

**PARKING ADVISORY BOARD  
MEETING MINUTES  
June 11, 2013**

**Members Present:**

Don Olsen, Chairperson  
Mike Craighill

Will Gilbert  
Steve Bruggeman

Leticia Moore  
Bob Carr

**Members Absent:**

**Others Present:**

Saree Couture

Liz Kampa-Weatherwax

Megan Hodson

**CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL**

Don called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. As Saree is new to the Parking Board, everyone introduced themselves.

**MINUTES**

Will moved to approve the May minutes. Leticia seconded. All in favor. Motion passed.

**STAFF REPORTS**

**Parking Division Management**

Liz stated she will be assisting and attending meetings as needed. She said PAB meetings will be held by Saree, Bruce, and Megan. Don stated the Parking Division is idling until November to see if it will become a Parking Commission. Liz said Saree and Bruce will be working together.

Bob asked Saree what her other job was. Saree explained she is in charge of Facilities for the City. She has been doing facilities management since her twenties. Bob asked if she had experience with parking garages. Saree said yes, but the garages were privately owned and not open to the public. She explained she does not have background in parking operations, but has maintained and restored garages. Saree said she is also very busy with her facilities job, but she will find a way to make it work. Liz said there is nothing that Saree cannot handle, and Megan is taking on more and handling the day to day operations. Liz said Saree is keeping office hours at City Hall, but also has an office at the Billings Operations Center.

Liz explained there is a Condition Audit report that needs to be done every five years. The last one was done in 2004 in conjunction with the Park 2 expansion. She explained Parking is not as over due on the audit as it seems. Liz said anything to do with maintaining facilities is Saree's forte.

Liz asked the Board to please bear with Staff, as there are a handful of people trying to keep things running as smooth as possible.

Steve asked if there are procedures in place to prevent embezzlement of Parking funds and asked if the money will get back into the Parking fund. Liz said there were a number of procedures in place that were not being followed. She explained some questions were asked that in turn raised flags, which then prompted an investigation. She said additional procedures have since been put in place. Steve said the Board has never taken on internal controls as long as he has been on the Board. He believes \$10,000 is a hit to the Parking fund and again wonders if that money will get back to the fund. Liz believes when the case is closed there will be restitution paid. Liz said currently it is not in the Board's capacity to dig into the day to day operations and controls. Depending on what happens in November, it could become a part of what the Board would handle. Mike said he appreciates Staff addressing the failed procedures and controls and creating new ones to be followed.

### **Meter Zone Map**

Saree asked if there was a revised map. Megan said not yet. She explained, Bruce wanted the Board to look at the locations of the 10 hour zones that were discussed in previous meetings. Saree said Bruce's main concern is the locations. She said Staff will send out the map to the Board.

Steve said it seems like the Board is designating another area as 10 hour parking. Leticia said it is where the Board picked for the placement of 10 hour parking. Megan explained the area was voted and approved by the Board, and Bruce wanted clarification from the Board that those areas were exactly what the Board wanted. Leticia said the area was to replace the 10 hour meters that were removed. Liz said the area is for 10 hour signed parking, not 10 hour meters.

Steve asked what the resolution was for. Liz explained, by law, Parking is not allowed to put in signed 10 hour parking. She said Parking can put in signed 2 hour and 10 minute parking, but not signed 10 hour parking. Bruce found a loop hole in the resolution that does not allow signed 10 hour parking. Liz said Bruce wants to make sure spaces designated for signed 10 hour permit only parking is what the Board wants. The resolution is to allow the ability to create signed 10 hour parking rather than metered.

Saree asked if the DBA was already selling the permits for these spaces. Liz said the DBA sells the 10 hour meter permits and can sell months in advance.

Will asked what the "or" in the resolution was for. Liz said the Board could amend all of the ordinances with the resolution or amend just Section 463.5 with the language that follows it. Steve said the blocks shall be 10 hours, but if the Board wants to change it back, then they would have to go to Council. Will said once the Board becomes the Parking Commission they can have control of it anyway. Leticia said the Board should look at the map, but recalls the select areas already being 10 hour meters as well as adding an additional area in the east.

Liz stated all of Parking's ordinances and resolutions never actually outlined specific blocks or spaces, which left it pretty vague and open. The City Administrator "and/or his/her designee" could determine time, meters, and signs and where they would go. Don said the PAB redefined the metered zone, and Council said everything inside the zone has to be metered. Leticia said the Board meant for it to say everything inside the zone "could be" metered, but Council made it say everything "has to be" metered. Leticia said the original intention was to shrink the metered area in downtown to reduce expenses by eliminating one enforcement officer. Liz stated meters are actually less work to enforce than signed parking. Leticia jokingly stated you do not want to get into that with us (the PAB). She personally believes there should be no meters at all. She said the whole point of the trial was to see what the effects would be if the least used meters were removed. Leticia said the Board had to keep the meters

in the core because of turnover. She said the Board intended for meters to be allowed in the metered zone, and not allowed outside of the zone. She added Council interpreted the trial different, because there is a lack of communication between the PAB and Council.

Liz asked what happens to the signed 10 minute parking that is inside of the core. Leticia said her understanding is everything in the metered zone has to be metered. Steve said the Board had a recommendation for Council to remove some blocks in the east, which did not have any meters to begin with. He said the intent was not to add any more meters, and Councilman Ronquillo agreed with the Board in a previous PAB meeting. Steve said the Board wanted to amend the area in the east, which he believes the Board did. The Board then started discussing 10 hour meters and modifying the placement of them.

Don felt the Board is not ready to vote on the resolution. Leticia said she believes the Board needs to look at a map before deciding. She said the Board probably does not want to add signed 10 hour parking in places it was not before. She thinks there will not be a lot of shouting from businesses where the 10 hour meters were originally placed. Megan explained the placement of the signed 10 hour parking is outside of the metered zone where 10 hour meters were originally placed, except in the east. She said the Board wanted to remove the block between 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue North and 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue North along North 25<sup>th</sup> Street from the metered zone and make it signed 10 hour parking. Leticia said during the trial all of the 10 hour meters were bagged; therefore, people stopped buying the permits because it was free parking.

Don said he fears if the Board were to approve the resolution the way it is and then they wanted to change it in the future, they would have to go back to Council and change the entire ordinance. Will said if a parking commission is created, he is sure there will be a resolution that will give that authority to the Commission. Liz thinks the Board needs to make sure the areas outlined in the resolution are correct, and Staff will provide a map to all members for reference. Liz also explained the “or” in the resolution would give City Council authority to establish by resolution that Parking may charge hourly, daily, or monthly fees for on-street limited parking or zones. She said the Board would not be listing specific blocks.

Steve asked if the resolution would still have to go back to Council. Liz believes Bruce is telling the Board to either pass the resolution to establish those specific signed 10 hour permit only zones, or to re-draft a portion of the current ordinance asking Council to pass a resolution that gives Parking leeway.

Steve asked if the resolution could say “establish” and “grant authority” to the PAB, because the Board does not have the authority without Council telling them. Mike believes Council cannot grant the Board authority. Liz said the Board does have authority to make changes to on-street parking with Staff recommendations. She said the Board has authority to approve downtown changes to parking except for what has already been stipulated specifically; for example, the meter zone approved by Council. If the Board passed the signed 10 hour permit zones, the Board could not go against ordinances or resolution even if granted authority by Council.

Leticia said the ordinance should say the outlying area is the non-metered zone. Will said the Board should not worry about making changes because of not knowing what will happen in November with the Parking Commission. Liz said Saree, Megan, and she will work together with Bruce. She verified the Board would like the ability to sell 10 hour permits for signed areas, not metered, in the selected areas, and reiterated that the streets would not be listed specifically in the ordinance. The Board agreed.

Don said the Board would like to finalize this next month.

### **Empire Parking Garage Update**

Don said the construction workers are done driving piles. He said the valet parking is working, but is not very convenient. The contractors are behind a month in schedule, but making good progress.

Saree said Bruce had lighting on his list, and asked Don if he was going to comment on the rebate opportunity. Don said there was a rebate opportunity, as well as an LED option with a 10-11 year payback. He said he is not positive where the decision is at, and they are waiting to hear back on more specific information on the cost vs. performance.

Don said Mr. Honaker has the option of the space on the southeast corner, and Mr. Nelson has the option on the southwest corner for retail space. Mike asked who would recruit tenants. Leticia said it would be the Parking Division that oversees the process, and NAI would help lease the spaces.

### **Informational Items**

Megan asked the Board what type of information they received off of the Monthly Reports. Steve said the report showed the cash sales for the month and indicated the activity level of the garages. Leticia said it helped with turning Park 1 into a monthly garage. Steve added the report was good informational tools for the Board. Liz asked if there was anything that the Board would like to see on the reports in the future. Don said no. Bob asked for a different format. Steve said the reports are also a good reminder of how many spaces are in the garages. Leticia said it was helpful with Park 2 and the vacancies.

Liz said the Board has two potential Board members that have applied, which are Joni Harman and Tabitha Frasca. Don said that is good news. Saree added the appointment is on the June 24<sup>th</sup> City Council agenda.

Liz said she has not taken a look at the North 27<sup>th</sup> Lot yet, and she has a few Special Parking Applications to review. She said Staff should have them ready by the July meeting.

Saree said Greg and Lisa could not attend the meeting because there was a magazine in town. She said Greg and Lisa suggested putting a sign on Park 1 that would say "Monthly Parking Only" with the bottom of it saying "Public Parking-Saturday, Sunday, Weekdays after 5:30 pm". Lisa and Greg told Saree it would be very informational. Mike said Parking put a sign on Park 1 that said "Monthly Cardholder Parking Only". Mike agreed the signage is still unclear. Saree explained there are businesses downtown that do not know the garage is open to the public.

Saree asked the Board if they wanted to act on adding the sign, or whether they wanted review and approve the sign first. Steve said he is okay with the wording proposed by Lisa and Greg. Mike asked if the new sign would replace all of the existing signs at Park 1. Saree said yes.

Mike asked if the Board needed to make a motion on the sign at Park 1. Liz said she does not believe the Board votes on operational items. Steve said the minutes can reflect the Board is in favor of the sign.

Saree said Lisa mentioned the Downtown Business Ambassadors, who will be walking around downtown on Friday and Saturday nights. She said the ambassador's purpose is to talk to people and answer questions. Saree said Lisa asked for maps explaining parking in downtown and also asked about the website. Saree said Staff has been cleaning up the website and wants to add more information to it; for

example, a parking map. She said the ambassadors will carry smart phones with them and will be able to access the website using the phone.

Saree said the credit card machine in Park 2 has been installed. She said there was discussion regarding the minimum charge for the credit card machine. Saree explained Park 3 has a daily customer who only typically is charged \$4.50. She wanted to know if Parking could let the customer use their debit/credit card since that charge would not be the minimum \$5 fee. Teri Walker said Parking could allow the customer to charge the \$4.50. Saree said the garage attendants will use their judgment for allowing credit card payments.

Mike said he was confused about that process. He explained Pat Weber (Finance Director) told the Board there was a fund that paid the credit card fees. Mike asked why the minimum charge mattered. Liz said in some locations the CD does pay for the fees; however the interest off the CD does not make enough to cover everything. Mike suggested either charging the customer a fee to use their credit card, or sell a parking credit. For example, if the customer has to pay \$2 for parking in the garage, their card could be charged \$5 and then the customer could be given \$3 worth of parking tokens. Don said the first suggestion sounds easier. Liz said she believes setting credit card fees has to be done by resolution.

Liz suggested in the future asking the garage attendants how things are working. She also added Staff will look into stocking the garages with additional tokens. Mike believes the token option will either be seldom used or used all of the time. Don asked what the tokens would do for out of town customers. Mike said nothing. Liz said Staff will report back to the Board on how the program is going. Saree said Staff would ask Pat if Parking could charge a fee for using a credit card.

Leticia said she spoke with Megan regarding Park 2 being out of control cards to access the garage. She said Megan was handling the situation, but wanted to make the Board aware. Leticia said the garage attendants were keeping a list of the people renting a space, and those customers would pull a ticket and get out of the garage for free. She believes there is not a list being kept by the garage attendant. Leticia said the bottom line is the need for control cards. Megan said it is out of Parking's control. She ordered new cards in late March or April and was told the cards would take about six weeks. Megan asked Leticia if she had a better suggestion for the meantime. Leticia said maybe ordering the cards sooner. Saree asked if someone else could supply the cards. Liz said more than likely. Liz asked if the other garages had a surplus that could be reprogrammed. Megan said when Parking sold Park 4 to United Properties they received a bunch of cards. She asked if those cards could be reprogrammed and was told no. Liz said Staff would get back to Leticia, and there is no sense in ordering additional cards.

### **DOWNTOWN ALLIANCE REPORT**

Lisa and Greg did not attend the meeting, so there was no report.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comment.

### **AGENDA**

#### **Minnesota Avenue between South 26<sup>th</sup> and South 27<sup>th</sup> Street**

Liz said she took pictures of the area and also saw a concern in an area to the east. She said Staff's recommendation is to install signed 2 hour parking on the north side of Minnesota Avenue in front of the Fieldhouse Café. Liz spoke with Terry Smith, from the City's Engineering Department, and he is

comfortable with removing the bike lane. However, he is not comfortable with installing diagonal parking without it being engineered. She said Engineering would provide the service at minimal cost if Parking is willing to wait until the fall.

Mike asked what that means. Liz said Parking would hire an engineer to design the diagonal parking. She said the engineer could take a similar block, work out the dimension to scale, determine how many spaces, what amount of feet could fit into the area, graph it out, and then have a contractor use the plans to stripe the area.

Liz said the Partnership offered to pay for the striping, but Parking would have to pay for the engineering. She believes the cost should not be too expensive. She said the recommendation is to hire a local company to perform the engineering services. Parking would cover the cost with the understanding the Partnership would cover the striping cost.

Don asked if the recommendation was all the way down to South 25<sup>th</sup> Street. Liz said it covers from South 25<sup>th</sup> Street to South 27<sup>th</sup> Street on Minnesota Avenue. Leticia motioned to approve Liz's recommendation. Bob seconded. All in favor. The motioned passed.

### **PAB Representative to the Downtown Billings Partnership Board**

Don said he currently represents the PAB on the Downtown Billings Partnership Board. He would like to resign from the DBP Board. He spoke with Steve about being the representative, but thought he should bring it up to the PAB just in case someone else would like to be on it. The Board agreed Steve would be a good representative. Steve said he does not mind doing it. Don said he would attend the June meeting and then the transition could happen for the July DBP meeting.

### **Alternative Parking Management Report**

Liz said Staff does not have anything new to report. She believes Bruce has been looking into cooperative meeting opportunities with the Board. Liz said it is a stand still until November. Steve said the idea was to combine members from Council and the PAB to look at the form and the powers the Commission could have. Steve would like Council to hear the PAB's ideas and Leticia would like them to know why the PAB wants the decision making abilities. Bob said he would like the transition to be more efficient, so when January 1 comes the Board is not having this discussion.

Saree said in the last meeting minutes, Bruce suggested forming a committee with some members from both the PAB and Council and discussing it at the next meeting. Saree suggested tabling this item until July's meeting since Bruce was not able to attend. Don agreed.

### **Handicap Parking Policy**

Liz said there was nothing to report. Don said the deadline is before the opening of the Empire Garage.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:17 p.m.