

**PARKING ADVISORY BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
March 12, 2013**

Members Present:

Don Olsen, Chairperson	Bob Carr	Leticia Moore
Mike Craighill	Steve Bruggeman	

Members Absent:

Will Gilbert

Others Present:

Councilmember Jim Ronquillo	Bruce McCandless	Greg Krueger
Chris Mallow	Megan Hodson	

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment.

REPORTS AND ACTION ITEMS

Minutes

Steve motioned to approve the February minutes. Leticia seconded. All in favor. Motion passed.

Monthly Report

Chris stated there is a high demand for Park 1, which jumped up 34 spaces or 7 %. There was a transfer with the Department of Homeland Security from renting “covered” spaces to the “secured” spaces. There was a decrease in cash sales in Park 2 and Park 3. Park and shops have decreased also.

Don asked if the garages were accepting credit cards yet. Chris said Staff will be training with Teri Walker from Finance. A cable still needs to be ran at Park 2, and then after that it will be up and running.

Chris said token usage has increased 30% from the previous month. Greg stated one entity, which is a non-profit organization, purchased 400 tokens. Park 2 and Park 3’s rented spaces are remaining steady at 100%.

FY14 Draft Parking Budget Preview

Chris stated Parking is looking better than the previous year. The beginning cash, \$872,876, is what Pat Weber, Finance Director, created. The revenues over expenses are \$206,593, which is due to meter income, fine increases, and having the Park 2 expansion debt service refinanced.

The first of the Capital Projects is the Garage Condition Audit, which is an industry standard, and needs to be done every five to seven years. The last condition audit was done in 2005. Consultants (concrete experts) come in and look at the building as a whole to see if there are issues with the integrity of the concrete, such as spalling. Any repairs would follow the inspection. Chris stated with the previous inspections, identified and fixed various issues, such

as, negative drainage to keep water from making puddles, and new membranes to protect the concrete decks. The Condition Audit is intended to help Parking know how the structures of the buildings are doing, and if additional work is required.

The other Capital Project is a new enforcement vehicle. Parking has two of the enforcement vehicles up for replacement, according to the City's Equipment Replacement Plan (ERP). Currently, Parking has four enforcement vehicles and three enforcement officers. Chris believes Parking does not need four vehicles, and the Parks Department is going to take the two enforcement vehicles Parking plans on getting rid of. Don asked if Parking was going to purchase from another company. Chris said Parking is looking into it. He said one of the issues with the Go4 Interceptor is that it is manufactured in Canada, and the parts have to come from Canada also. Parking has looked around and has even looked into an electric vehicle. He believes that type of vehicle is something to look into because it would alleviate fuel cost and the on-going maintenance. Chris also stated it will cost a couple thousand more to buy one. **Parking's** fuel expenses estimate between \$7,500 and \$8,000 per year. He believes if Parking could pay a little more upfront for this type of vehicle, in turn, it would save money for the fuel expense.

Don asked if there was a downside to having electric vehicles. Chris stated the electric vehicles have not been tested in cold weather areas before. The electric vehicles are mainly bought in California, Georgia, Florida, and Texas. The company has to further test the vehicle in northern cold weather climates to see if the battery life will maintain. Leticia asked where Parking would plug the vehicle in, and stated that it would not be totally free. The fuel is now the electricity. Chris said it would be plugged into a regular 110. Bob asked if \$33,000 was for one electric vehicle. Chris said yes. He also said some cities are going with smaller compact cars, for example a Chevy Cruze or Volt.

Don asked how many miles are put on an enforcement vehicle, and Mike asked what the maintenance plan is for the City when replacing the vehicles. Chris stated about 60-70 thousand "in-town" miles, which is the "usable life" of the vehicle as determined per the ERP for what class of vehicle it is.

Don asked if the plan was to purchase a vehicle soon. Chris said no, he wants to do more research before putting it out to BID. Chris said he will bring a report to the PAB, so they are involved with the research. Steve asked when Chris anticipates on making the purchase. Chris said it cannot be before FY14, which is July 1. Steve asked if the purchase could wait until there is a Parking Commission in place, and let them decide. Chris said he thought he would just take care of this purchase. Leticia asked if the Parks department has to pay for the vehicles they are taking from Parking and if that number is figured into the \$33,000. Chris said Parks would pay the salvage value of about \$1,500 per vehicle, and that is not figured into the \$33,000. **Chris said the Capital Projects are one-time expenses that are paid out of Parking's reserve fund.**

Steve asked how many years Parking has to pay for the Lighting Debt Service. Chris believes it is 20 years, and the total project was over \$500,000. Parking will be getting the Northwestern Energy rebate for Park 1 and Park 2. The Park 3 rebate has to be applied in conjunction with City Hall, because they are all on one meter. Parking will receive a pro-rated amount of the **rebate based on the size of Parking's project vs. City Hall's.**

Mike asked if the Garage Condition Audit covers all three garages. Chris said yes, and it is based on previous payments and what other similar cities are paying.

Don asked how long the TIF transfer will be enforced and if and when it will go away. Chris said

it was established in the resolution and there was no expiration date. He believes it would take a new resolution for removing it. Chris said Parking had to make a new resolution to remove the Parking transfer to the general fund. He believes Parking does not need the TIF transfer to balance the budget for FY14.

Steve asked where the Park 2 expansion was placed in the budget. Chris said it was placed under parking administration, and the cost of the expense is \$200,000. Steve also asked what amount is required to be in the reserve fund. Chris said 1/12th of **Parking's** revenue, which is about \$144,000. He also added not making the payment for the refinance of Park 2 for the current fiscal year **helped Parking's reserves**.

Alternative Parking Management discussion and update

Bruce stated the Legal department has done some research, and the **City's** Charter prevents a Parking Commission from being created. He took that information to City Council and also gave some options. The City can amend the Charter or ignore the Charter, go with a contracting route, or leave parking as is. City Council directed Staff to put on a future City Council agenda to amend the Charter to allow the Council at their discretion to designate certain Boards or Commissions as being governing or having administrative authority. He does not know exactly how it will be phrased. He believes Staff will use **Missoula's** Charter as a guide. The schedule will be as follows: the ordinance will go to City Council the second meeting in April; it will then be transmitted to the Election Administrator, and the Election Administrator will put it on the ballot for November 2013. The municipalities have elections in odd number years. Any amendment to the Charter has to be approved by the voters. If the voters approve it, it becomes affective 30 days after. By the 1st of the calendar year 2014, Council could then create a Parking Commission and designate what authority they choose to give the Commission at that time.

Don said the Board needs the citizens of Billings to say they agree with giving more power to Boards and Commissions. Don asked if there was a contingent that is opposed to modifying the Charter in any way. Councilmember Jim Ronquillo said he believes in 2005 Council wanted to get rid of the Charter, but the voters wanted to keep it and voted no to removing it. Councilmember Ronquillo also stated the wording is going to be the key. If the residents think it is going to cost money, then they will vote against it.

Steve asked if the intent was to still do the research and go forward like it will be approved. Bruce said yes, he will continue to work with Staff to get a plan together for Council. If Council adopts the ordinance that creates the Parking Commission, with administrative authority, the plan will have the steps Staff needs to take and the transition plan for staff, finances, etc.

Don said he has a concern with the Board only having six members currently. There should be nine total. He believes it could be hard to recruit members because in nine months they will have to reapply to be on the Board. Don asked if the City can campaign for the amendment. Bruce said City Staff can send out information or material regarding it, but cannot campaign for it. He said Council members can campaign for the amendment. Mike asked Bruce if the recommendation for the transition would be at the start of FY14 or earlier. Bruce believes it could be as early as January 1. Steve said the Board is going to have trouble meeting quorums moving forward with the season coming up. Bruce said the City Code requires Staff to advertise for 30 days, accept applications, and then the Mayor can appoint the new members with **Council's** consent. He asked the Board to coordinate with Staff to advertise, so the members can be appointed quickly. Bruce said he would talk to the Mayor within a couple days, and then Wynnette Maddox would put the ad in the paper.

Steve asked if a Commission is formed, will they be allowed to contract with the BID for savings purposes, such as maintenance and cleaning. Greg said the BID has precedent in that. Greg said the Parks Department contracts with the BID for certain services. Leticia said the BID and Parks are similar with what they do, but Parking is completely different. Steve said he just wanted to know if the Commission could contract with the BID. Greg said BIDs nationwide have evolved to be on the Clean and Safe program, and they do manage parking because it is a part of the downtown experience.

Metered Zone- (a) Meter type and placement (b) Annual Meter Utilization Review

Don stated there was a discrepancy between the meter trial zone and the meter zone the PAB created. The block by Pug Mahon's, 1st Avenue North between North 30th Street and North 31st street, kept all of its meters on both sides of the block during the trial. The zone City Council approved removed all the meters on both sides of the street. He said Mr. MacIntyre (owner of Pug Mahon's) was a big proponent for the meter trial, but after the meters were removed he was not. Upon receiving Mr. MacIntyre's complaint, Parking bagged the meter posts with "2 hour parking" bags. Don stated Mr. MacIntyre would like to have the meters back as soon as possible, and for the record, he is the only one who has complained.

Leticia asked if Mr. MacIntyre said why he prefers to have the meters over "signed" 2 hours. Don stated Mr. MacIntyre believes removing the meters will damage his business by not providing proper turn over. Steve asked if anyone has talked to Mr. MacIntyre regarding how his business is currently doing with the bags over the meters. Chris said Staff is seeing turn over and Mr. MacIntyre's employees have said the bags seem to be working.

The Board received a new metered zone map with 1st Avenue North between North 30th Street and North 31st Street added into the metered zone area.

Don stated there are three areas on the map the Board needs to discuss concerning adding meters into the zone. Steve asked if Pug Mahon's was in the area to have no meters, and if the Board wanted to keep the meters, would they have to go back to Council. Don said yes, those particular meters are in the "no meter zone", and the Board would have to go to Council. Steve said if the Board kept the bags on the meters or switched it to "signed" 2 hour parking, then they would not have to go to Council. Don said yes. Leticia and Steve said the board should leave that area for now and wait. Mike said the Board is going back to Council for the other areas on the map, and it should all be included. Don said that would be the idea if the Board agreed.

Don explained a few years ago, the property owners on Minnesota Avenue requested signed 2 hour parking on Minnesota and predominantly 10 hour meters on Broadway, South 29th Street, and South 30th Street. The area on Minnesota Avenue between South 24th Street and South 27th Street was supposed to be in that change, but it did not happen. There is a bike lane on South 25th Street, thus not allowing diagonal parking. Don said the idea is to make Minnesota Avenue signed 2 hour parking, and on South 26th Street there will be signed 10 hour parking. Greg said on South 26th Street there is currently nothing posted, and it seems to be working. Chris said he is waiting on the Streets Department to formulate a design for the signed 10 hour parking for South 26th Street.

Steve asked what the proposal to Council would be. Leticia said to amend that zone. Don said to make the area on Minnesota Avenue between South 24th Street and South 27th Street a part of the "no meter zone". Leticia said instead of changing the map, could the Board go to Council and ask to re-word the City Code to say that meters could be placed in that zone rather than meters being required to exist in the Metered Area. Bruce said the City Code states Council

shall designate where meters will be installed. He said the code could be amended. Leticia said, in her opinion, it would be easier for the PAB to make the designation rather than Council. Otherwise the PAB would be taking Council a new map every six months. She also said she would never approve adding more meters, and this would reduce the headache for the PAB and Council.

Councilmember Ronquillo said revenue decreases every time a meter is removed. Parking needs revenue to keep up, otherwise it will not be here. Leticia said Parking is not losing all forms of revenue. Councilmember Ronquillo reiterated there will not be any more revenue if there is no parking. He added Mr. MacIntyre said the bags were fine for now, but he would like his meters back. Leticia said the meters are not his, and the meters that were removed in the west area were not heavily used. She stated Parking was spending more money collecting and enforcing the meters in the west than what was being collected for revenue.

Steve asked Councilmember Ronquillo if Council would be opposed to the areas that the Board wants to make “free” parking. He added the Board did not envision removing the meters from the west side of downtown and adding meters to the northeast area. Councilmember Ronquillo said when the Board came to Council and said they wanted to bag meters, the loss in revenue was a small amount. He agrees with Steve about not wanting to add meters in an area that currently does not have meters. Councilmember Ronquillo said if the Board says there are currently no meters in those areas, he believes Council will tell them not to add meters.

Steve asked about the area north of 6th Avenue between North 27th Street and North 30th Street. Don said the area is supposed to have meters according to the map. However, Chris said the area was proposed to be eliminated from the “metered zone”. Don said there are some business owners who would not mind signed parking, except Carl Kurocawa, owner of **Juliano’s**, who still wants the meters by his business.

Steve made a motion to take a resolution to Council to recommend the shaded areas on the metered zone map (Minnesota Avenue to 1st Avenue South between South 24th Street and South 27th Street; South of 6th Avenue North to 4th Avenue North between North 24th Street and North 27th; 6th Avenue North to 7th Avenue North between North 27th Street and North 30th Street) to be a “no meter zone” and to add meters on 1st Avenue North between North 30th Street and North 31st Street. Mike seconded the motion.

Councilmember Ronquillo said Mr. MacIntyre did not receive any type of notice before the meters were removed in front of his business. Chris said he had lunch at the end of December at **Pug’s** and spoke with Mr. MacIntyre regarding the removal of meters. Bruce said he spoke with Mr. MacIntyre and apologized to him for not receiving any notice regarding the removal of meters, and he explained to him about the signage for that particular block. Mr. MacIntyre was alright with the signage and bags as an interim measure, but believes the meters work better because they are self enforcing. Bruce said if the Board is going to recommend signed 2 hour parking, he needs to go back to Mr. MacIntyre and tell him what the PAB is recommending. If Mr. MacIntyre does not like the recommendation, then he needs to talk to the Board. Mike believes the Board is not making an exception for **Pug Mahon’s**. He thinks they are going back to the way the original trial was.

Bruce asked if the Board was ready to make any decisions on the 10 hour meters on 2nd Avenue North between North 30th Street and North 31st Street. Steve asked if those meters could be bagged as a signed 10 hour parking zone. Chris said Parking could make the sign read “10 hour Permit **Only**” parking. Greg said probably 80-90% of the cars that park at 10 hour meters have permits. Bruce said it seems like the Board wants to leave the 10 hour meters on 2nd Avenue for

now, but added the Board needs to come to a conclusion soon. Steve said Parking could place bags over the 10 hour meters presently, and then the Board can further discuss where the 10 hour meters will be.

The Board voted all in favor of Steve's motion. The motion passed.

Don asked if Lisa could be involved in addressing signed 10 hour zones. Greg said he believes it would be beneficial to the permit holders. Steve said until the Board gets more data and has a recommendation, Parking should bag the 10 hour meters with a sign saying "10 hour - permit only". Chris said he could speak with Lisa and bring a Staff recommendation to the April meeting. He will look at similar cities and what they have done and make a report of the pros/cons of going to a signed 10 hour parking program.

Mike asked if the note regarding Mr. **Kurocawa's** concern was addressed in the motion. Don said Mr. Kurocawa will lose the meters in front of his business. Upon discussion the Board wanted to amend the original motion. Leticia motioned to leave the existing 2 hour meters on the southeast side of 7th Avenue between North 29th Street and North 30th Street. There was no second to the motion. However, the Board voted on the amended motion, and all were in favor. The motion passed.

Don asked Chris to bring a recommendation to the next meeting to establish a time when an Annual Meter Utilization Report would be completed. Don does not have any specific time of year in mind, just when it works best operationally for the Parking Division.

OLD BUSINESS

Empire Parking Garage Update

Don said demolition stopped on the Northern garage until all of the bonds were sold. Leticia asked for more spaces in the new garage. Chris said with that request, Parking is at its full capacity for requested spaces. Don asked how the spaces in the garage will be allocated and what the rate structures are. He said there needs to be a certain component to public parking. Don also asked how many spaces are still available. Chris said he will bring that information to the April meeting.

Greg said they gave the Northern six access cards for Park 1 for the valet parking, and **they'll** have a special permit to hang in the window. He said they are also going to be able to utilize 105 spaces in the Skate Park lot.

Chris said he wants to start working on differential rates for each of the garages. Leticia said she would caution against differentiating more than plus/minus five dollars. In her opinion, it shows preferential treatment between the garages. Don said the Board is not solving it right now. It just needs to be put on the agenda. Chris said he wanted to discuss equality, subsidizing, and raising rates. Part of what **he'll** bring with the garage rates is the direction on policy for the garages.

Chris said there is a challenge regarding the Empire Garage being automated yet permitting handicap parkers to park in it. Currently, handicap parkers do not pay to park in the garages if they show a valid permit or have specialty handicap plates. With the new garage being automated, there is a conflict on what to do. Chris said in other cities, handicap parkers have spaces to park, but they pay for parking. He would like to make it consistent between all of the garages and is asking the Board to help solve the challenge.

NEW BUSINESS

Signage at Existing Parking Garages

Don said the Northern Hotel has AD Creative Group working on a signage package for the hotel building, and there is talk that it may include the new garage. He would like to develop a similar signage package for all of the garages. Leticia asked who is in charge of the signage package. Don said the architects are, and he thinks it can be a bigger solution for all of the garages. Don would like to discuss this in April.

Downtown Alliance Report

Greg said the Northern **Hotel's** open house is March 16th, and the St. **Patrick's** Day parade is also the same day. It is the first year the DBA has put on the parade in 20 years.

Greg stated there has been a lot of graffiti in the downtown area lately. The purple team has been busy removing it. They document all of the graffiti and have filed a hate crime report. The Northern Hotel is a member of the Association now. Alive after Five planning has begun.

Informational Items

Leticia asked if there will be a sky bridge from the hotel to the garage. Bruce said the structure will be built to accommodate a bridge, but the only reason why it might not be built is for financial reasons. He also said the City will own the garage, and the Northern will operate it. They still need to agree on a lease agreement.

Adjourn:

The meeting was adjourned at 6:01 p.m.