

**PARKING ADVISORY BOARD  
MEETING MINUTES  
November 13, 2012**

**Members Present:**

Don Olsen, Chairperson  
Mike Craighill

Bob Carr  
Steve Bruggeman

Leticia Moore  
Will Gilbert

**Members Absent:**

Tami Kelling

Drew Smith

Chris Mallow

**Others Present:**

Bruce McCandless

Greg Krueger

Megan Hodson

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comment.

**REPORTS AND ACTION ITEMS**

**Minutes**

The minutes from September and October were approved.

**Monthly Report**

There was no discussion for the Monthly Report for September and October.

**Metered Zone- Meter Time Limits**

Don thanked the members of the Board that went to the City Council meeting. Don also stated City Council approved the meter reduction zone. Bruce said Lisa is putting together information about the removal of the meters on the DBA's website, and the Board could make necessary changes after the information ran for a few weeks.

Bruce explained the Central Business District map regarding parking meter time limits. Don asked the Board to come up with a strategy where 10 hour meters would be placed. Don asked what the time frame is on for designating spots for 10 hour meters. Bruce said it is not a crisis situation as the meters are already in place. For the areas that do not have any meters there is enforcement.

Bruce explained in the perimeter areas Chris is recommending 10 or 4 hour meters and in the core 2 hour meters. Bruce and Chris have recognized a couple of areas the PAB might want to recommend changing. Currently along Minnesota east of 26<sup>th</sup> Street there are no meters or timed zones. However, there is very little curb and gutter, so the concern would be putting signage to regulate time limits or trying to put the meter posts in. The other area to consider is 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue North. The only meters are located on half a block in front of Juliano's. The residents in the area have complained about the lack of available parking and the need to maintain parking. Bruce stated these are minor changes the Board should consider. Leticia stated Art & Anne wanted signed two hour parking when they moved in.

Don said the Board needs to consider developing a consistent policy regarding the meters. There has been discussion about 10 and 2 hour meters and whether the Board should also discuss 4 hour meters. He would like more clarification on the utilization of the existing 10 hour meters to determine if the PAB needs to add more 10 hour meters. Don asked Greg if they know how much the 10 hour meters are being utilized. Greg stated the people who are purchasing the 10 hour permits say it is still difficult to find a meter to park at. Greg said the DBA has been gathering information to create a survey asking questions regarding the 10 hour meters. For example, can the purchaser find a parking spot; is it easy or difficult, and where do they park. Greg stated the DBA tracks the purchaser of the permits and the permit sales, but they do not track the location of where the purchaser parks. Greg said Lisa is working with Toni Humphrey on the new DBA website and would eventually like to put the 10 hour meter map on the website, so people will be able to locate the designated parking spots. The patrons who utilize the long-term parking spaces are typically employees and not customers.

There was discussion regarding whether there could be timed zones in the “metered zone” and whether the PAB would have to go to Council for any change they would like to make. Bruce suggested studying the areas and going back to Council in a few months with a plan for the whole district including a list of the changes the PAB would like to see. Don said the “metered zone” should have meters; however, the discussion determined there may be a few exceptions, and the Board may have to present to Council in the future.

Bruce asked if the Board was ready to make any immediate changes. Don stated the Board needs time to think about this, gather more information, and discuss it further at next month’s meeting.

### **City Employees moving to Park 1 or Park 2**

Bruce stated Councilmember Bird sponsored a Council initiative asking Staff to look at moving City employees out of the Park 3 Garage and into the Park 2 Garage. Bruce explained there are 94 spaces in Park 3 that are occupied by some kind of City operation, whether employees, City vehicles, or Police. Bruce felt the Police Department and City vehicles (approx. 10 spaces) should remain in Park 3.

Park 1 Garage has 66 available spaces. The 27<sup>th</sup> Street North Lot, behind the Montana Brewing Company, has metered spaces in the middle of the lot that could be converted to monthly parking, and either the public or City employees could rent them.

Bruce stated there are some benefits to moving City employees out of the Park 3 Garage. There are currently 84 people on the waiting list who would be offered spaces if the employees were moved. The PAB could decide to charge a higher rate for parking in Park 3, since it is a high demand garage. The City departments presently pay for the spaces their employees park in. Don said that is an important point; Parking is being paid for every single spot that is rented by the City, meaning the City is a paying customer. Mike asked if the City pays the same as other customers. Bruce said yes the City pays the same as any other group does. He thinks the City receives a 10% discount. Leticia thought the discount levels are 5% and 10% depending on the size of the group.

Bob asked by moving City employees what kind of response there would be, and was curious what Councilmember Bird’s reasoning was for proposing the move. Bruce felt the response would not be good. Don stated as the Parking Board, they are not able to say the employees of the City need to park in another parking garage instead of Park 3. The City, as their employer, can say as city policy they want their employees to park where the City has designated parking. Bruce said in the Teamsters contract, Teamsters are allotted a roof space. All non-bargaining employees do not have that right. Don added

that this would be a staffing policy issue; the City is paying for their employee parking and those spaces are where the City sees adequate. Don stated that the City is a paying customer and if they did not pay for their parking that would be a different issue.

Bruce believes the reasoning for Councilmember Bird's asking is because of the demand of Park 3. He also said Councilmember Ulledalen amended Councilmember Bird's motion that this question or issue should be presented to the PAB for discussion and consideration.

Don stated the PAB concurs it would be ideal to maximize utilization of all parking garages.

### **Alternative Parking Management Report**

Bruce said Staff primarily looked at two options - Privatization and a Parking Commission. City Council's directive was to look at a different way to manage the facilities, and Staff did not consider selling the assets.

The first primary way that the private sector handles it is a reverse management agreement. The City puts out an RFP considering cost and experience with similar types of facilities. The City would keep the revenue and pay someone else to manage the Parking operation. The other is a long term lease of the parking operations to a private company who would collect and keep all of the money. It depends on how the City wants the lease to be structured. There could be a fairly significant upfront payment or payments could be scheduled for the term of the lease.

Montana state statute says that any city can create a parking commission by resolution. The City Council has to state that there is a need to establish a Parking Commission, and it has to be between five to seven members. Parking Commissions have very broad authority, but there are a couple of areas where City Council can restrain or restrict that authority. The Parking Commissions are allowed to hire staff, issue debt, set rates, but the Commission cannot set fines or change the boundaries of the area. The City Council has to define the boundaries of the area in the resolution.

The Parking Commissions operate differently throughout Montana. Bruce said he visited Missoula, Helena, and Bozeman and met with their parking managers in all of those communities. Missoula is the most sophisticated in all of those operations. Anne Guest, the Director for Missoula, really encouraged Staff to do another downtown or community plan that includes parking and what needs to be done long term. Helena had a combined Parking Commission and BID board since the early 1990's. Just recently Helena changed to two separate managers for the Parking Commission and BID instead of just one. Helena realized the two boards had separate goals that may not be necessarily be the same as the other. The structure is less than a year old, so Helena does not quite know how it will turn out. Bozeman has a Parking Commission also which operates a parking garage, about a half of a dozen lots and on-street parking. The on-street parking does not have meters as there is improved technology for license plate recognition. However, Bozeman's does not work very well. Bozeman's Commission is fairly restricted on what they can do and they still have a close relationship with the City. Bruce thinks that both Bozeman and Missoula's commissions are successful.

Don has been told that most Parking Commissions are unionized. One advantage of privatization is Parking would be a more non-unionized entity. Don's concern is losing control with privatization and how do you force a private company to have accountability? One of the Parking Commission's goals would have to be quality parking downtown. Bruce said Great Falls contracts with Standard Parking. Great Falls pays Standard a fee that covers all of the operating costs. The City of Great Falls handles the

majority of the maintenance and repairs to the structures. The City is not unhappy with what they have, but they are researching going to municipal.

Steve asked if the BID is interested. Greg said they are interested. Greg also said he talked to a couple of different parking consultants about this, and the overall consensus was there should be an overall vision or strategic plan for Parking before anything is done.

Don asked what the next step is. Bruce said making a recommendation. Greg thinks recommending a Parking Commission can be the first step, but the key is to make a strategic plan and hopefully set some kind of orders for the Commission. He said there is more to it and inquired if someone more knowledgeable could help. Don said Rich & Associates knows a lot about parking and asked if they have to have an RFP to bring someone in. Bruce said the procurement policy says anything in excess of \$20,000 for professional services has to go through the RFP process. Steve said the PAB should go forward with a plan and look at a Commission, but he thinks it needs to be a collaborative effort involving City Staff, the PAB, City Council, and the DBA. Leticia agrees with Steve, but she cannot support paying someone to consult the group.

Steve made a motion that the PAB supports a Parking Commission concept with a team-based approach involving the stake holders from City Council, the Downtown Alliance, and the Parking Advisory Board. Leticia seconded the motion. All in favor. The vote was unanimous.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **Empire Parking Garage Update**

Don stated there have been two or three meetings finalizing the design. Bill Honaker, owner of Alley Cat Investments, is going to own 25 spaces on the main floor. Mr. Honaker will most likely make the 27<sup>th</sup> Street and Montana Avenue corner of the retail space a restaurant. The other major player is Zootist Enterprises, Mike Nelson and Chris Nelson, who is renovating the Northern Hotel. Zootist Enterprises is also committed to the retail space at the opposite end of the building. Lisa Harmon is representing downtown. Don also sits on the committee, as well as Bruce and Chris. Hulteng Construction is also on the committee, but they have been slowly fading out. There are also the main players, Sletten and Dick Frische, the design lead out of Phoenix, but Schutz Foss is the local lead here. OAC, Steve Johnson, Grealic Bryan Redlin are the outside consultants helping facilitate the whole process. The committee's next meeting is to finalize the design.

Don said CTA has been contracted to design the relocate and bury of the utilities in the alley. It is becoming more complicated as the City wants to replace storm and sanitary sewer. The Northern opens in March 2013 and will have valet parking until the garage is built.

Greg said the condominium documents are drafted and what the condo fees are going to be still needs to be determined. The committee has also hired Mike at A&I Business Properties to value the retail street level property. This will become the price for all of the retail space. Greg said Mr. Honaker and the Northern have the right of first refusal. If the parties do not want to pay the price for the space, Greg said the property would have to be marketed. His suggestion would be to send out an RFP to hire a broker.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Empire Garage Signage**

Don stated there should be a plan for the signage in the Empire Garage. There are several entities involved, and there needs to be an aesthetic design with some kind of control over it. The signage is something for the PAB to consider and have an interest in.

### **Signage at Existing Parking Garages**

As Chris was not present at the meeting, this item was tabled.

### **Downtown Alliance Report**

Greg said his office has limited staff right now. They have intern staff filling in and hired a new purple person. The website launch party is November 15<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 at G&G Advertising.

One of the agencies that reports to the Legislature has indicated their support for removing the 95 mills that are the state's portion from the calculation of tax increment financing. All of the cities will oppose it because it will limit or kill their ability to sell bonds. It is a significant component to the TIF. The downtowns across Montana will form a coalition called the Montana Downtown Coalition and will have a legislative agenda.

### **Informational Items**

There were none to discuss.

### **Adjourn:**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:45 p.m.