

**Approved**  
**PARKING ADVISORY BOARD**  
**May 26, 2009**

Randy Hafer√  
Scott Wetzel √  
Don Olsen √  
Leticia Moore √

Steve Bruggeman √  
Bruce Simon√  
Nick Blake√

NOTES:

The meeting was called to order at 4:04 p.m. by Randy Hafer. Others present were: Greg Krueger, Chris Mallow and Kelly Cox.

**PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD:**

None to report.

**REPORTS AND ACTION ITEMS:**

Approve minutes from March meeting:

Scott motioned to approve the minutes from the March 2nd meeting. Leticia seconded the motion. All members were in favor and the motion carried.

Monthly Reports – February, March & April 2009:

Chris was asked to take the variance total off the 10-hour permit as it shows monthly variance against yearly and is useless information. When asked why there was such a large variance in cash flow at Park 4 garage Chris attributed it to several factors such as the economy, Lincoln center activities and financial services at 1<sup>st</sup> Interstate bank. He also stated that he felt that the removal of the hourly spaces at Park 1 garage had a bigger impact than he first anticipated and was also dependent to some degree on activities at the Alberta Bair and MSUB; whereas Park 2 revenue is dependent on activities at the Crowne Plaza.

Financial Statements:

Chris handed out the Budget sheet to the Board as it was over looked in the Parking Board Packet. Chris was asked to remove the Daryl apartment/Veeder building from the Income Statement as these are no longer owned by the City.

Bruce asked where the revenue from Penn credit was shown on the income statement. Chris explained that this revenue is added in to the violation revenue. Chris explained that Penn credit has been handling our delinquent accounts since February 2008 and that he is sending over approximately \$2500 a month in delinquent fines (over 120 days old). He also stated that we were receiving an average of approximately \$1500 a month back in revenue after Penn takes out their 19%.

Chris informed the Board that the Board's letter in regards to the stoppage of the general budget transfer was received by City Council and that they referenced the letter at their work session on May 12<sup>th</sup> but there were no further comments concerning it. Chris stated that all Council members were not in attendance and he thought maybe that was why it was not further discussed. Randy asked if there was anything further the Board could do and Chris stated that he would talk with Bruce McCandless and see. Chris also stated that the Board could speak to the Council in regards to this as they are still hearing budget presentations thru June. Randy was very interested in talking to the Council in a formal setting in regards to this and asked Chris to speak with Bruce McCandless about when would be the best time to speak with the Council.

Chris informed the Board that the Council has approved the half time Building Services Worker that he requested. This is shown in the operating budget divided equally between the four garages or shown broken down on the second page of the operating budget under staffing authorization. Additionally, Chris explained that other corrections were made under the staffing authorization heading in regards to Parking Garage Attendant and Parking Garage Attendant/Account Clerk 1. Chris explained that approximately three years ago the garage attendant's job title was switched from Garage Attendant to Garage Attendant/Account Clerk 1 as their job duties were changed to include doing billing for their customers. However, this was not corrected in the operating budget but has now been corrected under Staffing authorization. Included in these corrections is the removal of the additional Staff member that retired from Park 4 garage in April of 2007 along with the addition of the half time Building Services Worker.

City Council also approved the replacement of the Park 1 elevator in the amount of \$300,000. At this time Chris has Collaborative Design working on the construction documents and elevator design.

#### Garage Policy concerning Assigned Spaces:

Deputy Chief Tim O'Connell has requested that two or three more spaces be added to the Police Only section of Park three garage. The Police department currently pays the assigned rate for the spaces that are currently marked as Police only spaces and they would also pay the assigned rate for any additional spaces that the Board would agree to give them. Deputy Chief O'Connell states that these spaces are needed for on duty detectives as parking is limited in the basement and around City Hall. Chris asked the Board to set a policy for

assigned spaces and asked where the Board stands philosophically in regards to assigned spaces, whether the Board and Parking Division wants to maximize utilization or revenue. During the discussion Steve asked if the spaces for BPD would come out of hourly or monthly. Chris stated he thought it would be best to come out of monthly as hourly is in high demand at Park 3 garage. Steve stated that monthly was also very much in high demand at this garage and asked if the spaces were granted to take them from hourly and not monthly. It was stated that because each garage has its own individual uses and needs that all garages be looked at separately and that a policy that covered them all did not seem logical. Bruce motioned that this subject be tabled until the final report was in from the Parking Study. Steve seconded the motion and all members were in favor and the motion was tabled until the results from the Parking Study were received.

#### Park 1 Hourly parking spaces:

In June 2007 the Parking Advisory Board recommended that Staff reduce the Hourly Only spaces in the Park 1 garage in order to meet the demand, at that time, for basic covered spaces. Staff reduced the number of spaces from 46 to 27. This added 23 more covered spaces and the demand was met.

In July 2008 the Parking Advisory Board moved to turn the Roof of the Park 1 garage into all monthly and rent the roof spaces at 120%. This impacted the hourly business because the roof was used as hourly overflow. Once again, Park 1 had a large demand for roof spaces and there did not appear to be much demand for hourly spaces.

Staff has been tracking this change for some time and is now bringing the issue to the Parking Advisory Board for a resolution. Ever since the roof was turned into "Monthly Only", the Parking Division has been receiving a large amount of complaints. The complainants state, that since we converted the roof to monthly parkers only, they can never find a place to park and they either park on the roof anyway or go on to the street. Both of these actions result in a citation being given. Most recently, Staff received a call from Sharon Weatherwax-Ripley, Director of the MSU-B Downtown Conference Center. She is frustrated that this change was made without considering their conference attendees. She states that this change will reduce the parking for conference attendees and force them on the street. She states that, by not being able to secure adequate parking in the Park 1 garage, she will have a very difficult time drawing business to Downtown Billings. Please see attached email.

-----Original Message-----

From: Weatherwax-Ripley, Sharon  
Sent: Thursday, April 02, 2009 10:04 AM  
To: 'Mallow, Chris'  
Cc: Carr, Robert; Heikel, Karen  
Subject: RE: Emailing: Final 10 hour meter map

Chris,

Thank you for sharing the map.

I wanted to give you a quick overview of the impact the decision to convert the roof of Park 1 to reserved spaces will have on the MSU Billings Downtown Conference Center. The Conference has a maximum capacity of 500. On a typical day, we will see anywhere from 50 - 100 participants using our facility. Only on rare occasions does this swell to the 200+ range.

From its inception, one of the primary concerns about the Conference Center was parking. Our clients have the impression that parking is "impossible" downtown and our neighbors have the impression that our clients "hog" all of the hourly parking spaces. We have made a concerted effort to deal with both impressions. I have attached the map that we distribute to our clients which is in turn is sent to participants.

By directing our participants to park in the hourly garage spaces we help ensure that street level parking is left available for truly "hourly" use. When a participant complains to me about receiving a meter plugging ticket I gently tell them that could have been avoided by parking in the garage. When a client wants to pay for their participants parking, we can validate and charge it back to them. When someone tells me that it is "impossible" to park downtown, I can tell them there is 100 parking spaces not 1/2 block from us. This decision now makes all of these situations not possible.

We will adjust our parking guide map to include the 10 hour meter information but I anticipate a significant negative response from our clients and a considerable impact to our ability to draw business to downtown.

Thanks for hearing me out!

Sharon

Sharon Weatherwax-Ripley  
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Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommends that the roof remain as a “monthly only” area and we undo the action taken in 2007 and add 19 covered monthly spaces back to Hourly Only spaces.

There are 110 actual roof spaces at Park 1 garage. At this time the roof is rented to monthly patrons at 114%, or 126 spaces. At the current time there are 27 hourly spaces at Park 1 garage. It has come to the attention of the Staff that on most days all 27 spaces are taken by 10:30 when the attendant starts her shift and she must have the full sign turned on and turn away any additional hourly parkers. It was suggested by Bruce Simon that MSUB give out dated parking permits for MSUB conference attendees, this would allow them to park on the roof but would leave the roof as monthly only and rent it to 120%. Kelly stated that it was not only MSUB that was complaining but also attendees of the Alberta Bair Theatre. Steve motioned that the roof of Park 1 garage be rented out at 114% but be returned to hourly overflow parking as well, making sure that monthly parkers be made aware that if the spaces were full all they needed to do was contact the Parking Division and let them know where they were now parked. Scott seconded the motion. All members were in favor and the motion was passed.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

Handicapped Zone-research results:

Currently, Staff does not require that handicapped patrons pay a parking meter or adhere to any 2-hour time regulation within the downtown. At the January Parking Advisory Board meeting, the board discussed if this policy should continue or be revised. The PAB wanted to have an idea of the number of handicapped patrons that are parking at meters and not paying and not moving after 2 hours. Staff was directed to bring back some data about the amount of handicapped patrons that park at a metered space. Staff did field observations for two months and found that the amount of vehicles varies greatly from day to day as was expected. Staff did a standard deviation calculation and found a median average of 20 vehicles that are parked at metered spaces. Typical variations see a high of 36 and a low of 11. The Parking Division over 1100 meters within the CBD.

This equates to an average of 2% of meters having a handicapped patron at them at any given time. Staff did find the most of the meters are within the high-traffic “core” of downtown; but there is not any higher ratio of handicapped and basic patron in the core than in other areas of Downtown Billings.

Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommends continuing with our current policy without making any changes, based on the data gathered and possible negative public impact that would be created if handicapped patrons were required to pay a meter.

Steve motioned that the Board accept Staff's recommendation as noted. Scott seconded the motion. All members were in favor and the motion was passed.

#### Downtown Parking Study Update:

Rich and Associates will be presenting a preliminary report to City Council on June 15, 2009 at 5:30 at the Community Center. This will be an opportunity for any changes to be made or alternative ideas to be presented for input for the final report. A hard copy of the report will be sent to the City Council on June 12<sup>th</sup>, the Friday before the presentation, in order for the City Council to review it before the actual presentation. Randy requested that a hard copy also be available to the Parking Advisory Board for their review at that time.

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

##### Park 2 Security:

During the International Parking Institute Convention that Chris attended in Denver, May 17<sup>th</sup> thru May 19<sup>th</sup>, he learned that the industry is moving away from cameras and going towards personal call boxes and personal security. This goes along with the idea of removing all the cameras in Park 2 garage. Chris stated that the resolution on the cameras that are currently installed are too poor in quality and are not useful in the prosecution of anyone. The cameras were installed as a test program for possible use for prosecution reasons and were never meant for safety or security reasons. Although, at the time, the cameras were considered to be middle of the road in quality, at a cost of approximately \$18,000, they were and are still not good enough in quality and resolution to be of much use. The cameras are not nor have they ever been monitored thus being useless for safety reasons. Additionally, the cameras are being recorded on zip drive technology which Chris cannot access. Leticia asked if the insurance company for the City has been asked about the City's liability in regards to the cameras. Chris stated that Brent Brooks has spoken with Chris Hoiness and they both believe that the cameras do add a certain amount of liability.

Chris is still planning on having a meeting with Aaron Sparboe, Chris Johnson and Bill Honaker to talk about a possible cooperative security agreement.

Greg Krueger added that there are a record number of bike cops on the force this year with a total of 15.

##### DBA Report:

With possible funds from the B.I.D. they are looking at adding an additional officer in the downtown area. Greg stated that the number of calls for Shane have stayed about the same however the number of arrests has dwindled to nearly zero.

Having completed a citizen survey the DBA/DBP found that the majority of surveyed citizens do not feel safe in the downtown area after dark. With multiple types of advertising the DBA/DBP are working at changing this perception. One such item will be a new kiosk at the corner of N. 29<sup>th</sup> St. and 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave. N.

The DBA/DBP will be hosting a team of people from Great Falls in a meet and greet session to talk about the way downtowns run and different options for what can be done to add life to downtown.

DBA is putting out a new pocket size map. Greg asked Chris for his continued support with purchasing an ad in the pamphlet, as in the past.

The event season is on its way with the first event being the first Alive after 5 on June 2<sup>nd</sup> and the Strawberry Festival June 13<sup>th</sup>.

The east end master plan is scheduled for reveal very soon. Part of this will address zoning laws as far as parking goes. It has been suggested that a sort of zoning overlay be put into place in the buffer zone between downtown and the east billings urban renewal district. Greg stated that with current zoning laws the new GSA building would require nearly 4 city blocks with the parking regulations, setbacks and so on.

#### DBP Report:

See above.

#### Informational Items:

Chris was asked to bring the policy handbook with him to all the Board meetings for reference. Additionally it was asked that he put in an amendment to the policy book in regards to the roof spaces at Park 1 garage.

Chris showed the Board a lay-out of the requested parking changes in the area by Billings Clinic between N. 28 & N. 29<sup>th</sup> Streets between 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Avenues N. As of now these areas are unregulated parking but the Clinic is asking that it be changed to 2-hour signed parking. Chris stated that the Clinic would like this to coincide with the opening of the new Cancer Center. The Clinic feels this will force the employees to move in to longer term parking and free up these spaces for their patients. It was also suggested that diagonal parking be looked at for this area but it was belief of the engineering department that the streets were not wide enough to back out of the space before being directly into traffic. It was suggested that engineering look at back in parking only for this area. Chris informed the Board that he did not feel this would add much work for enforcement and that it would not be necessary to add another enforcement officer.

Chris has had his enforcement Officers tracking tickets issued in the medical area for the last couple of months and will be bringing an excel spreadsheet with the findings to the next meeting.

As mentioned earlier, Chris attended the I.P.I. conference in Denver, May 17 thru May 19<sup>th</sup>. The theme for this year's conference was "Parking as a method of change". He stated that the focus was on change in parking for development and redevelopment and the ideas, recommendations and best practices for such.

As part of the Parking Study Chris will be looking at doing new rate reviews. Bruce McCandless stated this should be looked into every four to five years. Additionally, Chris was asked to look again at the possible benefits and drawbacks at retrofitting the parking garages with automated equipment. Armed with more information obtained from the I.P.I. conference Chris will be readdressing this with City Council as part of the Parking Study.

Randy asked that in the next meeting the Board address some areas that have been brought up previously such as; how spaces are created, targeting specific areas that could be improved and specifically the EBURD or East Billings Urban Renewal District.

It was suggested that the meeting on June 8<sup>th</sup> be cancelled but it was decided that it would stay as scheduled and the Board could wait and see if there was a quorum or not.

Adjourn:

The meeting was adjourned at 6:15 p.m.