

**GREAT FALLS PARKING ADVISORY COMMISSION**  
**Minutes of October 17, 2011**

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

**Members Absent:** none

**Staff Present:** Wendy Thomas, Phyllis Tryon

**Others Present:** David Gagnon, Joan Redeen

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

**Meeting Minutes:** Mr. Kiser noted that the discussion at the previous meeting to double boot fees again a year from now was not included as part of the motion on doubling boot fees this year. He wanted to ensure that today's minutes reflect a desire by the Commission to hold a discussion a year from now regarding doubling boot fees again.

Mr. Campbell made a motion to approve the minutes of the September 19, 2011 meeting as written. Mr. Fulcher seconded the motion, and all being in favor, the motion passed.

**Old Business**

**Delivery Fee Proposed Increase**

Ms. Thomas explained that when the Parking Commission approved a delivery permit this past spring, they stated they wanted to revisit the fee schedule in October to discuss raising the fee from \$50 for the first vehicle to \$75. She said only three permits have been sold this year. Mr. Gagnon said they have had recent inquiries but not purchases. Mr. Kiser said that vehicles delivering in the middle of Central Avenue aren't being ticketed, and Mr. Gagnon said it is up to the Police Department to enforce in the middle of the street. Ms. Thomas said the primary intention for the permit was for UPS and FedEx vehicles because they were the ones being ticketed, and with the permit, they can park at a meter.

Ms. Redeen asked about delivery vehicles and alley parking procedures. Mr. Gagnon said as long as a vehicle isn't blocking the alley, there is not enforcement. Ms. Thomas explained that is a codified policy. However, Mr. Gagnon said to call Standard Parking if a vehicle completely blocks the alley so a parking attendant can be sent to ticket the vehicle. Mr. Kiser noted that alleys are not for regular vehicle passage but are for delivery trucks. Discussion took place regarding the need for delivery vehicles to sometimes block alleys for short periods. Mr. Kiser stated the delivery fee for a first vehicle should remain at \$50.

**Courtesy Parking Program**

Ms. Thomas said Western Sign was making a new Courtesy Parking sign for Tap House Grill. Mr. Gagnon said it was in place, but they were unhappy about the placement and the owner would be calling Ms. Thomas. The courtesy spot is for 30 minutes instead of 15 minutes, and the face of the sign states that it is courtesy of Tap House Grill. Ms. Thomas explained that the Parking fund paid for the new signs since Tap House had paid for the previous signs and the 30-minute courtesy and the sign style are experimental. The cost was \$27.50.

Ms. Thomas said that at the last meeting, there had been discussion about changing Courtesy Parking rates. She is developing a report listing each parking program and to whom requests need to be made for any change in rates. She said she would have that report at the next PAC meeting. At this point, she said she believes parking garage

and lot changes need to be addressed to the City Manager, and all other parking fees are addressed to the City Commission. The PAC can review boot fee changes and Courtesy Parking changes at the next meeting, and those items can then be presented to the appropriate entity.

### **Lighting in Parking Garages**

Ms. Thomas said she released an RFP for assessments for the parking garages. Included in the request is an assessment of the existing lighting. Capital improvement planning includes short, medium, and long-range objectives for budgeting over the next 35 years. Ms. Thomas suggested that when information is received from a lighting consultant, it can be forwarded to the parking consultant and move forward from there.

### **Sleep/Shop/Park Pass**

Ms. Thomas said the Great Falls Lodging Association approved \$500 for the Sleep/Shop/Park Pass program, along with the BID and the Downtown Great Falls Association. As soon as the funding comes in, she will have the passes printed and send out a press release. Mr. Brown asked if Ms. Thomas had approached a printer to add their logo for a printing discount. Ms. Thomas agreed that is a good idea, and added that the price quote is already low and she is anxious to get the passes printed. Ms. Redeen said she is about a week away from ordering grocery bags for downtown. Ms. Thomas noted the partnerships with the bags, coupons, and groups willing to get involved is very exciting.

### **Voided tickets**

Mr. Kiser asked if handhelds had the capacity to show past parking tickets when a license plate number is entered. Mr. Gagnon said they do not, and that the tickets can be tracked when the device is uploaded to TicketTrac. The handhelds do bring up a message when certain criteria are present, but they do not give any details. Mr. Gagnon said he could ask Cardinal Tracking about upgrades to the handhelds. When the handhelds were purchased four or five years ago, the cost was about \$3500-\$4000 each.

There was discussion about the number of booted vehicles and tickets on unmarked Police vehicles. Ms. Thomas said she would examine the report further for the next meeting. Mr. Bruckner asked about the meaning of the ticket not being placed on the vehicle, and it was explained that the owner of the vehicle appeared before the ticket was placed on the vehicle. In such cases, the ticket is voided. Ms. Thomas said that information is being tracked as part of the informal voided ticket policy. Mr. Gagnon explained that voided tickets for lot permits means someone had renewed their lot permit at the first of the month but neglected to have the permit visible on the vehicle. Those tickets are also voided when the driver shows proof of the permit.

### **New Business**

#### **Parking Tokens**

Ms. Thomas noted that a lot of tokens get lost and they have to circulate three times before cost is recouped on them. Discussion followed on the value of nickel tokens versus quarter tokens. Mr. Kiser said he wouldn't approve ordering any nickel tokens, which are only good for 6 minutes. He said people have asked about quarter tokens for 10 years. Ms. Thomas said she would have to price quarter tokens. Mr. Gagnon said his supply of nickel tokens is nearly out and he would hate to tell customers he has none on hand. Discussion followed about why the current tokens weren't circulating back into the system. Ms. Thomas asked Mr. Gagnon to follow up with customers to see if there is interest in quarter versus nickel tokens. Committee members asked how many tokens are purchased at a time per customer, and Mr. Gagnon said that Bresnan, for instance, recently purchased 1,000. The last order the City placed for tokens was about a decade ago. It was noted that quarter tokens would be more profitable than

nickel tokens. Ms. Thomas stated that companies such as Bresnan and the news media would find it more beneficial to purchase a \$50 first-vehicle parking permit.

### **BID Request**

The Committee reviewed the BID request to park the snow removal equipment in the fenced enclosure of the parking garage free of charge. Ms. Redeen said the BID is going to shovel a four-foot clear path on sidewalks in the entire BID District. She will coordinate with the City where the removed snow is placed. Property owners are still responsible for snow removal on the entire sidewalk area, but BID's efforts will help with vacancies and store owners who choose not to remove snow in front of their business. Mr. Kiser applauded the BID decision to improve the ease of pedestrian traffic downtown.

MOTION: That the Business Improvement District be granted a monthly parking pass at no charge in the North Parking Garage for the Arctic Cat Prowler to be parked in the fenced enclosure.

Made by: Mr. Kiser  
Seconded by: Mr. Brown

VOTE: All being in favor, the motion passed.

### **Quarterly Revenue and Expense Report – Parking Fund**

The Committee reviewed the first quarter Revenue and Expense report for the Parking Fund. It was clarified that the item, "Other Professional Services," was a four-month figure instead of quarterly figure due to when the October payment was processed for the Standard Parking contract. It was suggested that item read "Standard Parking Management Agreement" instead of "Other Professional Services." Mr. Kiser commented that Standard Parking costs have risen substantially in the past number of years. It was noted that of the Internal Service Charges, the Central Insurance portion is charged for the entire fiscal year in the first month, whereas the rest of the Internal Service Charges are billed out monthly over the course of the year. When considering these two items, the bottom line would not be a loss.

Mr. Kiser noted that there is no funding for improvements such as repairing the parking garage electrical problem, which is why he thought the ticket revenue was now coming into the Parking Fund. Ms. Thomas stated that the ticket revenue is coming into the fund because that is the correct procedure according to City code. She said it might be necessary to tap out most of the reserve funds to address the structural issues of the North Parking Garage. She also noted that reserve funds are not accounted for in the monthly Profit and Loss Statement. Mr. Campbell stated that the Balance Sheet would show reserve funds, but a Profit and Loss Statement would not.

Mr. Fulcher said he it would be helpful to see the budgeted figures for each line item. There was a brief discussion on recurring Internal Service Charges set by the City. Mr. Kiser said that in lieu of parking meters, one idea would be to levy an assessment on Downtown properties based on square footage of properties.

### **Monthly Revenue and Expense Report – Standard Parking**

Mr. Kiser asked how current figures compare to last year. Ms. Thomas said that revenue for the first quarter of 2010 was \$170,708. Mr. Campbell said he was interested in the trends for Downtown. There was discussion about comparison of figures between the year-to-date report for Standard Parking and the report for the City Parking Fund.

## Public Comment

Mr. Kiser opened the meeting for public comment. Ms. Thomas said she has had some conversations with the Human Resources Department at NEW about parking spaces for employee recognition. Ms. Thomas suggested to them that they consider dedicated parking spaces in the parking garage. The Recognition Committee at NEW wanted to pursue that idea and wanted to know the costs. Ms. Thomas told them she would bring it to the Parking Commission. Ms. Thomas also explained to NEW that the dedicated spaces would be self-regulating, so if someone parked in a space that didn't belong to them, it would be up to the employee to report it to Standard Parking. NEW will also need to pay for the signs for the spaces.

After discussion, the following motions were introduced:

MOTION: That reserved parking spaces in the North Parking Garage be charged at a rate of \$75 per month to NEW.

Made by: Mr. Kiser  
Seconded by: Mr. Brown

All being in favor, the motion passed.

MOTION: That reserved parking spaces for the public be charged at a rate of \$100 per month, and that persons reserving spaces pay for their signs.

Made by: Mr. Kiser  
Seconded by: Mr. Bruckner

All being in favor, the motion passed.

Ms. Thomas said she will present the proposed changes to the City Manager.

Mr. Fulcher suggested signage to alert drivers to the fact that the South Parking Garage is only reserved monthly permit parking. He entered the garage thinking it offered daily parking, and once inside, could not exit without backing up and irritating drivers trying to enter. Mr. Gagnon explained that signage will be part of the parking study. Ms. Thomas explained that because wayfinding will be part of the Downtown Master Plan, she thought it best to wait on signage until a study is done.

Ms. Redeen said she was in Bozeman last week for the Downtown Forum, and Great Falls may host the Forum next year. She attended a workshop on parking, and learned that the City of Bozeman assumed administration of parking in 2008. They added a City employee to oversee the parking program and retained employees that had worked under the previous contract for parking services, but shifted some duties and made various changes. One of the changes was to describe parking personnel as "Parking Ambassadors." These ambassadors meet and greet new store owners and offer a business card for contact in case of any problems or questions about parking. Ms. Redeen noted that the Bozeman downtown does not have parking meters, but after two hours, a ticket is \$25. She also said she would like to continue to build partnerships between parking attendants in Great Falls and the BID. The Downtown Safety Committee has also discussed this for safety reasons. The BID has one ambassador who works 20 hours a week, and parking attendants can add to the number of eyes on the street for Downtown safety purposes. Ms. Redeen also noted that the BID representative to the Parking Commission in Bozeman is a voting member of that commission. Ms. Thomas said she will need to review the ordinance which created the Great Falls commission to see if Ms. Redeen can be a voting member on this Commission.

Mr. Kiser said the buildings in downtown Bozeman have fewer stories than the Great Falls Downtown. He also suggested that parking attendants can help educate business owners Downtown that meter parking is for

customers. Mr. Gagnon said that one of the main job responsibilities for attendants now is to educate the public while they are enforcing parking. Ms. Thomas said she recently observed a Downtown business owner come out of the store to greet an attendant, and that is a positive testament for the employees of Standard Parking. Mr. Kiser said it also points to the City voiding first-time parking tickets.

Ms. Redeen also explained that in Bozeman, a person cannot park in a space and then after two hours, repark their vehicle within the same block.

Mr. Kiser inquired about what City code requires for street width for angle parking Downtown. Ms. Thomas said she will have the information for the next meeting. She then asked to be excused from the meeting for another appointment.

Mr. Fulcher said there might be a way to approach the highest repeat parking offenders and ask what it would take to have them park legally in a lot or garage. Ms. Redeen pointed out that if you make it illegal to repark a vehicle within the same block, it becomes more convenient to park in a lot or a garage.

### **Other Business**

Mr. Gagnon said he would like feedback on lightening up Saturday enforcement for the holidays, beginning with the Saturday before Thanksgiving, and also offering free parking the entire week before Christmas as usual. The Christmas dates would be December 19-24. Mr. Gagnon also would like feedback on parking for free at the meters with and without the two-hour limit.

Ms. Redeen noted the Parade of Lights this year is Friday, November 25, and the Christmas Stroll will be Friday, December 2. Mr. Gagnon said he would like to see more advertising this year for free parking in the garages during the Christmas Stroll. Mr. Gagnon said he would discuss the holiday enforcement with Ms. Thomas. The Commission agreed to address the issue of not allowing reparking within the same block at the next meeting.

### **Adjournment**

Mr. Kiser said he will be out of town and unable to attend the next meeting. The next meeting of the Parking Advisory Commission will be Monday, November 21, 2011. Mr. Kiser said there will be no December meeting. There being no further business, the Commission adjourned at 4:24 p.m.