

**Billings Parking Board
Meeting Minutes
March 8, 2016**

Board Members Present: David Fishbaugh, Chairperson; Leticia Hadley; Kelly Donovan; Brian Rossiter; Joni Harman; Mark Kary; Kallie Parsons; Andy Zoeller

Board Members Absent: Kevin Odenthal

City Staff Present: Tracy Scott; Megan Hodson

Guests: Randy Hafer; Lisa Harmon; Greg Krueger

Call to Order:

Chairperson Fishbaugh called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

Introduction of new Board Members:

Mark Kary works downtown at Wells Fargo. He is currently an active member of the Knights of Columbus Heights, coaches a Heights Little League team, and is a volunteer for Habitat for Humanity. He has a strong desire to serve the community and be involved with local decisions. He utilizes the on-street parking when he is working and wants to help create a solution to the parking areas which are of concern.

Kallie Parsons is the Volunteer Coordinator for the City of Billings Crime Prevention Center. She oversees the volunteers who enforce parking regulations and issue parking citations outside of the downtown area. She knows parking is a sore subject to the public and how important it is to be involved in something that seems small, yet troubles the public so much.

Andy Zoeller is the Accounting Manager for the City of Billings. He is a certified public accountant and oversees the accountants in the Finance Department. He currently resides close to the downtown area. He has an interest in downtown Billings and wants to see the city prosper.

Minutes:

The February 9, 2016 minutes were approved as presented with the amendment of “the location is to be determined” instead of “in the City Hall Conference room”, under the Agenda Item – Meeting Time/Day/How often, on page 2, in the last paragraph.

Reports:

- **Budget Report**

The Board received and reviewed the Quarterly Budget report for December 31, 2015. The revenues and expenses are around the 50% range, excluding the violations revenue (33.6%), the surface lots revenue (39.3%), the capital expense (5.5%), and the debt service expense (25.2%) which are all under budget.

Ms. Scott explained the enforcement officers are taking on the role of becoming more “parking ambassadors”, which will help educate the public on downtown parking and hopefully encourage more people to come downtown. The Library lot revenue has been fluctuating for this first year because the first two hours are free parking and the kiosk is a brand new system to everyone. The engineering fees for the garage concrete restoration project are being paid out of the capital expense and the bid for the work is higher than originally budgeted. The debt service payment is for the Park Two garage expansion. Mr. Zoeller clarified the debt service expense includes both the principal and interest payment. The Board asked to receive a cash flow statement in the future.

- **Monthly Report**

Ms. Scott explained the monthly summary to the new board members. There is no waitlist in Park One. Park Two and the Empire both increased in spaces from the previous month. The cash sales are up for all of the garages. The hotel validations can fluctuate month to month depending on how many conferences are being held during the month.

- **Condition Audit Report**

Ms. Scott advised the bid for the garage concrete restoration project came in over budget. The bid goes to City Council for approval on March 14.

Downtown Alliance Report:

- The Getting to the Heart event went extremely well. One of the topics was parking. The day after the event, members from the Alliance met to discuss the Downtown Strategic Plan, which also includes parking. Randy Hafer, the Chair of the Business Improvement District Board, discussed with the Board that there is a parking perception problem. The Boards need to create a better communication amongst the various groups and help each other tell the story of parking.
- The Board for the 27th Street Tax Increment Financing District (TIF) has received a request for a \$1.5 million private parking garage upgrade. There are 329

parking spaces in the private garage. The owners understand the importance of increasing the rates in the garages to maintain the upkeep, which the City essentially controls the rates for private parking. All of parking, whether public or private, is beneficial to the economic development of downtown. The owners want to make a presentation at the next Board meeting and ask for the Board's support.

Public Comment:

No public comment.

Discussion Items:

- City Link Insert (Map; Q&A)

Chairperson Fishbaugh explained to the Board one way to get information out to the public regarding parking downtown is the City Link insert in the Billings Gazette. Liz Kampa Weatherwax, the Purchasing Agent for the City of Billings, coordinates between the city departments and the Billings Gazette to create the City Link. Chairperson Fishbaugh stated there could be a variety of parking related items to publish; for example, a map of where to park downtown, commonly asked questions from the public with answers, rates, dates and times to pay for parking, etc.

The Board discussed other “fun” opportunities to get parking information to the public. Some suggestions were using social media to post “Parking how to” videos, creating a link on the Parking website with “I am going to...” and having a list of downtown business names and showing where to park. Mrs. Harmon also suggested combining health benefits into parking, by having signage stating “if you park here, and walk this far, you earn “X” from a certain business”. This helps with wayfinding and marketing for downtown businesses.

Staff will bring more information to the Board regarding the City Link and in the next few months the Board will discuss more in depth an “eye catching” approach to help get information to the public.

- Rates

Ms. Scott advised increasing the rates is inevitable for both on-street and off-street parking. Parking needs to be able to cover the cost of maintaining the garages, while investing in new on-street and off-street technology. Ms. Scott is working on different rate increase estimates and will provide that information to the Board.

- Meters – Phase I

Chairperson Fishbaugh explained updating the parking meters could be done in phases. Staff could locate certain areas of downtown where credit card meters would be more beneficial and in other areas meters could be removed. Ms. Scott stated the last estimate received for replacing only the mechanisms in the meters was approximately \$270,000. The on-street parking rates would have to be increased to accommodate the fees attached to having credit card meters. The Board discussed what the pros and cons would be with purchasing a small portion of meters at one time as an alternative to purchasing for the whole metered zone area.

Ms. Scott voiced a concern regarding discussion of the downtown streets being converted from one-way streets to two-way streets and how that will affect parking and the placement of meters. Staff will research different types of meters and start working on ideas for parking rates within the next few months. Ms. Scott asked for the DBA's assistance on presenting information to the public.

- Special Parking Permits

The Board tabled this item until the next meeting.

- Parklet

Doc Harper's Tavern has begun the process of asking the City's permission to create a "parklet" in front of their location at 116 N. Broadway. The parklet would take three parking spaces on North Broadway between 1st Avenue North and 2nd Avenue North. The parklet would not be permanent and would be from May – October. Ms. Scott explained the parklet is still in the planning stages. The three meters bring in an estimated amount of \$1700 for the six months. The Board discussed the option of Parking being compensated for the offset of revenue. The Board would like to further discuss this item.

Agenda/Action Items:

There were no items.

Adjournment: 3:21 p.m.