

**Approved**  
**PARKING ADVISORY BOARD**  
**July 13, 2009**

Randy Hafer√  
Scott Wetzel √  
Don Olsen √  
Leticia Moore (esc.)

Steve Bruggeman √  
Bruce Simon√  
Nick Blake√

NOTES:

The meeting was called to order at 4:09 p.m. by Randy Hafer. Others present were: Peggy Gaghen, Jim Ronquillo, Chris Mallow and Kelly Cox.

**PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD:**

**REPORTS AND ACTION ITEMS:**

Approve minutes from May meeting:

Don motioned to approve the minutes from the June 8th meeting. Bruce seconded the motion. All members were in favor and the motion carried.

Monthly Reports – June 2009:

Steve asked why all cash sales were up. Chris believes this is due to meetings and events in the surrounding businesses along with the Alive after 5 functions. The Alive after 5 functions affect Park 2 garage but not the other garages as all the other garages are closed when patrons would be leaving.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

Downtown Parking Study Update:

Randy asked the Board members for specific concerns in regards to the final draft of the parking study. The Board members had many examples of inconsistent material in the report from spelling and grammar errors such as spelling Billings with an apostrophe, having maps with incorrect legends and in one case referencing a map on the following page that was the completely wrong map. Bruce S. had many specific examples of errors and inconsistencies one of which included vacancy projections that he states makes no sense. The Board would also like to see some of the items in the report clarified in regards to how

totals were used and how totals compensated for weather issues and other anomalies. The Board believes that information that was received from stakeholders, anomalies such as Minnesota Ave., and their upcoming parking plan, along with potential areas such as the Northern Hotel garage were not taken into consideration by Rich and Associates. Along with these downfalls, the recommendations for new garage sites seemed absurd; such as suggesting that ¼ blocks be used or that the Old Chamber building be torn down and a garage erected in that location.

The Board would like to see a summer time “typical day” of data collection be added to the collection data that was taken on December 18, 2008 to have a closer view of a real “typical day” in downtown Billings. The Board believes that the data collected on December 18<sup>th</sup> is not consistent with a “typical day” for downtown parking, thus skewing the data, due to snow accumulation during that week, cold temperatures and being a week before the Christmas holiday. Before the project started Chris asked if Rich and Associates were able to compensate for these anomalies. Rich and Associates stated that they could and would but have not seemed to do so. At no time was there a suggestion by Rich and Associates to revisit Billings to do further data collection to see if their projections were correct.

Bruce S. motioned that the Parking Advisory Board inform City Council that the final report presented by Rich and Associates has numerous errors and that the Board feels the City Council should not accept this report as is and not make any payments to Rich and Associates until there is a satisfactory report. Scott seconded the motion. Randy suggested that the Board members e-mail him specific concerns in regards to the report by Thursday July 16<sup>th</sup> and he would draft a letter to the City Council in regards to their concerns. All members were in favor and the motion passed.

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

### **Recommendation about sale of Park 4 to City Council:**

It was motioned by Bruce S that a letter to the City Council be drafted stating that the Parking Advisory Board believes the City Council should solicit bids to sell Park 4 garage at a minimum bid of \$4,750,000 or trade for the building of a new garage. Steve seconded the motion. It was suggested by Greg Krueger that someone from the City should inquire of Billings Clinic if the five million dollar grant they received to build a new parking structure could be used to purchase an already existing structure. It was mentioned that the appropriation of this money had expired but Greg assured the Board that it had not. Jim Ronquillo told the Board that City Council would need all pertinent information in regards to Park 4 garage including but not limited to Strategy 5’s recommendations,

occupancy totals, revenue information, ect. Chris assured Jim that all items pertinent to the sale of Park 4 would be included. Concerns in regards to the United Properties lease were addressed. Chris stated that he believed that one of the conditions of sale would probably be that the new owner would have to honor the contract until it expired in 2015. The contract sets the price at the market rate for similar parking space in Billings, Montana. It was stated that in addition to the local companies who may be interested in purchasing the garage there are nationally held companies that purchase parking garages and run them in the private sector and that they too may be interested. All members were in favor and the motion passed.

#### DBA Report:

Event season is in full swing for the DBA. Lisa stated that the DBA is going to be installing a billboard on the Securities Building with the DBA logo "Downtown starts here". The new map of downtown is close to being finished. The DBA is still working on their clean and safe program and Lisa states Shane is still working hard as the Downtown Resource Officer and doing a great job.

The BID removed 162 bags of debris from the Lincoln Lot. After a large first effort they feel keeping it up should be much easier. Additionally, the BID has been working on finding plants more suitable for the raised planters around Park 2 garage.

The BID is also working on the three bulb outs around the new Met transit station as it seems they were an afterthought and irrigation was not installed here. Lisa states that it takes nearly 200 gallons of water to be hauled to this location to irrigate.

#### DBP Report:

There has been a request that the portion of the Library lot where the 10-hour meters are located be sold to Stockman Bank. Stockman needs to know the decision by September. The DBP would like to see the 28 meters from this lot be repositioned along N. 28<sup>th</sup> St. between 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Avenues North.

It has been conveyed to Greg Krueger by the Bond Council of the D.O.R. that the \$800,000 from the Federal Courthouse project, to be paid by the G.S.A., should be returned to the tax entities. Greg states that this money is intended for development and should be given to the DBP then to the Parking Division to help stimulate development in downtown.

#### Informational Items:

On July 14, 2009 at 2:00 p.m. the bid opening for the replacement of Park 1 garage elevator will take place at City Hall. As part of this construction work and to stay in A.D.A. compliance, all handicap spaces will be moved to the lowest level until the completion of the project.

Chris and Kelly have been working on collecting estimates for the complete replacement of the awning fabric around the Park 1 garage. At this time the estimates are coming in high enough that a competitive bid will need to be scheduled.

Chris is working on a D.O.J. decree to get all handicap spaces in all the garages up to A.D.A. code. Over all, the total of handicap spaces in the garage will be less than we currently have but will all be up to A.D.A. code. Chris was asked if the City's on street handicap spaces were up to code. He stated that Terry Smith was working with streets on this issue and that Terry asked Chris not to add any further spaces until further notice. He also stated that there are groups that fix these types of spaces and that they would be returning to Billings sometime in the late summer or early fall. The minimum width for a handicap space is 8'. For a van accessible space there must be an additional 8' access area. The standard space width in all City parking garages is 9'. The minimum numbers of handicap spaces, per the City's A.D.A. compliance officer, that are required for the garages are:

*Park 1 has 461 total spaces -9 spaces, at least 2 van-accessible  
Park 2 has 760- 2% of total, or 16 - at least 2 van accessible  
Park 3 has 273- 7 spaces, at least 1 van accessible  
Park 4 has 772- 2% , or 16, at least 2 van accessible*

Randy stated that the Minnesota Ave. project will be in front of the Planning Board Thursday July 16<sup>th</sup> for their approval. He is hoping to have the final decision by August and the striping done this fall. Chris stated that the City has a link to the EBURD project and that there is mention of this project there.

Adjourn:

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

**Unapproved  
PARKING ADVISORY BOARD SPECIAL MEETING  
July 7, 2009**

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

Steve Bruggeman  
Bruce Simon√  
Nick Blake (esc.)

NOTES:

The meeting was called to order at 4:08 p.m. by Randy Hafer. Others present were: Peggy Gaghen, Chris Mallow and Kelly Cox.

PARKING STUDY:

The Board asked that colored hard copies be made for all Board members.

The first problem the Board members saw with the report was the lack of professionalism regarding grammar and spelling in the report. Don stated that he quit counting the errors at 24. The Board agreed that Rich and Associates professional reputation was on the line and that the lack of proof reading was a huge issue that could easily be fixed and would help make their report more believable. The Board stated more than once that there was “a sense of the report being based on flawed or non-typical information” and the lack of proof reading did not help this conceived notion.

Another one of the issues that the Board had was the “typical day” that Rich and Associates chose to collect their data. The Board believes that the data they collected was skewed due to the information being collected in December as this is a holiday month and does not accurately depict the “average” parking day in downtown. Other issues that the Board believes skewed the numbers were the temperature on December 18, 2008 and the accumulated snow in the streets. On December 18, 2008 the temperature topped out at a high of 11 degrees Fahrenheit with 6” of accumulated snow in the streets. The Board would like to see an “average summer day” collection of data to add to the “average winter day” numbers to get a more accurate depiction of an average day in downtown. Chris stated that Rich and Associates are willing to give him the steps to get the data and have Staff do the collecting of information. The numbers could then be added to the numbers Rich and Associates already has and be recalculated. It was asked why Rich and Associates could not come back and do the data collection. Chris explained that the contract was for one trip to Billings for data collection and that if we wished for them to come back, a change order would have to be put through in order to pay for the extra trip and expenses.

Chris explained that when the Study started, there was a push by City Council to get the information from the Parking Study to assist them in the possible sale of the Park 4 garage and the possibility and most feasible location of a new parking garage. This push to start the project leads to Rich and Associates starting the report in December. There was no way of them knowing what the weather would be when they booked their trips three to four weeks in advance; however they did state, when asked if they could account for these type of setbacks, that they could.

Another large concern was the lack of consistent information in regards to total parking space numbers throughout the report. Additionally it was asked if the private underground spaces in at least six downtown buildings, such as the Stapleton Building, the Sopo Apartments, the Federal Courthouse, the Federal building, City Hall, ect. were accounted for.

Peggy suggested that the report seemed to be filled with “fluff” and that it was hard to understand. She stated that maybe a more simple report would be more useful.

It was also a concern of the Board that certain anomalies were not taken into account such as the Hart Albin building and how there were many square footage in that building that were occupied by only a handful of people and how the report is showing on table 2H that on block 42 there is a lack of 110 nightly spaces. In regards to the lack of spaces at block 42 Chris explained that he believes they assumed that the conference center would have night conferences and these spaces would be needed. Chris also explained that he believes that Rich and Associates got the square footage of buildings and the land usage and business type from the Planning Department and that they used this information along with other factors to calculate parking numbers and not just the data collected on December 18, 2008.

It was also suggested that some type of worksheet be made to summarize their conclusions, that they address the Northern garage and the 4<sup>th</sup> and Broadway location.

The Board would also like to see some future possibilities, if this then that type of scenarios.

Bruce stated that he didn't feel that the price to automate the garages was very clear and would like to see it broken down per garage.

There were also concerns in regards to the public survey and Rich's methodology of how they qualified the people who got the survey or their criteria for who received the survey. It was explained that the survey was put on the City of Billings web site and was advertised on the DBA website with a link for downtown business owners to use.

There were blatant errors such as mentioning of 15 and 30 minute zones that Billings has none of.

Bruce asked if the hand-held data was given to Rich and Associates. Chris stated it was not because the hand-held's were not in use at that time and that Chris felt that the Study was not about specific meters but parking as a whole.

Chris stated that the City Council wanted an official opinion of the Board about their thoughts on the sale of Park 4 garage. There was talk in regards to asking for bids with a minimum bid being Strategy 5's suggested market price of

\$4,697,215 plus the contract price of \$33,000 for Strategy 5's work and then taking bids from there.

It was decided that the Agenda for July 13<sup>th</sup> be changed to include approval of the June minutes, monthly reports, Park 4 feedback to the City Council and specific feedback to Rich and Associates in regards to the Parking Study.

Adjourn:

The meeting was adjourned at 5:40 p.m.