

City of Birmingham
ADVISORY PARKING COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING

Birmingham City Hall Commission Room
151 Martin, Birmingham, Michigan
Wednesday, October 4, 2017

MINUTES

These are the minutes for the Advisory Parking Committee ("APC") regular meeting held on Wednesday October 4, 2017. The meeting was called to order at 7:40 a.m. by Chairman Lex Kuhne.

Present: Chairman Lex Kuhne
Gayle Champagne
Anne Honhart
Judith Paskiewicz
Vice-Chairman Al Vaitas

Absent: Steven Kalczynski
Lisa Krueger

Birmingham Shopping District Ingrid Tighe, Executive Director

SP+ Parking: Catherine Burch
Sara Burton
Jay O'Dell

Administration: Austin Fletcher, Asst. City Engineer
Paul O'Meara, City Engineer
Carole Salutes, Recording Secretary

RECOGNITION OF GUESTS (none)

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OF August 2, 2017

Dr. Vaitas made the following corrections:

Page 3 - Fourth paragraph, second sentence, change "are" to "area."

Page 5 - Fifth paragraph, replace "bee" with "been."

All were in favor of accepting the Minutes as amended.

BIRMINGHAM SHOPPING DISTRICT ("BSD") HOLIDAY ADVERTISING

Ms. Tighe brought forward the BSD proposal for APC participation in the 2017 Holiday TV Campaign. The BSD thinks it will be very advantageous to the downtown merchants and to the City's parking system to promote a convenient parking message during the busy shopping season.

In the past, the APC has participated in similar campaigns with support ranging from \$15,000 to \$25,000. This year, the BSD is requesting \$25,000 from the parking system to go towards the BSD \$55,000 ad campaign for the holiday parking. They do vignettes on TV that promote downtown Birmingham, including the shopping, the restaurants, and the two hours free parking in the decks. Normally they partner with WXYZ and also with Comcast. So, she requested continued support for this great program.

Last year the BSD requested \$20,000, but they have gone back to the traditional \$25,000 that they have done the other three years. Their goal is to have a knockout holiday season for the merchants as the upcoming construction season will be a tough spring for them.

Motion by Ms. Paskiewicz

Seconded by Ms. Honhart to recommend to the City Commission the expenditure of \$25,000 from the Automobile Parking System fund promotion account (Account No. 585-538.001-901.0300) to assist the BSD in creating their proposed 2017 holiday promotional TV campaign.

Motion carried, 5-0.

VOICE VOTE:

Yeas: Paskiewicz, Honhart, Champagne, Kuhne, Vaitas

Nays: None

Absent: Krueger, Kalczynski

S. OLD WOODWARD AVE. PERMIT PARKING AREA AUTHORIZED PERMIT SALES

Mr. O'Meara recalled that about fifteen years ago, the APC created a permit parking area on Ann St. north of Frank St., to make better use of on-street parking in that area. At that same time, a discount permit parking area was created at the south end of the downtown area, where parking demand has typically been low, on the following streets:

- S. Old Woodward Ave. (east side) – Haynes St. to Woodward Ave. = 39 spaces
- Landon St. (both sides) – Ann St. to S. Old Woodward Ave. = 10 spaces

In the past, these monthly permits were offered for as little as \$25 per month. However, there was virtually no demand for them for several years, as people were not interested in parking this far from their places of employment.

In July of 2016, the parking system increased its daily rate for parking to \$2 per hour, with a maximum price of \$10 per day. Interest in this area grew quickly. Since the maximum authorized number of permits is 30, the area sold out within two months. Since then, the cost of these permits has been increased to \$35 per month. Over the past year, demand for the permits has been similar to the amount available, although currently only about fifteen parking permits are being sold.

It was noted the 555 complex to the north underwent an extensive building renovation earlier this year. The nature of the work required closing a significant number of on-street parking spaces for this work. Now that this construction work is completed, and the area has returned to normal, a survey was taken to measure current demand for parking in these areas. A count was taken at 8 a.m. to measure customer demand, since a large yoga studio is present in the 555 Building to the north. Counts were taken at 10 a.m. and the assumed peak time of the day (1 p.m.). Since September is a busy month, and the weather was good, the actual usage was less than expected. At the time that the most number of cars were counted, the total of the two areas combined was just 53% occupied. Since permit holders tend to use their permits at a rate of about 60% at the most, it is assumed that it would be safe to sell an additional 20 parking permits for this area. Doing so would bring the number of permits available to 50.

If the additional permits are authorized, the City will direct the SP+ office staff to call those on the Pierce St. and Peabody St. Structure waiting lists to let them know that these lower cost permits are available. Doing so will bring some economic relief to those on the waiting lists that are looking for other options. Assuming that increased permit sales will reduce the number of open parking spaces in this area, it is felt that it is important to notify the adjacent businesses, and give them a chance to comment before this idea moves forward.

With that in mind, staff recommends that a public hearing be held at the next APC meeting on November 1, 2017. All businesses within the area of the subject parking areas would be notified about the hearing, and invited to comment.

It was noted the prices in the structures are \$50/month for Chester St. and the others are at \$70/month.

There were no comments from members of the audience at 7:50 a.m.

Mr. O'Dell said the meters are still open for public parking. It is first come, first served. Permit holders are directed to the Pierce St. Structure if the metered spaces are taken. He added the rate is good. Because it is so far away, it is an enticement to get people out there.

Motion by Dr. Vaitas

Seconded by Dr. Paskiewicz to endorse the proposal to increase by 20 the number of authorized monthly parking permits on S. Old Woodward Ave. south of Haynes St., and to schedule a public hearing to receive input from the adjacent business owners, at the regularly scheduled meeting of the Advisory Parking Committee on Wednesday, November 1, 2017, at 7:30 a.m.

Motion carried, 5-0.

VOICE VOTE:

Yeas: Vaitas, Paskiewicz, Champagne, Honhart, Kuhne

Nays: None

Absent: Kalczynski, Krueger

PARKING LOT 6 EXPANSION PROPOSAL

Mr. O'Meara stated that the N. Old Woodward Ave. corridor continues to suffer from a lack of parking capacity during hours of peak demand. Several years ago the APC made a recommendation to extend the paved surface of the parking lot into the City owned floodplain area. The expansion proposal would have required removal of the remaining pine trees but would have provided a net gain of 28 new parking spaces at relatively low cost.

The proposal was not endorsed by the City Commission and since then no further discussions have been held about expanding this lot.

Recently, City Staff reviewed this area again. Given the width of the current driveway that runs along the east edge of the parking lot, the east curb could be removed and relocated about 4 ft. to the east, about 1 ft. away from the existing pine trees. Doing so would allow for the installation of parallel parking spaces along the east edge of the lot, while still allowing full usage of the existing parking spaces that already use this drive lane. The net gain would be 13 spaces. This new proposal has several benefits:

1. The construction would not require the removal of the adjacent pine trees. The proposal was reviewed by the City's forestry consultant. It was noted that all of the trees are nearing the end of their life expectancy, and will continue to decline regardless of whether work is done here or not.

2. Construction of the additional pavement would be simple. Given the importance of this lot to the adjacent businesses, as well as the weekly Farmer's Market, a simple, inexpensive construction project would be a plus.

It was discussed that the loss of pine trees and screening was the main concern of neighbors when this expansion proposal came up previously. Dr. Vaitas noted that Leland Cypress could be planted as screening. It is very dense and grows 3 to 4 ft./year. Committee members agreed they should do as much as they can there and find the right screening to assuage the problem of headlights shining onto the residential properties on Brookside. Dr. Paskiewicz said that lot is practically empty in the evening anyway.

Mr. O'Meara advised that dirt and oil flowing down into the river cannot be prevented. It is happening now and would increase slightly if the lot is expanded. If desired, a rain garden could be built so water would flow into that first and then discharge into the river. The group saw an opportunity to get maximum parking capacity as well as increase the aesthetics and improve the environmental aspect. The lot could be made very pleasant along the river for the Farmers Market.

Dr. Paskiewicz pointed out there is an ongoing problem of people making illegal u-turns in front of the northern-most drive in order to proceed south because there is no place to turn around. The Chairman thought that a u-turn could be formalized there by taking out three parking spots.

It was decided that the committee would direct staff to investigate further screening options and environmental issues. Everyone thought this is a great opportunity, and compared to other things, the cost is much less.

AD HOC PARKING DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE UPDATE

Dr. Paskiewicz said the committee held a meeting recently after not having one for a long time. The committee has added in the idea of building the parking structure so that it could accommodate multiple uses in the future. The thought is that people will be parking less because of self-driving cars and Uber type services.

Mr. O'Meara added that four development teams have submitted qualification packages and all four were approved. They have 90 days to submit a more detailed plan along with a financing proposal for review by the Parking Development Committee.

CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

Mr. O'Meara reported that the Park St. Structure painting project is wrapping up and the majority of the spaces are open. Some steel repairs are still underway.

Walker Parking Consultants has been hired to design plans to replace all of the lights with LED next year in the Chester St. Structure. They are also hiring Walker to rehab the fourth and fifth floor of the Pierce St. Structure later in 2018.

The idea of adding more floors to the top of the Pierce St. Structure has been dismissed for now. The structure is almost fifty years old.

MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORTS

Mr. O'Dell said everything is doing well.

MEETING OPEN FOR MATTERS NOT ON THE AGENDA

Dr. Paskiewicz noted there has been some difficulty for people getting in and out of the Park St. Structure. It has been said that signage about how to insert the card is not very clear. Mr. O'Dell said they can look at that and try to clean it up. Because of its layout, Park St. has always had an issue when one car takes an inordinate amount of time to wait for a parking space which then backs up three levels of the structure. Overall however, the new passes have sped up the exit times.

Mr. O'Meara noted that the counter signs for spaces available in the structures are mostly activated now.

NEXT REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING

November 1, 2017

ADJOURNMENT

No further business being evident, the chairman adjourned the meeting at 8:37 a.m.

City Engineer Paul O'Meara