

GREAT FALLS PARKING ADVISORY COMMISSION
Minutes of November 21, 2011

Members Present: Dave Campbell, Darren Brown, Charles Fulcher, Charlie Bruckner

Members Absent: Phil Kiser

Staff Present: Wendy Thomas, Phyllis Tryon

Others Present: David Gagnon, Joan Redeen, Bob Milford

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 October meeting minutes. Ms. Thomas noted the meeting date on the minutes should be October 18, not October 17 as printed. There were no other changes. Mr. Fulcher made a motion to approve the minutes of the October 18, 2011 meeting to include the date change. Mr. Bruckner seconded the motion, and all being in favor, the motion passed.

OLD BUSINESS

Parking RFP

Ms. Thomas stated the Parking Request For Proposal information includes some New Business also. The Request for Proposals was sent out, and she said the committee reviewing the proposals will meet December 1. There were four responses, all from national companies. She asked Chairman Kiser if he would like to participate on this committee, but his schedule is too restrictive. He recommended Mr. Brown, who agreed to participate. Ms. Thomas said that Mr. Gagnon and City Engineer, Dave Dobbs, are part of the committee. She has also asked a local structural engineer to participate, but has not yet received a response. She will report the committee selection at the January meeting.

Handhelds/Ticket History

Mr. Gagnon checked with Cardinal Tracking on software upgrades for handhelds so that parking attendants can check ticket history on vehicles. None is currently available for this system, and Mr. Gagnon reported that the Cardinal representative said he was not aware of any other companies with that technology.

Mr. Gagnon also spoke with Ms. Ann Guest in Missoula about the Oops! ticketing program. She had serious reservations about how the program will affect Parking revenue and whether it will work for them. She was concerned there may be a 30-40 percent loss of revenue. Mr. Gagnon will follow up with her within 60 days. Mr. Campbell asked if someone getting a first-time parking ticket in Missoula has to go to City Hall to have the ticket excused. Mr. Gagnon said he did not discuss those details with Ms. Guest, but he would be willing to call her for more detailed information. Mr. Fulcher suggested asking her what changes she might suggest to the program to make it work better.

Ms. Redeen noted that the Missoula BID was against instituting an Oops! program over concerns about revenue loss, but the Great Falls BID is in favor of it.

Parking Dimensions for Central Avenue

Ms. Thomas reported that given the dimensions of street lanes and parking depth requirements for Central Avenue, there is clearly not enough footage to allow angle parking on both sides of the street.

Parking Commission and voting BID member

Ms. Thomas said the City Ordinance creating the Parking Commission states that voting members of the Parking Commission are appointed by the City Commission. The Parking Commission can request the City Commission to amend the Ordinance to allow the BID representative to be a voting member. Discussion followed and the item was tabled for the next meeting agenda.

NEW BUSINESS

Parking Rate Modification Table

Mr. Campbell asked about the \$945 Passenger/Freight, Meter District program on the handout and whether anyone has that permit. Ms. Thomas said she did not think there were any of these permits within the meter district. The Boys and Girls Club and another private child care business have this type of permit outside the Meter District. The Parking program installs signs for "Pick-up Zone Only" so that children can be dropped off and picked up. The business pays for sign installation, and the annual fee is \$100 per space. Ms. Redeen asked if the school district pays any of those fees, and Ms. Thomas said they do not. The Parking program does not regulate school district parking.

Ms. Thomas noted that the proposed Boot Fee changes will need to come before the City Commission. For this reason, the Parking Commission may want to suggest a one-time fee increase instead of a two-step increase.

Meeting Dates in January and February

Both regular meeting dates in January and February occur on holidays when the City offices are closed. It was decided to hold those meetings on the Tuesday immediately following those Monday dates. The January meeting will be held on the 17th, and the next meeting will be February 21. There is no regular meeting in December.

Parking Ticket Void Report

There was discussion that the Monthly Citation Dismissal report can be presented quarterly instead of monthly. Ms. Thomas suggested the information be tracked and presented when reviewing the informal Oops! program.

Monthly Revenue & Expense Reports (10/11)

There was discussion about no monthly lot revenue from Lot 6. Mr. Campbell inquired whether Tap House Grill was satisfied with their new Courtesy Parking signs. Ms. Thomas said the owner was happy with the 30-minute Courtesy Parking sign. The owner canceled the two Courtesy Parking spaces in front of the bar area, as bar traffic occurs basically after enforcement hours are over. Another business owner has inquired about a 30-minute sign.

Holiday Parking Enforcement

Mr. Campbell asked about Saturday parking enforcement being lessened during December, and beginning the weekend following Thanksgiving. There is no enforcement on Black Friday. Discussion followed about whether there has been any advertising. Ms. Redeen said she thought the Downtown Great Falls Association is out of marketing funds but can send out email notices to their contact list. BID puts the information on Facebook. During the entire week of December 19-24, there will be no parking enforcement. Ms. Thomas will send out a press release, and Ms. Redeen said the television stations may follow up on that release. Mr. Gagnon said the parking enforcement employees can work on maintenance and garages.

Mr. Campbell noted that D.A. Davidson employees tend to park on the street all day during free parking times. After some discussion, it was suggested that a two-hour enforcement be complaint driven.

Parking Token Pricing

Information was provided on pricing of quarter parking tokens. Incorrect tokens are taken by the meter but no time is given in return. It was noted that costs would be recouped more quickly with quarter tokens than with nickel tokens. Mr. Gagnon stated that changing to quarter tokens would require renting a programming unit at a cost of just over \$1,000. In addition, each meter would have to be pulled and a new rate plate installed at \$1.15 per device. Six-minute nickel tokens would still work in the meters, along with the new quarter tokens. The 200-300 existing mechanical meters located in outer areas cannot be changed because parts are no longer available.

It will cost approximately \$200 to have the City name custom stamped on the tokens. Mr. Campbell said that customizing the tokens help users remember the purpose of the token. Mr. Fulcher agreed the City name should be on the tokens.

Ms. Thomas said this was not an item budgeted for this year, and she is being cautious because information on the structural study of the parking garage is still to come. There was discussion about whether the change was worth the cost given the number of users, and whether there would be increased use if tokens were a quarter instead of a nickel. There have been complaints about the value of a nickel token being only six minutes on the meters. Mr. Milford said if the City name is placed on the tokens, they become more collectible.

It was decided to address the issue again at the January meeting. Mr. Brown suggested that Mr. Gagnon track nickel token use from this point until the next meeting. Ms. Thomas said she will produce a table showing the overall cost of each type of token, number of customers using them, an Autortrax estimate, and a cost estimate for employee time to change meter plates. Mr. Gagnon will find out about turn-around time for ordering tokens. Ms. Redeen asked if both sides of the token are stamped, and suggested the ~~BID~~ Downtown logo be stamped on the tokens also.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Redeen introduced the new Community Ambassador, Bob Milford, who is in the position until January 31, 2012. The former Ambassador has taken a position at Showdown. Mr. Milford said plowing the sidewalks after the first snow went smoothly, and most business owners are good about clearing the area in front of their business.

OTHER BOARD BUSINESS

Ms. Thomas noted that the Shop Til You Drop In Bed cards went out and she received some positive feedback from hotel owners.

There was discussion about the television stations possibly buying parking passes for meter spaces. Ms. Thomas noted that although employees are given parking tokens, if they are ticketed, they are responsible to pay the ticket themselves. Therefore, there is little incentive for the stations to purchase parking passes for their employees.

ADJOURNMENT

There will be no December meeting. There being no further business, the Commission adjourned at 3:52 p.m.