

City of Birmingham
Advisory Parking Committee
Regular Meeting

Birmingham City Hall Commission Room
151 Martin, Birmingham, Michigan
Wednesday, May 4, 2022

Minutes

These are the minutes of the Advisory Parking Committee ("APC") regular meeting held on Wednesday, May 4, 2022. The meeting was called to order at 7:30 a.m. by Chair Vaitas.

1. Rollcall

Present: Chair Al Vaitas
Vice-Chair Richard Astrein
Kelly Cobb
Steven Kalczynski
Lisa Krueger
Judith Paskiewicz
Lisa Silverman
Mary-Claire Petcoff
Jennifer Yert

Absent: None

Administration: Ryan Weingartz, Parking Manager
Nick Dupuis, Planning Director
Laura Eichenhorn, City Transcriptionist
Greg Wald, Services Commander

2. Introductions

The APC welcomed new member Kelly Cobb.

3. Review of the Agenda

4. Approval Of Minutes: Meetings Of April 6, 2022

Motion by Vice-Chair Astrein

Seconded by Dr. Silverman to accept the minutes of April 6, 2022 as submitted.

Motion carried, 7-0.

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: Paskiewicz, Silverman, Krueger, Cobb, Vaitas, Kalczynski, Astrein

Nays: None

5. La Strada Café – Outdoor Dining

PD Dupuis presented the item.

Ms. Krueger expressed concerns about the congestion that might occur on Merrill by adding this deck to 220 Merrill's valet parking and potential deck.

Dr. Silverman said she found La Strada's deck less disruptive than 220 Merrill's.

Ms. Petcoff concurred with Dr. Silverman, adding that an operator should not be penalized because another operator nearby was already granted a deck.

Ms. Krueger and Chair Vaitas said the APC needed guidelines on which to base their decisions regarding dining decks.

PD Dupuis clarified that 220 Merrill would no longer be using any on-street spots for its valet services. He also clarified that the outdoor dining deck guidelines being worked on by the Planning Board are largely design related, not parking-related.

The APC had a wide-ranging discussion about general topics including the purview of the APC, the need for criteria for granting dining decks, the need for an updated procedure for evaluating dining decks, whether the City has a parking capacity issue, the trends in post-pandemic parking demands, the need for more data as part of dining deck decisions, the rates paid by dining establishments for on-street parking space rentals, the fairness of allowing dining establishments to rent on-street parking spaces while retailers cannot, and people's general enthusiasm for outdoor dining.

PM Weingartz said that while everyone assumes there is a parking capacity issue in the City, Birmingham does not currently have a parking capacity issue.

Dr. Silverman said that while she supported La Strada's request, she acknowledged that Merrill is narrow and often crowded by trucks.

In reply to Chair Vaitas, Ms. Krueger noted that La Strada's outdoor dining on the sidewalk was very limited.

Philip Cwagenberg, attorney, was present in lieu of attorney John Henke, La Strada's usual representation. Mr. Cwagenberg stated:

- La Strada did not receive any complaints about parking availability while this deck was operational during the relaxation of the outdoor dining guidelines due to the Covid-19 pandemic;
- There would be six two-tops on the sidewalk, and there would be no room to turn those into four-tops;

- The APC should consider whether the loss of two on-street parking spaces on Merrill to accommodate La Strada's deck would put an undue strain on the adjacent Pierce Street structure;
- The use of the two on-street parking spaces would also not exacerbate the parking issues on Merrill that stem from deliveries;
- There are only two restaurants on Merrill, so there would not be another request for a dining deck on Merrill in the near future; and,
- La Strada's dining deck would be a viable use for two on-street parking spaces on Merrill.

Ms. Krueger asked if the APC would be provided with criteria with which to make dining deck decisions.

PM Weingartz said those decisions could only be made on a contextual, item-by-item basis.

Ms. Krueger said that moving forward she would like the dining deck requests to be presented with more data.

Motion by Dr. Silverman

Seconded by Mr. Kalczyński to recommend approval to the City Commission of La Strada Café's request for an outdoor dining deck.

Motion carried, 5-2.

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: Paskiewicz, Silverman, Krueger, Cobb, Kalczyński

Nays: Vaitas, Astrein

In reply to Dr. Silverman, PM Weingartz said he would check on whether or how the APC could recommend a change in procedure to the City Commission for evaluating dining decks.

6. 2021-2022 Construction Assessment Progress

PM Weingartz introduced the item.

In reply to Vice-Chair Astrein, PM Weingartz explained that structural work would need to occur before aesthetic work. He estimated that the entire project would take three to five years.

In reply to Mr. Kalczyński, PM Weingartz said adding additional floors to Pierce might be considered as a possibility in the fall.

He said he was working on an RFP for the structures' gate arms.

7. Meeting Open to the Public for Items not on the Agenda

8. Miscellaneous Communications

- Parking System Update: Waitlist, Occupancy and Revenue

- Role of APC

PM Weingartz reviewed the item.

Chair Vaitas asked that parking-related matters continue coming before the APC for APC comment.

PM Weingartz noted that on occasion there would be time-sensitive decisions that need to be made between APC meetings.

Chair Vaitas acknowledged that fact.

PM Weingartz also noted that, as the inaugural Parking Manager, he could be a more dedicated advocate for the APC at the Commission level.

Dr. Paskiewicz stated that decisions on repairs and budgets for construction came before the APC in years past.

Chair Vaitas concurred, noting that the APC is tasked also with maintaining the financial health of the parking fund.

Dr. Paskiewicz continued that this is why she had requested, at the April 2022 meeting, "clarity on the division of work between the APC and the Parking Manager; more information on who reviews items before they come to the APC; and more information on how the APC's opinions are presented to the Commission".¹ She asked if they might be able to add this general topic to a future APC agenda.² She added that:

- She would like to understand if there were previous concerns about parking management in the City prior to PM Weingartz's hiring that led to his hiring, and if so, who had those concerns and what those concerns were; and,
- Whether the City wants the APC to approach parking more as a service for the community or more as a revenue opportunity.

She said her request for a presentation on those topics still stood.

PM Weingartz said he would work on that and get back to the APC.

- APC Attendance
- OMA Memo

9. Adjournment

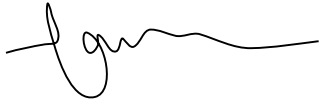
No further business being evident, the meeting adjourned at 9:00 a.m.

¹ As amended at the August 3, 2022 meeting.

² As amended at the August 3, 2022 meeting.

Advisory Parking Committee
May 4, 2022

Parking Manager Ryan Weingartz



Laura Eichenhorn
City Transcriptionist

APPROVED