

City of Birmingham
ADVISORY PARKING COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING

Birmingham City Hall Commission Room
151 Martin, Birmingham, Michigan
Wednesday, February 7, 2018

MINUTES

These are the minutes of the Advisory Parking Committee ("APC") regular meeting held on Wednesday February 7, 2018. The meeting was called to order at 7:40 a.m. by Chairman Al Vaitas.

Present: Chairman Al Vaitas
Vice-Chairperson Gayle Champagne
Anne Honhart
Steven Kalczynski (left at 9:23 a.m.)
Lisa Krueger (left at 9:23 a.m.)
Judith Paskiewicz

Absent: None

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

BSD: Ingrid Tighe

Administration: Mike Albrecht, Police Commander
Austin Fletcher, Asst. City Engineer
Tiffany Gunter, Asst. City Manager
Paul O'Meara, City Engineer
Carole Salutes, Recording Secretary

RECOGNITION OF GUESTS (none)

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OF JANUARY 3, 2018

Ms. Honhart made the following change:
Page 4 of 7 - Delete "Seconded by Mr."

Motion by Dr. Paskiewicz

Seconded by Ms. Champagne to accept the Minutes of January 3, 2018 as corrected.

Motion carried, 6-0.

VOICE VOTE:

Yeas: Paskiewicz, Champagne, Honhart, Kalczynski, Krueger, Vaitas

Nays: None

Absent: None

INTERVIEWS

PARKING CONSULTANT SERVICES

Ms. Gunter recalled at the last meeting of the Advisory Parking Committee ("APC") on January 3, 2018, members approved a Request for Proposals ("RFP") soliciting Parking Consultant Services to conduct an analysis and provide recommendations to improve the parking system in the Central Business District. The RFP was released on January 4, 2018. Staff received a total of four responses and conducted an internal review to identify finalists and invite those consultant teams to interview with the APC. The consultant teams that submitted proposals include Nelson/Nygaard, Rich and Associates, Walker Consultants, and Carl Walker. All bids met the minimum qualifications as outlined in the RFP.

Based on initial scoring, staff has invited the top three vendors to participate in interviews today. They are Nelson/Nygaard, Rich & Associates, and Walker Consultants. The APC will be asked to make a recommendation to the City Commission for the preferred consultant team. Staff has prepared a set of structured interview questions for the APC to use during the interviews to allow for maximum objectivity in the evaluation process. The Chair will ask the structured questions and APC members are welcome to add follow-up questions, if necessary.

The committee members then discussed the questions that would be put to the interviewees, as follows:

- 1) Tell us about your experience with similar projects, particularly those that involved public parking space in a densely populated urban environment.
- 2) What do you know about Birmingham's parking system and what is the greatest challenge with the existing system?

- 3) Describe your approach to community engagement and an example of your team's demonstrated ability to work with diverse groups on similar projects.
- 4) Can you provide an example of a recent parking solution that was implemented, but not immediately embraced by the community? What was missed in the planning process and was it resolved? If so, what was the fix? Finally, how does your team work to avoid situations such as these?
- 5) What sets your team apart from other planning firms?

Walker Consultants

Mr. Rick Klein, Vice-President and Managing Principal of Walker Consultants, advised that Mr. Jim Corbett will be the lead for the project. Mr. Klein went on to provide a little history on Walker. They have a long history with the City of Birmingham and they specialize in studies just like this. Not only does Walker come up with ideas for improvements, but they can be there for the next step to help implement them

Mr. Klein noted that Mr. Corbett has had ten years of experience with the City of Tampa, FL as Municipal Parking Manager. Prior to that he worked for the City of Ann Arbor, MI as project manager of Parking Operations Review and RFP Development for their Downtown Development Authority. Mr. Dan Kupferman, who is also on their team, will assist Mr. Corbett with technologies and operational solutions to parking problems.

Chairman Vaitas read each question to Mr. Corbett.

Responses:

Q1) City of Corpus Christi, TX had a challenge with engaging the community to come up with a public/private partnership to share the private off-street parking inventory so that it could be collectively used by visitors to the City of Corpus Christi. It became a unified parking system and not just a city parking system. Also, working with the City of Tampa over the years, he brought their antiquated system up to date.

Q2) Birmingham is a clean, well run system with a very successful operator, SP+. His experience with credit card in/credit card out systems is that credit cards are not always recognized. You have to get it to work 100% of the time. He did not see any glaring problems, but thinks one suggestion might be to have more curbside management because certain members of the community are taking advantage of ride sharing and ride hailing services. If there are not designated drop-off and pick-up areas, sometimes the service will stop right in a

traffic lane to let people off. That can be a safety issue. Also, a potential UPS or FedEx drop-off station could be created and packages distributed from that point.

Further, he found it difficult to find City of Birmingham public parking structures.

Mr. Kalczynski asked how they will determine whether the City is lacking a physical structure vs. signage or traffic flow. Mr. Corbett answered they can extract utilization data from existing technology. If a parking facility is greater than 85% occupied it tends to be less efficient. They rate utilization based on the various percentages of capacity.

Q3) They like to work with structured groups that have vested interest in the downtown community. He also believes in speaking to the audience through a structured presentation.

Q4) When they implemented their multi-space pay stations on the street in Downtown Tampa there was always the concern that the rate would be substantial enough to cover the cost of the credit card processing transaction fee. So they made the system so people could not buy less than an hour with a credit card. However, the community came back and said they wanted to pay for say, 20 minutes with a credit card. Therefore they ended up going back to the quarter hour implementation of the pay system.

Q5) He has direct private operator and municipal operator experience. He is also a Certified Administrator of Public Parking through the International Parking Institute. That leads to understanding how a city parking system should work.

In response to Dr. Paskiewicz, Mr. Corbett explained that he and Mr. Andrew Baglini from their Chicago office will be the primary leads and will pull their other resources as needed.

Nelson\Nygaard

Mr. Christopher Bongorno, Sr. Associate, was present along with Mr. Brad Strader from MKSK; and on the phone from San Francisco, Mr. Thomas Brown, Project Manager and Principal in charge for this project. Mr. Bongorno gave a short overview of Nelson\Nygaard and said he will be the Deputy Project Manager for this project. Mr. Strader and his team will be their leads on signage and wayfinding and community engagement/ stakeholder outreach. Ms. Julie Dixon of Dixon Resources and her team will be their leads on parking operations and technologies.

Mr. Strader advised that he has done a lot of work in Birmingham over the last 15 to 17 years. Also, MKSK was recently hired by the City for a three-year contract

as a Multi-Modal Board advisor. He lives nearby and is very familiar with Downtown Birmingham. Also on their team is Lauren Cardoni who is a transportation planner and a wayfinding expert. MKSK has a long relationship with Nelson\Nygaard in Michigan and in other states.

The Chairman started with the questions for Mr. Bongorno.

Responses

Q1) Most of the projects they work on are in densely populated areas. Birmingham is ahead of the game in many respects compared to some of the other places they have worked. That said there certainly will be opportunities to push forward and find new innovative solutions and best practices to apply here.

The Chairman asked how they manage demand and use and capacity. Mr. Bongorno responded they will look at supply and capacity expansion opportunities. They will take advantage of existing demand and use data and start to evaluate how it balances across Downtown. There are a lot of different strategies that go from operations and capital, technology implementation, and looking at best practices and how to optimize those already in play.

Mr. Brown explained how they put demand management into two buckets: redistributing demand and reducing demand.

Q2) They understand that Birmingham has recently adjusted rates, invested in technology, and made some operational changes; but they are still experiencing a lot of crunch, on-street and off-street. Additionally new development is coming in and that is leading to some issues.

Mr. Strader said the one thing he has not heard talked about here is how much to invest in additional parking structures; new, or adding levels, or tear down and rebuild, because what if in five or ten years 25% of the vehicles are going to be autonomous or there will be more Uber and Lyft. That is something this organization can weave into planning for parking for the future that the City has been missing so far.

Q3) Mr. Strader indicated he has worked with Ms. Gunter in some community engagement projects for the Rapid Transit Authority and SEMCOG. In Birmingham as well as in other places he has had great stakeholder and public engagement. People here like the fact that he lives in the area. In addition to on-line surveys, going door-to-door and talking about parking will hopefully be another way to gain more public participation.

Mr. Brown added one thing that has proved to be very valuable is the focus groups. Then the perspectives of those distinct groups can be documented and the City can respond to that range.

Q5) Nelson/Nygaard has a lot of best practices reviews and they can bring that innovation and experience to Birmingham. They are a multi-modal firm that puts people first. Parking is not the end goal, but part of the means of what makes a successful place.

Mr. Brown noted they have experts across the firm to dig into the aspects of pedestrian, bike, or shuttle connections for the overall parking system.

Mr. Bongorno said it would be a great opportunity to work in a community like this that has a lot of the ground work laid and wants to go further. He feels their team could be the firm that brings the City forward.

Mr. Strader added that Nelson/Nygaard has a national approach, the cache that people in Birmingham like. They will be bringing their observations and new ideas to Birmingham.

Rich & Associates

Mr. Dave Burr, Director of Parking Planning, introduced members of their team: Ms. Annaka Norris will serve as project manager. She will be assisted by Mr. Steven Wiltse who is a planner and also a transportation consultant. Mr. Jaymes Vettrano, who was formerly the City Manager for the City of Rochester, MI will be providing a management perspective and will also assist with community outreach.

Parking has to be managed and operated properly. Through community involvement and collecting a lot of data, they will be looking at how the parking works in Birmingham, and what some of the issues are that business and employees face. If parking is too difficult, people will go elsewhere. The team wants to understand what is needed to make the parking function properly so that it supports and is not a detriment to the economic vitality of the community.

One of the things they do in all of their studies is to involve stakeholders. There are a number of techniques that they would apply. A kickoff meeting is held, assessment is evaluated, there are stakeholder interviews, and analysis. All of these various stages build on each other to get to their preliminary presentation to the City which they call the Preliminary Report. Information is presented and feedback is received to make sure they are addressing all of the issues in the community. That information is used to produce their Final Report and presentation to the City.

If they do their job, parking will not be an issue in Birmingham. It is their goal to have parking support the community.

Chairman Vaitas opened up the series of questions for Ms. Norris:

Responses

Q1) Manitowak, WI is a project that she is just finishing up. It has a large downtown area and they have a huge problem with employees taking up parking space. Juliette, IL and Naperville, IL were management studies. Coeur D'Alene, Idaho, and Loveland, CO are communities where their team has been called back for help along the way. Also, they have been working with Royal Oak, MI for 20 years. Those are some of the projects that she has managed.

Q2) Parking can sometimes go against creating a walkable downtown and they want to make sure the parking is in the right places and that it is convenient. Wayfinding could be a little better in order to help the public find the parking structures. Some of the wayfinding inside the garages could be improved. It is great to see that Birmingham has such a good mix of uses downtown. Parking for employees may be the key factor to focus in on in order to free up parking for customers and visitors. Stakeholder interviews will provide information needed to understand how the system is really working. They are looking to run parking at about 85% occupied. That will provide enough for people to find a spot. There is previous overall history that will help them to understand parking demand in Downtown.

Q4) Williston, ND is an oil boom town, so the downtown is either really busy or kind of dead. Rich and Assoc. recommended two-hour parking in the core area and side streets because they didn't have time limits and it was really affecting retail businesses. Because they needed some longer term parking for employees without building a parking structure, the existing lots were made long-term. This worked very smoothly, but it took almost two and one-half years to implement. The biggest issue that typically stops things from occurring quickly is the public consensus.

Q5) What sets their team apart from other planning firms is their team approach where everybody comes together to work on a project.

At this time Mr. O'Meara gave a quick rundown on why a consulting firm is needed and what this committee needs to do. Demand is growing and more building is coming in the near future that will push the demand even further. We are concerned that a crunch point will come where they are not meeting the demands of the community and fresh ideas are needed. Ms. Gunter added that one of the goals the City Manager expressed to her was to have a

comprehensive overall look in order to make sure they are moving to improve the parking system, and to get a de-facto master plan for parking that is compatible with both the Multi-Modal Transportation and Planning Board agendas.

Ms. Honhart noted that for many years this board has wanted to see wayfinding signs throughout the City so that people know how to find the parking decks. It was discussed if the consultant recommends wayfinding signs whether it would be adopted by the City. That has always been put off because it was thought wayfinding should be throughout the entire City and not just for parking.

Mr. O'Meara felt it is a different environment now, and the City may be more receptive to taking on this challenge. Parking capacity is the bigger issue, but signage is important too. It was generally thought the City will be more willing now to adopt the recommendations of a consultant. Supply and demand is the really big issue. Ms. Gunter noted that stakeholder interviews can include feedback from the Multi-Modal Transportation Board and the Ad Hoc Parking Development Committee..

COMMITTEE MEMBER EVALUATION

Ms. Krueger thought when Walker Consultants spoke specifically about Birmingham they hadn't gotten to know the City the way she would have liked them to. The Chairman agreed.

Ms. Champagne thought the experience that MKSK with Nelson/Nygaard already has in-house is interesting. Chairman Vaitas added they have a lot of experience and a lot of local contracts. Ms. Honhart liked the fact that they talked about the future; not necessarily building more structures, but trying to find more solutions to existing parking problems. They also mentioned going door-to-door, focus groups, surveys, and the garages. Ms. Krueger felt they will think outside the box and that is where the City needs help.

Dr. Paskiewicz liked that Rich & Associates named two specific problems about employees taking up parking spaces and also how parking could be the reason people don't want to go there. These were down in the trenches kinds of comments about what they actually end up dealing with. By contrast it was hard to really get that sense from the other two groups.

Chairman Vaitas expressed the thought that the different groups showed various levels of confidence. He felt that Rich & Associates showed the lowest level of confidence about what they can accomplish.

Ms. Champagne thought Nelson/Nygaard had a detailed and comprehensive scope of work in their presentation. The Chairman agreed.

Ms. Honhart said it was interesting the way Walker & Associates talked about pulling the stakeholders together to lay out why parking is the way it is. Once they understand the problems they become more sympathetic towards the situation.

Mr. O'Dell commented that Julie Dixon of Nelson/Nygaard is really a rock star in the parking industry. She worked in San Francisco and designed and tested their whole system. A lot of municipalities have modeled their system based on what San Francisco did.

Mr. O'Meara advised that when a favorite is selected, staff will make calls to their references to make sure there is not a pattern of problems.

Dr. Paskiewicz offered one more thought. She felt the team of Rich & Associates who all live here would have come more prepared right away with experience and suggestions.

It was noted that it is good for a consultant to have experience in other places, but they should be nearby and available. The Chairman said in his opinion Nelson/Nygaard has the combination of both local and national familiarity.

Motion by Ms. Champagne

Seconded by Ms. Honhart to recommend to the City Commission to approve an agreement with Nelson\Nygaard Consulting Associates.

Motion carried, 6-0.

VOICE VOTE:

Yeas: Champagne, Honhart, Kalczynski, Krueger, Paskiewicz, Vaitas

Nays: None

Absent: None

OLD WOODWARD AVE. RECONSTRUCTION
BSD FUNDING REQUEST

Ms. Gunter advised that the Executive Director of the Birmingham Shopping District ("BSD") has plans to launch a multifaceted marketing campaign to promote the downtown shopping, dining and spa experience during the Old Woodward Ave. reconstruction project which is set to begin in March.

Birmingham restaurants, retailers, and businesses rely on the BSD to effectively communicate to consumers that despite construction, businesses are open and various parking options are available to accommodate customers' parking needs. The marketing campaign will highlight the downtown through TV, radio, magazine, newspaper, and social media ads promoting the popular "2 Hours Free Parking in the Decks" program and free valet parking available. The BSD Board has committed a total of \$100,000 for Old Woodward Ave. construction related activities.

The BSD is requesting that the Advisory Parking Committee recommend a \$60,000 commitment from the parking fund to support the marketing campaign. The marketing effort will incorporate messaging to continuously promote the parking system. The APC allocated \$75,000 in 2015 to support valet parking services related to the Old Woodward Construction project. These funds have not been expended due to the project's delay. There was no set-aside to promote the valet services in the original request. The additional \$60,000 would allow for a robust marketing campaign with multiple layers to reach a broader audience spanning the four to five month duration of the construction project in order to increase the likelihood of patrons using the valet parking option.

In response to the Chairman, Ms. Gunter said she will request a more detailed plan from the BSD in terms of the media approach.

Ms. Krueger felt that \$60,000 across four months is quite high. Ms. Gunter also agreed to get the total amount that the BSD is committing to the valet services. Ms. Champagne wanted to see a breakdown of how the \$60,000 will be used. She favored anything this committee can do to support the merchants, but it should be done responsibly.

Ms. Gunter said she will bring the requested information to this committee next month so they can make a more informed decision.

MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORTS (nothing of note)

MEETING OPEN FOR MATTERS NOT ON THE AGENDA

Mr. O'Meara mentioned the committee has a lack of members with three vacancies along with two alternate positions open. If anyone knows of a potential candidate, they are encouraged to let them know.

NEXT REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING

February 7, 2018

ADJOURNMENT

No further business being evident, the chairman adjourned the meeting at 9:30 a.m.

City Engineer Paul O'Meara