



ORDINANCE REVIEW COMMITTEE

Members

Councilor Jeremy Dubs, Chair
Councilor Garrick Perry, Vice-Chair
Dane Kuttler, Citizen
Molly Moses, Citizen
Councilor Stanley Moulton, III

MEETING MINUTES

Date: June 11, 2025, Time: 6 p.m.

Virtual Meeting

1. **MEETING CALLED TO ORDER/ROLL CALL:** At 6 p.m., Councilor Jeremy Dubs called the meeting to order. On a roll call, the following members were present: Councilor Dubs; Chair, Councilor Stanley W. Moulton, III, Member Dane Kuttler and Member Molly Moses. Councilor Garrick Perry, Vice Chair, was absent. Also present were City Solicitor Alan Seewald and Administrative Assistant Laura Krutzler.

2. **ANNOUNCEMENT OF AUDIO/VIDEO RECORDING**
Councilor Dubs announced that the meeting was being audio/video recorded.

3. **PUBLIC COMMENT**
James Wilson, Prospect Street, read a statement and offered comments about the 72-hour parking rule. He said he has lived on Prospect Street for 22 years and has always parked on the street. The recent 72-hour rule makes it impossible for him to travel without risking his car being towed, since if he leaves for a week he will violate the 72-hour rule since he has no one to move it. He stressed that his car is registered and not abandoned. There is no rapid turnover of spaces on the street and no competition for parking. The parking administrator has told him that just moving the car an inch after receiving the notice will satisfy the requirement of showing that it is not abandoned. However, other cities investigate if the car is registered, he pointed out. If the owner is a resident, why doesn't Northampton do that? He asked. In Worcester, vehicles are only considered abandoned if they meet both criteria; 1) not being moved for 72 hours *and* 2) deemed abandoned (as shown by having no license plate, a revoked registration with cancelled insurance or additional factors such as broken windows or being filled with trash).

Abandonment is not an issue in Northampton, he suggested, since, per parking department records, only twelve vehicles were towed in 2024 while eight have been towed so far in 2025.

Mass. General Law (M.G.L.) Chapter 90, Section 22B defines an abandoned vehicle as one left unattended for 72 hours without the consent of the property's owner or local authority, he explained. His questions are: why does Northampton not have resident stickers that could be purchased and provide revenue for the town. Why

are resident parking passes not generally available? Why is there such concern about abandoned vehicles when less than a dozen a year are towed? Why be concerned about this now?

He said he would send his statement to Councilor Dubs, who said he would get back to him with a response. [See James Wilson Public Comment, attached.]

Jim Nash, Montview Avenue, said he knows members were contacted relative to an issue having to do with hedges. He has spoken to the building department and his understanding of the ordinance is that if the abutters on either side of a property are okay with whatever is going on with the shrubs or plants, everything is fine. He's advising them to take no action on the complaint. This particular matter has to do with the part of his property that abuts some conservation property. Some plants have grown between his property and the conservation area but the conservation group is fine with it. He thinks other things are going on here besides what is going on with the hedges.

Ace Tayloe said he previously sent an email expressing support for various ordinance proposals but wanted to add the request that the committee consider updating the city code to use gender-neutral language. In a cursory search, he found 38 instances where he or she is used as a pronoun. He suggested replacing 'he' and 'she' with the gender-neutral term 'they.' They is a pronoun that applies to either gender or unknown gender, he noted.

4. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Councilor Moulton moved to approve the May 14, 2025 meeting minutes. Member Kuttler seconded. The motion passed unanimously 4:0 by roll call vote with Councilor Perry absent.

5. **SCHEDULE AND COORDINATE PUBLIC FORUM – POTENTIAL DATES – JUNE 23RD, JUNE 30TH**

Members discussed and settled on arrangements to hold a public forum at June 30th at the Northampton Senior Center from 6 to 8 p.m. with the administrative assistant to contact Senior Services Director Kim Park to confirm the availability of the facility and Member Kuttler to create a flyer for distribution on City Council listservs and posting to the website and social media.

Member Kuttler offered to buy pizza and Ms. Krutzler said she would make sure the Senior Center allows groups to serve food.

6. **QUESTIONS/RESEARCH TOPICS RELATED TO NOISE ORDINANCE – EXEMPTION AREAS? (See [USA Waste Reference to Exemption Area](#))**

Councilor Dubs presented a question raised by Councilor Maiore on behalf of her constituents; namely, whether there is an exemption to the noise ordinance in Florence that allows USA Waste to empty commercial dumpsters in areas adjacent to residences at 2 and 3 a.m.

Councilor Moulton said he thinks there is a misunderstanding that has mushroomed in recent days. [Section 312-25 Prohibited Activities During Certain Hours of the Day](#) prohibits certain activities between 10 p.m. and 7 a.m., including the collection of trash and recycling. The ordinance was most recently amended two years ago to delineate certain areas in downtown Northampton and Florence as exceptions to that general rule. The amendment came as a result of trash haulers thinking/claiming that the downtown extended into certain residential areas. The City Council approved an allowance to allow trash collection to start a little earlier – 6 a.m. - in Florence Village-Center (FV-Center) districts.

There is no allowance for trash or recycling collection earlier than 6 a.m. other than in the areas specified, he stressed. They used zoning districts to alert trash haulers to where they could pick up before 7 a.m. and maps of these areas were distributed to haulers two years ago. Complaints have generally stopped until now, he noted.

In response to resident reports that trash is being picked up at 1:30 or 3:30 a.m., “that is not allowed,” he stressed.

The claim of an exemption stemmed from a letter from USA Waste in which Kim Brodeur states that the town has recognized safety challenges in the center of Florence and identified exemptions. There have been no exemptions or waivers approved by City Council, he clarified. It is an enforcement issue and he has reminded Councilor Maiore that any violation should be reported to the DPW as the enforcement agency. He said he would advise her to direct Roger, the recipient of the letter from USA Waste, to forward the letter to the DPW.

Councilor Dubs said he would share this explanation with Valle Dwight and Ms. Krutzler said she would report back to David Starr, the other resident who emailed her regarding this issue.

Councilor Dubs said it sounds like a trash hauler may be violation of the ordinance.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REMOVAL

Councilor Jarrett recommended sending any specific recommendations for ordinance removals to the City Council as soon as possible, Councilor Dubs reported.

Member Moses said she noticed the ordinance contains certain prohibitions on activities on Sunday like juke boxes or pool tables. She wondered if fellow members would agree by consensus that these are likely to be considered outdated ordinances that they would recommend for removal.

Attorney Seewald said he is not aware of any blue laws remaining in effect but he hasn't looked into it.

As far as Member Moses' suggestion, everything before this committee is properly done by roll call vote, he reminded. He recommended following this practice rather than making specific decisions piecemeal or by consensus. He suggested having a session in which they bring forward a list of ordinances to be removed.

In the past, they had a section of housekeeping changes in the report along with other sections.

Ms. Krutzler offered to compile a list of ordinances recommended for removal in a spreadsheet for placement on an agenda and discussion/action by the committee.

As far as pool tables and bowling, Ms. Krutzler expressed her understanding that the ordinance does not prohibit these activities on Sundays but simply requires a separate license for Sundays as opposed to regular weekdays.

Attorney Seewald confirmed that it would be permissible for Ms. Krutzler to share a spreadsheet with ideas for ordinances to be removed as long as committee members do not 'Reply All' to comment or make changes to it between meetings.

8. RESPONSE TO INFORMATION REQUEST (re: PEO ENFORCEMENT OF §285-17)

Ms. Krutzler screen-shared a response from Parking Administrator Nanci Forrestall to the information request received today. [See Nanci Forrestall Response to Information Request, attached.] Her response seems to be that this is already happening, Ms. Krutzler observed.

Member Kuttler pointed out that parking enforcement doesn't come down her street, so what is still missing is a reporting mechanism. "I need to know who to call if my neighbor hasn't cleared their sidewalk," she noted.

Councilor Dubs said there is a form on the city website to report unshoveled sidewalks. However, Ace Tayloe said he has filled that form out in the past and was informed that the form is not being checked and advised not to use it.

The problem for people with mobility issues is that they have to find uncleared areas for themselves and then have to go into the street which puts them in physical danger, Councilor Dubs shared. He's gotten stuck in the snow many times and had to sit and wait until somebody walked by to help him. From lived experience, he can tell them [monitoring and reporting] is not happening enough. It can't only be on residents, so that's why he would like to look more into the idea of it being taken on by parking enforcement officers.

Councilor Moulton agreed.

He asked if the letter from the Disability Commission distributed to them late this afternoon was uploaded to the agenda [See Disability Commission Letter, attached].

Ms. Krutzler said no.

Councilor Moulton said it is something they certainly want to enter into the record when there is a larger discussion of this issue. The issue has multiple components, including enforcement and whether the 24-hour deadline is realistic, he added. It is a large topic deserving of its own discussion.

Councilor Moulton asked Ms. Krutzler to acknowledge receipt of the letter from the Disability Commission.

Councilor Jarrett noted that parking enforcement officers make rounds outside of the metered areas of the city looking for people parked the wrong way on the street, etc. They do make rounds, he reiterated.

The method to report should be very clear, he added. He has used the form (which he understands is no longer in use) in the past. Apps such as 'See Click Fix' are also available. He said he hopes the ordinance can be crafted to encourage city departments to make it as easy as possible to report.

9. OTHER BUSINESS

Members scheduled their next regular meeting after the public forum for July 9th at 6 p.m.

10. ADJOURN

Councilor Moulton moved to adjourn. Member Kuttler seconded. The motion passed unanimously 4:0 by roll call vote with Councilor Perry absent. The meeting was adjourned at 6:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Laura Krutzler.

JAMES WILSON
81 Prospect St, Apt 47
Northampton, MA 01060
413-219-2750
Jmmwilson3@gmail.com.

MY CASE

- I have lived on Prospect St for 22 years and have always parked on the street.
- The recent 72-hour rule makes it impossible for me to travel without risking having my car towed. If I leave for a week, I will be violating the 72-hour rule.
 - I have NO ONE to move the car for me.
- My car is registered, I am a resident; it is not "abandoned."
- There is no rapid overturn of parking spaces on the street---no competition for spaces. I was told "just move it an inch" after you get the notice and that will be fine per providing information the car is not abandoned? [You need more information that JUST MOVEMENT ...to discern if a car is abandoned]
- Other cities investigate if the car is registered and if a person is a resident; why don't we do that? This is the case in, for example, Worcester.

Worcester Rule

- A vehicle is considered to be abandoned if it meets **both** of the following two (2) criteria:
 - It has not moved for seventy-two (72) hours; AND
 - It is "deemed to be abandoned". This includes a vehicle with:
 - no license plates; or
 - An attached license plate (a plate that differs from the one recorded at the Registry of Motor Vehicles for that vehicle or
 - An expired vehicle registration (NOT an expired inspection sticker! or
 - A revoked registration with the insurance cancelled.
 - Additional factors such as flat tires, broken windows or "filled with trash" will signal a problem but one of a) through d) above must apply.
- Abandonment is not an issue in Northampton.
 - In 2024, 12 vehicles were towed; in 2025, so far, eight have been towed (this data is from Nanci Forrestal)
- The Law states: "Chapter 90, Section 22B of the Massachusetts General Laws defines an abandoned vehicle as one left unattended on a public or private way for more than 72 hours without the property owner's or local authorities' consent."
- **How can I get consent?**
- Why do we not have "resident" stickers, which could be purchased and provide revenue to the town? This would allow me to park my car for periods exceeding 72 hours.
- **Can we extend the 72 hours to 2 weeks**, which is what a typical hospital stay or vacation would include?

Here are some additional questions:

- Why are "resident parking passes" not generally available? What is the logic of that?
- Why is there such a concern about abandoned vehicles when less than 1 dozen a year seem to be towed?

Just trying to understand the logic that drives the law.

Finally

- Why after 20 years is this now being enforced and of concern?



Information Request from Ordinance Review Committee

Alan Wolf <awolf@northamptonma.gov>
To: Laura Krutzler <lkrutzler@northamptonma.gov>

Wed, Jun 11, 2025 at 3:49 PM

Is this helpful? There is also another development that the city is investing in a simple reporting tool for residents. I can tell you more in person - a lot to type.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Nanci Forrester** <nforrester@northamptonma.gov>
Date: Wed, Jun 4, 2025 at 4:25 PM
Subject: Re: Information Request from Ordinance Review Committee
To: Alan Wolf <awolf@northamptonma.gov>
Cc: Kristine Bissell <kbissell@northamptonma.gov>, Charlene Nardi <cnardi@northamptonma.gov>

All - The chief of police asked a number of years ago that parking enforcement act in a reporting capacity when potential violations of this ordinance are observed. The PD has an established protocol with procedures in place to handle appropriate followup. During the course of their shift when PEOs observe these unsafe conditions it is reported to the PD thereby maintaining an organized and timely response through one department instead of piecemealing it to several. This has been found to be the most effective means of enforcement of the ordinance. Please let me know if I can answer any other questions.

Nanci

Nanci L. Forrester
Assistant Collector - Parking Administrator



NORTHAMPTON
Massachusetts

212 Main Street
Northampton, MA 01060
Office 413-587-1075
Fax 413-587-1289

www.northamptonma.gov/219/Tax-Collector

www.northamptonma.gov/258/Parking

CODE RED Register to receive emergency notifications with specific information about emergencies and time-sensitive local community issues.

On Wed, Jun 4, 2025 at 3:14 PM Alan Wolf <awolf@northamptonma.gov> wrote:
Hi guys - thoughts here?

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Laura Krutzler** <lkrutzler@northamptonma.gov>
Date: Tue, Jun 3, 2025 at 10:09 AM
Subject: Information Request from Ordinance Review Committee
To: Mayor of Northampton Mass. <mayor@northamptonma.gov>, Alan Wolf <awolf@northamptonma.gov>
Cc: Garrick M. Perry <gperry@northamptonma.gov>, Jeremy Dubs <jdubs@northamptonma.gov>

[Quoted text hidden]

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Alan Wolf
Chief of Staff to Mayor Sciarra
Pronouns: He/Him/His

Mayor's Office
210 Main St.
Northampton, MA 01060
413 587-1249 (Main)
413 587-1067 (Direct)
413 587-1275 (Fax)

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Alan Wolf
Chief of Staff to Mayor Sciarra
Pronouns: He/Him/His

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DISABILITY COMMISSION
City of Northampton
Office of Planning & Sustainability
210 Main St., Northampton, MA 01060
413 587-1288
adacoordinator@northamptonma.gov

June 11, 2025

To the Ordinance Review Committee,

In our June 10, 2025 meeting, the Northampton Disability Commission discussed the current enforcement process of the City Ordinance 285-17, "Removal of snow and ice from sidewalks." The current enforcement does not adequately facilitate the prompt removal of snow and ice from sidewalks, leaving residents unable to safely navigate sidewalks. This causes untenable situations for many residents, with people using mobility devices and white canes most impacted. In the course of the meeting, the idea of Parking Enforcement Officers observing, documenting, and reporting snow and ice on sidewalks was discussed. As the Parking Enforcement Officers are already traveling all the streets and sidewalks downtown, they would readily observe buildings not in compliance with the City Ordinance. They also carry cameras for parking enforcement that could be used to document snow and ice on sidewalks. This information could be communicated to the Police Department for the next steps of compliance with and enforcement of the City Ordinance.

While the Disability Commission does not know all the ramifications of this possible change in enforcement process, the idea seems to hold positive potential for the residents of Northampton and was supported by the Disability Commission. A motion in favor of this possible new process was passed unanimously.

Thank you for your consideration of the Disability Commission's input on this matter.

Sincerely,

Amy Sugihara
Chair, Disability Commission