



# The Biddeford Beat

CITY OF BIDDEFORD WEEKLY NEWSLETTER | Monday, June 12, 2017

Volume 17.19

A1

## Save the Date

*La Kermesse*

*Franco-Americaine*



What: 2017 La Kermesse Festival  
Where: Biddeford, ME  
When: Thu. June 22<sup>nd</sup> – Sun. June 25<sup>th</sup>

For more information and full festival schedule, please visit [www.lakermessefestival.com](http://www.lakermessefestival.com)

## Parking Beach Pass and Fee Update

As of June 15<sup>th</sup> through Labor Day, September 4<sup>th</sup> resident and nonresident vehicles are required to display beach permits to legally park at Biddeford Beaches 8am-5pm. Effective July 6<sup>th</sup> permits fee will increase for both resident and nonresident.

### Resident:

Person who pays real estate taxed to City, who is a register voter to City and/or person who can provide a vehicle registers (A2)

## UPCOMING MEETINGS

### Mon Jun 12

6:30pm - Policy Committee  
(City Hall Council Chambers)

### Tue Jun 13

7:00am - School Budget Validation Referendum Election  
(BHS Tiger Gym)

7:00pm - School Committee Meeting  
(BHS Little Theater)

### Wed Jun 14

4:00pm - Historic Preservation Committee  
(City Hall 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Conference Room)

4:45pm - Wastewater Commission  
(City Hall 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Conference Room)

6:00pm - Zoning Board of Appeals  
(City Hall Council Chambers)

7:00pm - Shellfish Committee  
(Biddeford Pool Fire Station)

### Wed Jun 15

8:00am - Downtown Taskforce  
(City Hall Mayor's Office)

6:30pm - Airport Commission  
(City Hall Council Chambers)

7:00pm - Conservation Committee  
(City Hall 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Conference Room)

For Full Calendar, [click here](#)

## Parking Garage Updates

By James Bennett, City Manager

It's quite clear that the issue of the parking garage remains a topic of concern in the community. For those that understand the parking challenges in the downtown; the question is when will it be done? For those who currently park daily in the downtown on public streets; the question is how will the garage impact me? For many taxpayers; how will this impact my tax bill? For those that like the direction the downtown is heading; will the parking garage make the trend happen quicker? For those that believe the community is heading in the wrong direction; how can I make the parking garage 'the election issue'? Finally, for many, what is going with the parking garage?

This article is an effort to answer those questions or at least, most of them. The consultants that the City engaged to assist in the design of the parking garage are working on the first phase of their engagement. The firm is evaluating the leading potential locations for the garage. Their work includes evaluating the subsurface conditions, the limitations of the lot from a size perspective, the potential impact on traffic and other related issues. Once that work is complete, their findings will be submitted to the City Council. The City Council will ultimately make a decision on the preferred site. Once a preferred site is identified, the City Council will make a decision on whether to authorize the formal release of the bidding documents.

There are only two potential ways that citizens would pay more in property taxes because of the parking garage. It is reasonable to estimate that the parking garage will cost in excess of \$10,000,000 to construct. The only practical approach is to borrow the money. If the Council wanted it to be paid for by property taxes, it must ask the voters for approval in a citywide referendum vote. (A2)

Questions/Comments:

t. 207.284.9313

e. [newsletter@biddefordmaine.org](mailto:newsletter@biddefordmaine.org)

w. [biddefordmaine.org](http://biddefordmaine.org)

*(Continued from AI Beach Permits)*

both City and State of Maine.

- ~~\$20~~ **\$25** First vehicle.
- ~~\$10~~ **\$15** Per additional vehicle registered at same address.
- ~~\$10~~ **\$15** For residents 65 and older.

Non-Resident:

- ~~\$120~~ **\$125** Season
- ~~\$60~~ **\$65** Seven-Day
- ~~\$35~~ **\$40** Three-Day
- ~~\$15~~ **\$20** One-Day

Permits are available at City Clerk’s office with proof of ID and license plate numbers.

Permit stickers are to be placed inside lower left of front windshield (driver’s side).

For more information about beach permits and Clerk’s Department, please visit:

[www.biddefordmaine.org/clerk](http://www.biddefordmaine.org/clerk)

*(Continued from AI Parking Garage)*

There is only one other way that the Council could cause your tax bill to go up. That way is to pay cash for the parking garage. While legally possible, it really is not an option. The City is about \$9,000,000 short of any possible cash payment. Hence, the bottom line is that unless the City Council gets approval from the voters to use property taxes to repay the bonds, there is no way that the parking garage can increase your property taxes. To be clear, use of property taxes to pay for the garage is not the plan.

This probably raises a new question for you. If the City is not using property taxes, then than how will it be paid for? There will be two sources of non-property tax funds available to pay for the garage. The first is the parking revenues that are generated by the facility. All parking revenues from the garage will be dedicated to paying all costs associated with the parking garage.

Once it is decided that the City is charging fees for the use of the garage, it will require a discussion about charging for other downtown parking lots the City owns. The reality is, all free parking actually costs money (snow removal, striping, construction, repair, etc.). When the parking is free, your property taxes pay for it. When there is a charge, the user pays

for it. In an ironic twist, those that support free parking (and hence, argue against a parking garage because of property taxes) are indirectly supporting the continued practice of paying for others to park through your property taxes.

The second source of funds is from the dedicated tax incremental financing (TIF) account. TIF funds are created under a special provision within state law. Without going into all the details, these funds can only be used for limited uses by those laws.

There is another important aspect of TIF’s that is often misunderstood. Without the benefits of the TIF, many of the new investments by the private sector would have not occurred. Hence, there would be not be any TIF funds if the TIF was not created. In those rare times where the new project would have been created regardless of the TIF, current state funding formulas would have caused half of the new tax money to be lost. By placing the project in a TIF district and tax sheltering the new tax revenues, half of those fund are essentially ‘found’ funds. The ‘found’ funds are created by encouraging development and protecting (sheltering) the funds from the state tax shifts that would have given away half of the money to other communities.

In the very near future, the parking garage will be on the City Council agenda. During those public meetings, many of the above questions will be addressed. One thing is certain, your property taxes are not being used for the parking garage. It’s quite the contrary. When users pay to park, those costs are directly paid by them. The cost of free parking is currently paid out of the general fund (translation, your property taxes). Further, the availability of new parking will continue to increase business activity and the value of the downtown. The additional value will translate into a great share of the property tax burden being paid by those businesses.

Finally, there has always been a great amount of information which have been available electronically on the City’s website. Recently, a FOIA request was submitted regarding the parking garage. As a result of that request, all related information can be found together on the City’s FOIA portion as well. If you still have questions, feel free to reach out to the Mayor, City Council members or the City Manager.

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 For questions and comments: t. 207.284.9313 | e. [newsletter@biddefordmaine.org](mailto:newsletter@biddefordmaine.org) | Thank you for reading