

WORK SESSION MINUTES
PARKING and TRAFFIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

8:00 A.M. – Thursday, November 5, 2015
City Hall – Eileen Dondero Foley Council Chambers

PRESENT: Councilor Brad Lown,
City Manager, John Bohenko
Public Works Director, Peter Rice
Deputy Fire Chief, James Heinz
Acting Deputy Chief, Frank Warchol, Police Department
Member, Ted Gray
Member, Ronald Cypher
Member, Harold Whitehouse
Alternate Member, Mary Lou McElwain
Councilor Chris Dwyer (via telephone)

STAFF ADVISORS:
Parking Manager, Joey Giordano
Parking and Transportation Engineer, Eric Eby
Transportation Planner, Juliet Walker

ABSENT: Member, Shari Donnermeyer

Joey Giordano, Parking Manager, presented at the work session. His presentation focused on the Guiding Parking Principles for the Central Business District.

The work session goals were as follows: to review the overall parking principles, better understand the current parking system, and to look at the programmatic changes in the parking system. Mr. Giordano focused on two overall principles. The first principle discussed was a balanced mix of retail/restaurant, office, and residential use, which are a key to downtown vitality. The second principle discussed was a downtown parking supply that is convenient, viable, and central to downtown destinations and that this principal is key to the short-term and long-term health of the City's retail, restaurant, and office economy.

The current system includes on-street parking, off-street parking including the parking garage, and public/private parking. The on-street parking program includes single space meters, pay and display meters, and free time-limited parking. The off-street parking program includes the pay and display lots, parking garage and free lots. The public/private partnerships includes a number of locations and staff actively seeks new private partnerships.

Mr. Giordano provided possible future considerations for the parking program. Some considerations discussed were the current industry standards, Donald Shoup's book *High Cost of Free Parking*, and current operations. The current industry standard is to achieve 85% parking utilization by using real time data. The goal is to establish a price point that creates turnover by using real time data to move prices up or down. Mr. Giordano stated that manual counts are currently taken over a four-day period several times per year. He stated that current industry standards are to remove time limits. The City's program currently uses time limits, not

pricing, to create turnover. The current industry standard is 24-hour parking utilization, but City enforcement now ends at 7 p.m. An ordinance change would be required to move from a time-limit based system to a price-based parking system.

Some single space meters are currently being used in the parking program. Several disadvantages of single space meters include the exclusive use of coins and the lack of technology to collect data. If a rate change is made, the utility mechanics must manually address each meter. There are approximately 300 single space meters in the City.

Mr. Giordano discussed current available technologies, which includes smart meters. The smart meters require only a head change to the existing single space meters. They accept coin, credit cards, and payment by smartphone app. There will be a future trial study conducted in the City using this technology.

Multi-space meters are also being used in the parking program. There is one multi-space meter for approximately 10 to 12 parking spaces. This system requires the driver to exit the vehicle, walk to the meter and pay, and return to the vehicle to place the ticket on dashboard as proof of payment. New technology that is currently available uses the same infrastructure system, but it is a pay-by-space system. One drawback to using the pay-by-space system is the need for signs indicating each space number. Sensors could be installed on poles to collect real time data.

Mr. Giordano discussed four programmatic changes needed to move the parking program forward. The changes are: real time data on occupancy, user education, ordinance changes, and continued development of public/private partnerships.

Peter Rice, Public Works Director, reiterated that the parking division is not planning on implementing the changes discussed in the presentation at this time. The presentation was to provide an overview of the technologies that are currently being utilized in the field, provide information to the public, and to inform the Committee.

Ted Gray asked if there was an alternative to the payment process of using a multi-space meter. He stated people do not want to exit their vehicle, pay at a meter and return to the vehicle, especially when it snows. Mr. Giordano stated that there are alternatives, for example, a pay by phone application. Training would be needed for parking enforcement staff and software upgrades would be required.

Mary Lou McElwain asked if the downtown business community has commented on the time limit restrictions. She has heard from business owners who are losing sales because of the time limits. Mr. Giordano stated that the time limits are needed in order to keep turnover in the area. He assured the Committee that business owners would be notified of any changes.

Harold Whitehouse stated that all new technologies must be operational in the New England climate.

Ron Cypher asked about the payment process for parking in the garage. Mr. Giordano explained the new credit card and pay-on-foot process. He assured the public and Committee that more information would be disseminated before changes are implemented.

Chris Dwyer asked if staff had information about evening enforcement programs in other cities. Mr. Giordano stated that many communities are going to no time limits. He stated that some are enforcing until 11 p.m., or 24-hour enforcement, to ensure parking turnover.

Mary Lou McElwain asked if Councilor Thorsen's memo was addressed in the presentation. Mr. Giordano stated that the items in the memo were addressed in today's presentation. She favors single space meters, free parking, and wants to ensure that the community is involved in any changes.

Adjournment – At 8:24 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Amy Chastain
Secretary to the Committee