

GREAT FALLS PARKING ADVISORY COMMISSION
Minutes of January 17, 2012

Members Present: Dave Campbell, Darren Brown, Charlie Bruckner

Members Absent: Phil Kiser [and Chuck Fulcher](#)

Staff Present: Wendy Thomas, Phyllis Tryon

Others Present: David Gagnon

Call to Order: The Parking Advisory Commission meeting was called to order by Mr. Campbell at 3:00 p.m. in the Rainbow Room.

Meeting Minutes: Mr. Campbell asked if there were any changes to the November 21, 2011 meeting minutes. Mr. Brown made a motion to approve the minutes as corrected. Mr. Bruckner seconded the motion, and all being in favor, the motion passed.

OLD BUSINESS

Capital Needs Assessment Update

Ms. Thomas said the Capital Needs Assessment is moving slowly. She sent a contract to the consultant and she is waiting to hear from them. They have been quite unresponsive. She will send an email tomorrow and suggest they respond or she will need to start negotiating with the next bidder. Mr. Brown noted there is a timeline for the work requested. Ms. Thomas noted this consultant is out of Denver. There was only two points difference on a 450-some point scale between this consultant and the next.

Parking Tokens

Mr. Campbell said he would use new quarter tokens if they were available, but customers would get frustrated if they tried using them in meters that could not be updated for the new tokens. Mr. Brown asked if Mr. Gagnon had been able to track token use this past month. Mr. Gagnon said they sold 800 tokens. Mr. Campbell noted that is \$40 worth.

Ms. Thomas said the City was close to releasing an RFP, if they can get State approval to help fund it, for a comprehensive look at Downtown Great Falls, including parking, streetscape, and complete streets. She noted the current popular professional recommendation is to utilize payment boxes on the streets and get rid of meters. Mr. Campbell said that the boxes work in large, congested cities, but he thought Great Falls would have to increase parking fees substantially to pay for the boxes if they required the use of credit cards for payment. Ms. Thomas said there were pay stations that were cash only. She noted there was an inconvenience factor in that a customer has to go down the street to the box and back to the car to place a ticket, and in areas with snowfall, the ticket gets hidden on the dashboard by snow on the windshield.

After further discussion about pay stations versus meters and the use of tokens, Mr. Campbell asked if there were used meter heads available from other cities. Ms. Thomas said it was worth looking into. It was noted that there may be more tokens sold if they were quarter tokens instead of nickel tokens. There was concern about the cost of buying quarter tokens and having to reprogram the meters. Ms. Thomas suggested asking the Downtown Great Falls Association for their input on whether they would utilize tokens. Mr. Campbell said there was an upcoming meeting and he would try to remember to ask about that.

Shop 'til You Drop Update

Ms. Thomas reported that hoteliers are very supportive of the Shop 'til You Drop program and would like it to continue. However, Standard Parking has reported use of placards coming from a tattoo parlor and a raffle, but none from local hotels. She is cautioning hotels not to keep the cards in a place too readily accessible. They responded they would revisit how they are handing them out. In the meantime, any vehicle with a local license plate using a placard is being given a parking ticket. In the chance that someone has come from out of town and is renting a car or using a relative's car, the ticket would be dismissed if they let Standard Parking know. Ms. Thomas said one of the recently ticketed vehicles is registered to a downtown business owner.

The owner of Dragonfly Goods has had a couple of out-of-town customers mention the parking placard.

"Oops" Ticketing Update

Mr. Gagnon said that Ms. Guest in Missoula did not have any information yet on how the "Oops" ticket program is working there, and she suggested waiting 60 days for her to have some information. Ms. Thomas was not able to meet in Missoula with Ms. Guest and the national parking expert yesterday.

NEW BUSINESS

Monthly and Quarterly Revenue & Expense Reports (11/11, 12/11)

Ms. Thomas reported that she sent a memo to the City Fiscal Services Director to transfer one-half of the revenues from Parking Lot 6 to the Library. She said this has not been done on any regular schedule in the past, and she has decided to make the transfer on an annual basis. Ms. Thomas explained that she has added revenues to the report showing money received for tickets paid through City Court.

Mr. Brown inquired what fund will cover the parking study, and Ms. Thomas said she thought it was under "Other Professional Services." Mr. Brown said there may not be funds to seal the surface of parking lots this year and inquired about timetables for maintenance projects. Ms. Thomas said the study would show what maintenance should be performed in a timetable for the next 20 years, as well as estimate costs. She said that depending on what the parking garages need, lot maintenance may need to be deferred.

Ms. Thomas stated there are reserve funds for parking available for maintenance, and that those funds do not go into the General Fund.

Handicap Parking Time Limits

Ms. Thomas said she looked into the State and the City of Great Falls parking requirements for Handicap Parking. She said the requirements are that Handicap Parking is not subject to any time limits. However, meters in Great Falls must be fed every two hours. She said we were meeting the letter of the law, but not perhaps the intent of the law. Discussion followed about recalibrating Handicap Parking meters, and also the cost of renting versus purchasing a recalibration unit. It was suggested that perhaps there are now used recalibration units for purchase.

After some discussion, it was agreed that Handicap parking meters should expire after four hours instead of two.

MOTION: That Handicap Parking meters be extended to four hours.

Made by: Mr. Brown

Seconded: Mr. Bruckner

All being in favor, the motion passed.

Ms. Thomas said she would bring the recommendation before the Mobility Committee within the Transportation group. She would also check with the City Attorney's Office, as an amendment to the City Code may be required to make this change.

Board Comments

Mr. Brown stated that he had received a complaint from a citizen who lived near Downtown whose neighbors had multiple vehicles parked out front as well as there being some disabled vehicles. The citizen wondered what could be done. Ms. Thomas said inoperable vehicles can be dealt with through the Police Department, but if citizens have a valid residential parking permit, their operable vehicles are legal.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

ADJOURNMENT

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 21, as Monday, February 20 is a holiday. There being no further business, the Commission adjourned at 3:48 p.m.