

PARKING ADVISORY BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
May 14, 2013

Members Present:

Don Olsen, Chairperson
Mike Craighill

Will Gilbert
Steve Bruggeman

Leticia Moore
Bob Carr

Members Absent:

Others Present:

Bruce McCandless
Greg Krueger

Pat Weber
Liz Kampa-Weatherwax

Lisa Harmon
Megan Hodson

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Don called the meeting to order at 4:03 p.m.

MINUTES

Steve moved to approve the April minutes. Will seconded. All in favor. Motion passed.

QUARTERLY REPORTS

Pat Weber, Finance Director, stated the year to date budget is down. The TIF transfer has not happened yet, and the NorthWestern Energy rebate arrived in April. He said the expenditures are over due to the remodel of a lease space at Park 1. Pat said there will be an amendment put in for the expenditure side of the budget for FY 13 to correct a few things. At the end of March the cash was at \$486,000. He said Parking is looking at a better picture compared to a year ago.

Pat recommended not removing the TIF transfer from the budget. He thinks the Board would be wise to let things go for a while before switching things in the budget. Don said the reason he brought up removing the transfer was for the Partnership. Pat said the Empire Garage is balanced out and is doing well for what money is there. Pat understands it leaves the Partnership short on cash, but reiterated the Empire Garage is what everyone wanted to build. Pat said the bond sale was good, which makes the finances in good standing also.

Mike asked Pat if the minimum amount for the credit card machines is \$5. Pat said yes, and Park 2 has not received the machine because of a line that needs to be run. Leticia asked who installs the line. Pat said the City's IT department does. Liz said it is on their list (to get done). Mike asked if the customer only stays for one hour, do they pay the whole \$5. Pat said it was a good question, and Parking will discuss and look into it.

STAFF REPORTS

Handicap Parking Policy

Bruce said Chris had mentioned changing the handicap parking policy, particularly when the Empire Garage comes online. He said Don had obtained information from an advocacy group. Bruce stated the group's response was handicap individuals should be treated no worse than able bodied people. Parking would comply with the ADA when developing a new policy. Bruce said some communities allow extra time for on-street parking, because the individuals may be slower getting back to their vehicles.

Bruce and Liz have not done any work on this item and prefer to wait until closer to when the Empire garage opens. Bruce believes Parking needs to handle this system wide. Liz added Parking needs to be consistent; therefore, on-street parking and the garages should be handled the same. The individuals will know what is expected then.

Don wants to carry this item on the agenda.

Meter Zone Map

Bruce said shortly after the last Board meeting, he met with Don. He explained to Don that upon further legal research, Parking cannot do exactly what the Board wants to do concerning eliminating areas - particularly the signed 10 hour zones. Bruce said there has to be revisions to the City Code in order to do that. He said it will be a two-step process. He is asking City Council to revise the code to allow the City Administrator authority to make the changes the PAB is requesting. Bruce said he has not had a lot of time to work on this, but it is on the agenda.

Empire Parking Garage Update

Bruce said the Empire is on budget but behind schedule. He believes the garage will not be completed until mid-April 2014. Bruce said Sletten has been developing a "look ahead" schedule, basically meaning what is supposed to be happening onsite. Bruce said he can bring the schedule to the next meeting. They are driving piles and forming the next batch of the pile caps and grade beams. He believes there are enough piles driven that concrete could be poured. There is a certain volume of dirt onsite, and in order to not have it trucked off and brought back, they are trying to move progressively along the site. Once the first batch of pilings is done, they will not do anymore for a couple of weeks in order to give them time to do the pile caps and the grade beams. Then they will move all of the dirt on the west side of the property, re-grade it all, and then drive the pilings on the west side. He said that portion will be done. Bruce said after that is completed the slab construction will begin, and then around late June or early July the building will start going up.

Bruce said the Fire Department is the only department who has not signed off on the building permit. They have kept in close contact with the Fire Marshalls and see no problem with them signing off on the permit. Their primary concern was getting the permit approved by June 1st.

Bruce said the City's attorneys believe the contractor does not have adequate insurance in professional liability. He believes it will be resolved, but it may have some cost to it. Bruce said change order #3 was approved by City Council. A \$150,000 of the \$230,000 was directly related to the delay of the demolition of the Northern Garage the City had caused. The City told Sletten not to tear down the Northern Garage until all of the bonds were sold, which delayed Sletten about 40 days, and there was a penalty for it. Bruce believes there won't be any more big change orders, but there will continue to be smaller ones.

Bruce said there is a resolution going to City Council on May 28th, which would give the City Administrator expanded authority to approve change orders.

Mike asked how the valet (parking) is going. Bruce and Lisa said it had not been brought up. Bruce said, from his own observation, it looks like employees are using the area. Bruce said he would look into how the valet parking is going.

Alternative Parking Management Report

Bruce believes the ordinance amending the City Charter (to allow a parking commission) will go to City Council for the first reading no later than June 10th. He said it has to be done no later than mid-August to get on the ballot for November. Bruce said the draft is done and has been reviewed by Legal and Administration.

Steve asked if the draft is generic. Bruce said yes. Mike asked if the Commission Board would still have to go to Council to change a city ordinance. Bruce said yes, but it depends on how much authority City Council gives the Commission. Bruce said the draft gives broad authority to the Commission. For example, it is similar to Missoula and the only authority that Missoula's Commission does not have is setting rates and the boundaries.

Bruce said Staff will be working with the PAB to make a transition plan to be presented to Council. He currently has it on his calendar to start no later than September. Bob believes the Board has identified some important items regarding a transition plan. Steve asked how involved Council will be with the transition plan. He believes the more involved Council is with the transition, with the Board being able to hear their concerns and ideas, the more time will be saved when the transition phase happens.

Steve suggested inviting Council to the PAB meetings or setting up a special meeting with them to talk about this special subject. He hopes to further the education process before it gets voted on. Leticia asked if Council would be more apt to hold a special Monday meeting before Council. Bruce said the volume of issues brought to the PAB meetings will be less than previous meetings, and there will be some month to month issues that need to be taken care of. Bruce suggested forming a committee with some of the PAB members and some of Council to participate.

Don said to put on next month's agenda to discuss forming a committee with Council. Bruce said the Board needs to consider which Council they would like to take the proposal to, since there is an election for new Councilmember's this November. Don said he would like to go with a known entity rather than an unknown one.

Informational Items

Don said he has two items he would like to discuss. The first one is the need for having more members on the PAB. He said he talked to Joni Harmon, a downtown property owner, and gave her the paperwork to apply to be appointed to the board. Mike said he also took paperwork to Tabitha, who owns Big Sky Imaginarium. Mike said he will check back with her.

Don asked if there is any public information available about the manager of the Parking Division. Bruce said the investigation has been completed, and the Due Process letter will be issued. He said the hearing will probably be May 23rd. Bruce said he does not know if Chris will attend the hearing or if he will resign. If Chris resigns, the hearing would be canceled. If Chris does not resign, the hearing will be public.

Lisa said there is an Ad-Hoc position on the DBA Board and offered Bruce to attend those meetings. She said she would put Bruce on the distribution list, and the Board meets the fourth Wednesday of every month at 7:30 am.

DOWNTOWN ALLIANCE REPORT

Lisa said Alive after Five is starting on May 30th, which is a week earlier than previous years. She said this year July 4th is on a Thursday, and they will not be having Alive after Five that week. The following week will be the Strawberry Festival. She said it is a busy time for them right now. Lisa said it is Bike, Walk, or Bus to work week, and there is Sneaker, Spoke, and Spark Plug Challenge May 15th. There are teams who will be doing a treasure hunt.

She said they had their annual meeting, and they showed a film called The Next American Dream. She said the film was about how the American dream is shifting and what it is going to look like. It will involve walk-able urban cores and vibrant urban centers. She said the DBA Executive Board meets to bring a ballot forward for the new Board of Directors and to finalize their budget. Lisa also added it is time to begin the process of renewing the BID, because they are at year eight and only have a 10 year shelf life. They are also looking into new sturdier plant material for under Sky Point.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment.

AGENDA

Layout of 27th Street North Parking Lot

Don stated there is a concern with the layout of this parking lot. He said the Montana Brewing Company asked to reorganize the lot. Montana Brewing suggested taking out the metered spaces in the middle of the lot. Don said he is not familiar with the subject.

Bruce said the North Lot is 75 feet wide, has two parking bays against the buildings, and a row of eight metered spaces down the middle. He said the row down the middle is what is causing the problem. The entry off of North 27th Street is right in the middle of the lot. The vehicles pulling into the lot have to make a hard right immediately upon entering. Bruce suggested having someone with drafting knowledge take a look at the present lot and redesign the layout. He thinks the lot could become 90 degree parking, which would possibly increase the number of spaces by essentially only having two bays against the buildings.

Liz said the lot consists of metered and reserved spaces. Leticia asked how Montana Brewing would feel about losing the middle row. Don said they suggested the removal. Liz said Staff will look into it and get back to the Board.

Parking Master Plan

Don said the Board, along with Lisa and Greg, has advocated a plan for Parking. Don asked if the Board wants to wait until they find out about the Commission before moving forward with the plan. Liz asked if a plan was started. Don said no, in general a bigger vision for parking downtown is the main concern. Don said Lisa suggested bringing in Dennis Burns from Phoenix to help with the plan. Don said this can be deferred and the Parking manager can help facilitate it.

Northern Valet impacting Minnesota Avenue

Don spoke with Joni Harmon who said there is an impact on parking on Minnesota Avenue. Don said Parking put 2 hour bags on the meters on Minnesota Avenue, and there is 10 hour parking on South 26th Street. The PAB discussed putting signed 10 hour parking in, but Bruce found out the Board cannot put 10 hour signs in without amendments to the ordinance. Don said Joni wants to know if there is some way to improve the situation.

Liz said she needs to look at what changed in that area with parking. Don said on the south side of Minnesota Avenue there are 2 hour meters with one signed 10 minute parking space. On the north side of Minnesota it is 2 hour meters. Liz asked why the meters were bagged. Don said the block was included in the Minnesota parking plan but did not get finished. He said, in theory, there should be free 2 hour parking on Minnesota Avenue, such as west of South 27th Street, and 10 hour meters on South 26th Street. In a previous PAB meeting, the Board discussed putting signed 10 hour parking instead of the meters. He said the Board has ignored the strip in front of the Fieldhouse Café. Liz asked if there is anything in front of it. Don said there is nothing for about a block. Leticia said there has never been anything before, and now it is an issue because of the Northern Hotel's valet parking in the Skate Park Lot. Don said hopefully the issue will go away when the Empire Garage is completed.

Lisa said St. Vincent's De Paul has been calling her about the Northern Hotel's employees parking in their lot. Lisa explained to them their signage is very important, and recommended they notify the Northern Hotel and ask them to instruct their employees to not park there. Leticia suggested the Northern Hotel could recommend their employees park in Park 2 and validate their parking. Greg said the Northern does have a validation stamp.

Mike asked if Ms. Harmon had any suggestions regarding parking on Minnesota Avenue. Don said one suggestion is converting to diagonal parking on the south side of the street, which is west of South 27th Street. He said west of South 27th Street there is no bike lane. Greg said he has been in contact with BikeNet, and he has permission to temporarily put diagonal spots in. He said with the pedestrian bridge running across the railroad tracks, the bike lane will be re-routed. Greg said if the bridge does not happen, they can put the bike lane back in. He also said it would be funded by the valet budget. Leticia said it would take a while to get the striping done and believes the Board has a better chance getting the signed 10 hour parking done in a couple months. Greg said Engineering has already signed off on it. Don said there should be a motion of support for striping the south side of Minnesota Avenue between South 27th Street and South 25th Street to diagonal parking.

Greg said they were talking about making two of the spaces signed 10 minute parking in front of Subway, and the rest of the parking would be free 2 hour parking. Greg asked Liz if the motion passes, could he get the supplier's number that Parking uses for striping on-street. Liz said normally, for any items placed under the Agenda section, Staff would bring a recommendation to the Board prior to any voting or motions. Bruce said Staff was not prepared with a recommendation, because it was not known what the discussion and resolution would be for this item. Liz said she is uncomfortable saying yes to striping without physically seeing the street and having a recommendation for the Board. Liz said she would be happy to give Greg the name of the vendor that Parking uses for on-street striping. Liz asked if she could bring back a recommendation to the Board for action.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:06 p.m.