

Approved
PARKING ADVISORY BOARD
December 14, 2010

Randy Hafer√
Bruce Simon √
Nick Blake (Esc.)
Mitch Goplen (Esc.)
Drew Smith √

Steve Bruggeman√
Don Olsen √
Leticia Moore √
Scott Godfrey (Esc.)

NOTES:

The meeting was called to order by Randy at 4:05 p.m. Others present were: Bill Honaker, Bruce McCandless, Chris Mallow and Kelly Cox.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD:

Bill Honaker was present at the December 14 meeting and asked the Board if it would be possible to close the Park 2 garage at 6:15 p.m. instead of 11:00 p.m. Bill stated that if this could happen he could clear 80-100 spaces on the street as the surrounding business' employees could be forced to move into the garage. Bill also stated that he was willing to come up with a way to pay the City for the lost revenue, minus expenses.

Bill feels that by sending these 80-100 people into the garage it would create more activity in the garage in the later hours of the night and would help with security issues. Additionally, with the new B.I.D. Officer the security issues should be less. He also assured the Board that if "they" (the downtown business owners) were subsidizing the parking "they" would be very diligent about making sure their employees were parking in the garage and not on the streets.

Chris explained that not only would the City lose revenue in the evening but also in the morning because it is in the morning hours that the attendant is collecting Crowne Plaza validations when their patrons are leaving. Don suggested that the Crowne Plaza pay an average validation price per month instead of an actual usage price. Chris stated that at this time the Crowne Plaza pays somewhere in the area of \$6000 a month for the validations they use. It was also suggested that the City employ a half time employee to cover the 3:00 p.m. to 6:30 pm. shift.

It was decided that Chris would have the attendants at Park 2 garage track the cash and validation sales for the next month from 7:15 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. and from 6:15 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. to see what is being made during these times. It was stated that this is a busy time of year so it would be best case scenario numbers which could be used to determine if this idea would be feasible.

REPORTS AND ACTION ITEMS:

Approve minutes from November 2010:

Steve motioned that the minutes from the November meeting be accepted as written. Leticia seconded the motion. All members were in favor and the motion passed.

Monthly Report- November 2010:

Chris was asked, as part of Bill Honaker's request, to track cash & validations at Park 2 garage from 7:15 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. and 6:15 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. Bruce S. asked why the 10-hour permits had such a lag in sales from last year. Bruce also wanted to know how much coin was being collected from the 10-hour meters. Chris stated that he believed that 90% of the time being spent at 10-hour meters was from people with permits. In regards to the drop in sales, Chris stated that a combination of un-regulating some areas from 2-hour signed to free parking and the move of First Interstate Bank surely had a lot to do with the lag in sales.

The drop in sales from October to November was due to the holidays in November (Election Day, Veteran's Day & Thanksgiving). Chris stated this is typical for this time of year.

Chris attributes the increase in cash sales from last year to an all around better downtown economy.

Lordwith Residential Parking Permit program Staff Report and Recommendation:

Information:

Staff received an application from Michael Kessler (423 Lordwith Dr. Apt. #3) on 10/28/10. He is asking that a Residential Parking Permit Program be created for the Lordwith Dr. "loop" (three streets creating a horseshoe shaped drive).

Currently parking is not allowed on Lordwith as it is signed "No Parking School Days 8-5; the signage was install many years ago as an effort to keep students, of nearby Senior High School, from parking on these streets. Staff learned that after these signs were installed the School Resource Officer (SRO) was the main individual enforcing the No Parking rule on this street. The SRO was ticketing only students parking on Lordwith not residents.

In early 2009, the BPD charged the Volunteer Patrol Unit (VPU) with enforcing existing parking regulations city-wide. The VPU took over enforcing Lordwith from the new Senior High School SRO. The VPU read the signs and cited all vehicles parking on Lordwith as being in violation of signage.

Staff spoke with Mr. Kessler and other residents about how best to allow the residents to park on Lordwith and not be ticketed. Staff advised him of two options, the RPPP or removal of the No Parking signs.

City Code allows for the creation of Parking Permit Districts as stated in the following section of City Code (Sec. 24-452):

Establishment.

(a) Parking meters shall be established upon such streets and avenues and in such parking lots as the city council from time to time shall designate and pursuant to such designation the city administrator shall install parking meters. The city council may designate parking lots by entering into agreements with the owner of the lots or by resolution.

(b) Parking permit districts may be established by ordinance. The establishment of a parking permit district may include restrictions for parking on specific days or weeks during the year. The city council must make the following findings prior to establishment of the zone:

(1) Seventy-five (75) percent or more of the capacity available for on-street parking and public off-street parking on six (6) contiguous blocks (and/or twelve (12) block faces) in such proposed district is generally occupied at the hour and day of peak observed demand;

(2) Over thirty-five (35) percent of the vehicles parked on-street and in public off-street parking facilities in the area at the hour and day of peak observed demand are not owned by property owners, commercial lessees or residents of the designated area;

(3) That limiting the parking of vehicles along the public streets will provide ample motor vehicle parking for property owners, commercial lessees or residents of the area; and

(4) Creation of a parking permit area will promote tranquility between commuters and residents, increase pedestrian safety and reduce traffic hazards.

(c) An ordinance designating an area of the city as a permit parking district shall describe the following:

(1) The designated on-street parking and off-street public parking area where parking will be limited to permit holders;

(2) Hours of each day and days of each week the parking permit regulations shall be in effect;

(3) The individuals eligible to purchase a permit;

(4) Effective dates of annual permits;

(5) Any special provisions or exceptions applicable to schools, churches, businesses, commercial lessees, public park use, etc. within the district; and

(6) Visitor permits or special gathering provisions for the area.

(d) Peak-hour parking occupancy within a proposed parking permit district shall be determined by a parking occupancy survey of all public on-street and off-street parking facilities within the proposed district and shall be conducted by the city prior to establishment of the district and after that, on an as needed basis as determined by the city administrator. These parking occupancy surveys shall be conducted during at least three (3) days within a 14-day period, including the days and times that the parking problem is alleged to exist.

(e) Within each parking permit district, the city administrator shall set the supply, rates and rules for distribution of permits, and the time limits or other restrictions applicable to non-permit holders as deemed necessary to achieve a target occupancy of eighty-five (85) percent for on-street parking and ninety (90) percent for public off-street parking facilities, at the hour and day of the week of peak observed demand for parking in the district.

(f) The city administrator may expand or reduce boundaries of an existing parking permit district by two (2) contiguous blocks or less, and/or adjust the supply, rates and rules for distribution of permits, and the time limits or other restrictions applicable to non-permit holders, as deemed necessary to achieve a target occupancy of eighty-five (85) percent for on-street parking and ninety (90) percent for public off-street parking facilities at the hour and day of the week of peak observed demand for parking in the district.

(g) The city council may dissolve a parking permit district when it determines that dissolution best serves the public interest or meets at least one (1) of the following criteria, including but not limited to:

- (1) Low permit sales in a district;*
- (2) A small number of blocks with parking permit district signs; or*
- (3) The absence of the original traffic generator.*

If approved by the city council, the district would be dissolved at the beginning of a new permit cycle.

Section “b” sets forth the criterion that needs to be met before a permit district can be created. Staff has conducted surveys of a six block area, three block faces of Lordwith and on Ave B, Ave C, and Ave D (between Virginia Lane and 6th Street west), as specified in City code. Based on the conditions and information available some assumptions and methodologies had to be made.

- Staff observed the parking during school hours (10:30 a.m.) and after school hours (4:30 p.m.).
- Observing the parking available at 10:30 a.m. shows how and where students are parking in the area of the school (the traffic generator).
- Comparing the parking data at 10:30 a.m. with the parking available at 4:30 p.m. shows how many of the cars, parked at 10:30 a.m., were students and how many were residents.
- Did not include the High School parking lot in the study area as it is not publicly available and the nature of the complaints and request are pertaining to spill-over parking from the off-street lot.

The following observances were noted:

Lordwith (North, South, and East block faces): 1-3% of on-street parking spaces utilized at either observed time.

Ave. B, between Virginia Lane and 6th Street W, 95% of on-street parking was utilized at 10:30 a.m. and 40% of on-street parking was utilized at 4:30 p.m.

Ave. C, between Virginia Lane and 6th Street W, 90% of on-street parking was utilized at 10:30 a.m. and 30% of on-street parking was utilized at 4:30 p.m.

Ave. D, between Virginia Lane and 6th Street W, 20% of on-street parking was utilized at 10:30a and 15% of on-street parking was utilized at 4:30 p.m.

Staff concludes that sections of Ave. B and Ave. C, within the observed area, are the only block faces that meet the 75/35 rule stated in City Code. Lordwith and Ave. D do not show high enough peak parking demand to meet the 75/35 rule.

Recommendation:

Staff recommends that the request for a RPPP be rejected. Staff cannot recommend the request based on the data collected. Staff feels that the students do not park north of Ave. C, as witnessed in the data of Ave. D. For that reason, Staff recommends removing the existing signage on three blocks of Lordwith. Staff feels that this will solve their complaint about being ticketed and that there will not be a significant amount of students parking on Lordwith based on the walking distance to Senior High School.

Bruce S. motioned that the Board accept Staff's recommendation as written to remove all the "no parking" signs on Lordwith. Don seconded the motion. All members were in favor and the motion passed.

Conference Call with Desman Associates to discuss Technology Audit report and next steps:

Before placing the call to Desman Associates Chris explained to the Board that the next step in the process was for the Board to give Desman Associates one or two options to explore. Chris said that it was not in Desman's scope to explore every option, but that the Board needs options that are technically and financially feasible for Billings.

Randy asked Scott Martin and Greg Shumate to sum up their findings and thoughts on taking out all parking meters in downtown. Scott stated that it all really depended on where the City of Billings priorities were. They stated that the City could not make up the lost revenue from the meters in fines. They stated that it will be harder to enforce and that the City would need additional enforcement as enforcing signed areas is more labor intensive. They also stated that they felt that by doing this it would also lead to more appeals. Additionally, they stated that if the City was to use plate recognition software it is still more labor intensive. The case study for this was taken from Ft. Collins, CO. Ft. Collins has taken out their meters and has purchased the newest plate recognition software. They have also found that they needed to add two enforcement Officers to properly enforce. They found that the plate recognition software has a 95% read rate however the person doing the reading must not

exceed 5 mph or the plates will not read. They have found that this causes traffic issues in the core and have since moved the software to the periphery where the slow moving vehicle will not cause traffic issues. Bozeman has found that the plate recognition software they have is not reading the white on blue plates from Montana at all.

Chris stated that if the meters were pulled new equipment for enforcement would need to be purchased and the fine structure would need to be increased and possibly revamped (no courtesy tickets). It was also stated that if the City was looking at covering the loss of revenue from the meters by issuing tickets the enforcement would need to be more consistent and more frequent. This would then lead to funds being ticket based vs. meter turn over. Thus putting the City in revenue driven state and would impact how the City is viewed. Chris stated he felt this would be even less customer friendly.

It was suggested that instead of an all or nothing concept what if the meters were left only in the core. It was again suggested that meter rates be raised.

Information in regards to productivity of the Enforcement Officers was raised. At this time there is no way to determine in what areas tickets are being issued and at what rate. Chris asked Scott and Greg if they could give him some suggestions on how to collect that data. They stated that they would send him information.

Greg stated that at this time there is a lot of effort going in to giving courtesy tickets. At this time nearly half of the Enforcement Officer's efforts are going into writing courtesy tickets. It is the suggestion of Desman's to revamp this system and go to no more than one courtesy a year. They stated that they believe that the regular offenders in downtown are taking full advantage of the two free tickets a year and even possibly more if they trade vehicles or get new plates. Randy asked how other communities were using the courtesy program or if it was even being embraced by other communities. Both Greg and Scott stated that they didn't know of any communities that were using a courtesy program.

Randy asked if Desman's felt that Billings should institute an anti-shuffling law. They stated that they felt Billings should and that both Bozeman and Ft. Collins have anti-shuffling laws.

Steve asked if it was Desman's suggestion to automate the existing garages and any new garages that may be built. They stated that definitely any new garage should be automated and that they believed both Park 4 and Park 1 could go to pay in lanes now. Chris stated that he was currently looking at going all monthly in Park 4. It was stated that larger cities do have attendants during the peak hours as pay in lane can be confusing and slow and cause substantial traffic backups. They also stated that pay on foot wasn't a feasible option as there isn't really a good place to put the pay-on-foot machines and they are quite expensive.

Validations could be tied in with the pay in lane machines by changing the tickets to ones with magnetic stripes. The dispensers would need to be changed along with the card swipers so that they would be credit card friendly. Additionally, it was suggested that gates stay down at all times. A new system could be programmed to let people out who came in after a certain time but others who came in earlier would still need to pay to exit.

Desman's also suggested that employees be moved to Park 2 at a discounted price. This was already addressed and decided against. It was also suggested that prices be raised at Park 3 garage.

Don stated that the Board needed to find a balance between revenue and convenience. Desmans stated that studies show that turn over and enforcement are easier with meters in place.

Bruce S. stated that it has been proven that usage goes down when rates go up. Desmans state that they have found that this may be the case short term but it has been shown that usage always levels itself back out regardless of the cost of the meters. Desmans also wanted to point out that the tiered parking fines program was a good idea and worked well.

It was decided that more information was needed and that the Board would get back to Desman Associates with specifics on where to go from this point.

Other suggestions that could come in to play for easier more customer-friendly parking downtown was the idea of single head meters to help with parking space designators. Bruce S. stated that he believed the double-headed meters could be confusing especially during the winter months when the painted parking space markers on the road could not be seen. Information labels on the meters themselves that state how to park at certain meters may help although; Chris states he has not found anything that would fit on the meters we currently have. Randy suggested looking further into the pay-in-lane option.

Chris stated that another issue brought up by Desmans was the collection process and the open till process and the possibility of theft. Chris explained a new way of collecting with locked meter collection cups along with a new type of cart where the coins are not accessible to the people collecting. He also explained that there are better ways to track the flow of "no sale" usage in the garages by the attendants. By fixing these types of issues it would alleviate any possible theft issues and make reconciling more accurate.

Financial Statements:

There were no comments in regards to the financial statements. Bruce S. did ask that the financial statements be sent with the Parking Board packet so that the Board would have more time to study the statements before coming to the meeting. Chris explained that he would normally do that but he had just received the statements from Finance on the day of the meeting.

OLD BUSINESS:

Updates to Strategic Planning List of Projects:

The subcommittee met with Engineering and Planning are working on focusing on specific research. Everyone concerned are planning on meeting again on 1/18/11 at 10:00 a.m.

PARKING ADVISORY BOARD – Planning Decisions (3/16/10)

1. *Support/encourage diagonal parking in hospital corridor and Dehler Park (underway at Clinic); City to do Dehler Park; Chris to contact SVHC*
2. *Support EBURD parking overlay zoning (underway – final council approval 3/22/10)*
3. *Recommend changes to CBD parking*
 - Option 1*
 - *Adopt anti-shuffling ordinance (Chris to research; 6 month phase in)*
 - *3 “zones”:*
 - *2 hr. metered in highest use/turnover areas*
 - *10 hr. metered in desirable long stay locations*
 - *Remove meters at fringe areas with low utilization*
 - Option 2*
 - *Adopt anti-shuffling ordinance*
 - *3 “zones”:*
 - *2 hr. signed (no meters) in highest use/turnover areas*
 - *10 hr. metered in desirable long stay locations + pass*
 - *Remove meters/time limits in fringe areas*
 - *Chris to get consultant opinion, then conference call*

Either option must support & encourage continued use of garages

 - *Adjust 10 hr. rates to support garages*
 - *With Option 2, increase fines for shuffling or overstaying limit*
 - *With Option 2, update technology to enforce*
 - *Retain courtesy tickets for 1st offences*
 - *Retain monthly 10 hr. passes*
4. *Work on Parking Division Finances*
 - *Letter to Council strongly recommending phasing out Parking Division transfer to General Fund (233k/yr.)*
 - *RH/GK to draft letter; signed by all; bond new garage, etc.; present at Work Session with several members, letters of support*
5. *Recommend changes to parking for rest of city (per list)*

- a. *Provide diagonal parking for on-street parking whenever possible (or perpendicular in street centers where available)*
- b. *Encourage an interconnected grid of streets in new developments*
- c. *Require all new streets in commercial areas to be designed to accommodate on-street parking*
- d. *Allow on-street parking to count as part of total parking requirement or make on-street parking a mandatory offset of on-street parking*
- e. *Allow an offset for bicycles/scooters/motorcycles (biking racks downtown)*

- f. *Allow compact/energy efficient car spaces as part of the total requirement (smaller)*
- g. *Create a standard for the maximum number of parking spaces provided depending on project type; change current into maximum; set new floor*
- h. *Allow/encourage parking sharing between parcels/properties; i.e. if more than 1 business adjacent, then max. X .9 = total for entire site, 3 or more X .8, 5 or more X .7, etc.*

- i. *Encourage parking behind buildings.*
- j. *Bike racks.*

NEW BUSINESS:

Downtown Alliance Report:

None to report.

Informational Items:

Bruce S. wanted it noted in the record that the Board would like to thank Randy for his time spent serving on the Parking Advisory Board. Randy's last term on the Board ends after the meeting on December 14th. Bruce M. asked Randy if he was still willing to stay on the committee for the sale of park 4. Randy also asked if it would be o.k. if he stayed on the subcommittee on revamping the parking ordinances. Bruce S. suggested that the new Chairman vote Randy in as an Ad-hoc member. Randy and Mitch's Board seats will be open as of January 1, 2011. Mitch has not reapplied to be on the Board. Steve asked Chris if he would contact Sharon Weatherwax-Ripley and see if she is still interested in joining the Board. Chris stated that he knew that she was no longer with MSUB but he would find her and find out if she is still interested.

Adjourn:

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