

**GREAT FALLS PARKING ADVISORY COMMISSION**  
**Minutes of April 25, 2011**

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

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

**Others Present:** Dave Gagnon, Standard Parking, and Joan Redeen, BID

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

**Meeting Minutes** Mr. Fulcher made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 21, 2011 meeting as written. Mr. Brown seconded the motion, and the motion passed 4-0.

**Old Business**

**Parking Meter District Boundary Map**

Ms. Thomas presented an enlarged map of the parking meter district for the Commission to review. There had been discussion at a previous Commission meeting regarding the relaxed enforcement of parking in residential districts. A complaint was received from Prairie Mountain Insurance about parking enforcement at 300 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue South. Ms. Thomas also received a call regarding enforcement on 2<sup>nd</sup> Street North where out-of-town Post Office vehicles park in residential districts when Post Office employees are here for training. Although these Post Office employees are in town only temporarily, the trainings occur regularly. In the past, these vehicles were not ticketed. However, there have been confrontations between residents and the Post Office employees. Ms. Thomas left two messages at the Post Office but had not yet received a response. She will inform the Post Office that these employees are not allowed to park in violation of the posted parking restrictions and suggest they park in Post Office parking. Ms. Thomas said one resident who has complaints was pleased she was attempting to call the Post Office.

Ms. Thomas noted there are two issues involved: are we or are we not enforcing parking regulations, and are we going to enforce against government vehicles? It was noted that past policy was not to ticket government vehicles. Mail trucks parking in residential areas are not ticketed. Ms. Thomas stated Federal Express and UPS vehicles have recently been ticketed, and she is working to get a policy in place for them.

Mr. Gagnon stated his employees have been instructed to cite government vehicles that are in violation of parking regulations, and that they will deal with them on a case-by-case basis. Discussion ensued about ticketing City vehicles, and it was noted everyone has to be treated fairly and consistently.

Mr. Kiser inquired about the complaint from Prairie Mountain. Ms. Thomas said the complaint was that people from CTA were parking for two hours in residential zoned parking in front of the offices. She noted that it was the only such complaint for all the parking districts. Mr. Kiser noted that when complaints come in, patrol and ticketing can be stepped up in that area to correct the problem.

Ms. Thomas noted these are the only two complaints (Post Office vehicles and Prairie Mountain Insurance) in the three months that relaxed enforcement in the 2-and-3 hour restricted parking areas

has been taking place, which includes a block in either direction of the Courthouse where there are no meters, and east of 9<sup>th</sup> Street.

Discussion took place about areas to add to relaxed enforcement. Areas discussed in the past were not yet added to the mix until the Commission was able to review results of the first trial areas.

A motion was made by Darren Brown to remove the following areas from parking enforcement: 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave North from 3<sup>rd</sup> Street North to 4<sup>th</sup> Street North; 4<sup>th</sup> Street from 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave North to 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue North; 5<sup>th</sup> Street from 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue North to 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue North; and 6<sup>th</sup> Street from 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue North to 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue North. Patrolling would continue on 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue North from 4<sup>th</sup> Street to 6<sup>th</sup> Street. Dave Campbell seconded the motion. The motion passed with all in favor.

Ms. Thomas said she was concerned that there would be problems with parking near the Courthouse. Dave Campbell noted that parking around Gibson Park creates some seasonal issues with Municipal band concerts and other park activities.

### **New Business**

#### **Monthly Revenue & Expense Reports**

Ms. Thomas stated she is working on a new spreadsheet and chart for revenue and expenses. She is working on a parking garage revenue spreadsheet, and she will request Dave Gagnon to send an update to her monthly.

New courtesy parking spots have been purchased by Stranger Things and First Avenue Auto Body. Mr. Fulcher said the owner of the Tap House may purchase courtesy parking in front of the establishment, but the owner had wondered who enforced the parking in those spots. It was explained that it is up to the establishment to contact Standard Parking for enforcement if the privilege is abused.

Ms. Thomas said she has discussed with the City's Fiscal Services Department that citation revenue should come into the Parking Budget, where currently it goes into the City General Fund. She stated there were some substantial costs coming up this year with the need for a downtown parking study and a structural analysis of the North parking ramp. The elevator core in the parking ramp and the stairwell towers are sinking and causing electrical issues.

Ms. Thomas noted the City has signed a 3-year agreement with Standard Parking and they will still have to be paid per the agreement. The amount for the upcoming fiscal year is \$308,640.

Discussion ensued about the budget report and the expense of repairing the North ramp elevator structure. Ms. Thomas is hoping to complete the structural evaluation during the upcoming fiscal year, which begins in July for the City. She has contacted two firms which conduct evaluations, restoration, and parking studies. At this point in time, she is budgeting \$25,000 for the studies but is not certain the amount is what will be required. The Commission discussed the safety aspect of the facility. The structure was built around 1980. The stairwell tower is a separate building from the main parking facility.

Mr. Kiser inquired about the possibility of getting ticket revenue out of the City General Fund and into the Parking fund. He explained that originally when the City wrote tickets, the money went to Parking,

but when the work was contracted out, the money then went into the General Fund. However, he supported Parking getting the funds. Ms. Thomas said she can espouse depositing the revenues into the Parking Fund due to the high cost of the upcoming parking building elevator repairs.

Ms. Thomas presented information on the Ft. Myers, Florida parking program. She noted that parking fees were active during evening events parking in the garages.

Ms. Thomas had sent the Commission two Power Point presentations on the parking program from Rome, Georgia. Mr. Kiser would like this information reviewed and on the agenda for the next Commission meeting.

### **Public Comment**

Mr. Kiser opened public comment. Ms. Redeen asked whether a person shopping downtown could present a shopping receipt and get a parking ticket waived. Mr. Kiser wondered if that would cause people to stop feeding meters on a regular basis. Some shop owners pay tickets for their customers. Mr. Fulcher said he thought any such program would need to be initiated by the City, not the Parking Commission. It was discussed that the City used to have a courtesy parking program where a customer received two warnings before having to pay a ticket. Ms. Redeen suggested a program where a shopper is allowed the first ticket waived but not the second. Ms. Thomas said she could research what the City courtesy parking program in the past entailed. After some deliberation, the topic was tabled for further discussion at a later meeting.

Ms. Redeen inquired how many meters are downtown, and how many are on Central Avenue. There are 230 meters on Central. She then explained that downtown business owners have been discussing bagging meters on Central Avenue on holidays to alert shoppers to the fact that parking is free on those days. It was noted that although there is no ticketing on holidays, many people feed the meters, which is a source of revenue for the Parking Fund. It was brought up that many people think they cannot park in a spot with a bagged meter. After much discussion, Ms. Redeen decided not to pursue the idea.

Ms. Redeen asked about the Downtown Association renting City equipment and any liability issues, and whether parking garage equipment could be utilized. She had heard that only City employees can use City equipment due to liability issue. Ms. Thomas explained that the contract with Standard Parking included insurance provisions and liability language. Mr. Kiser noted that according to the State, Standard Parking employees were actually considered City employees. Ms. Thomas offered Ms. Redeen a copy of the contract to review. Ms. Redeen said she would take it back to her Commission to look over. It was noted Helena holds an auction on equipment, and it's available to look on the State website.

There were no further public comments.

Mr. Gagnon stated that he will provide a block by block revenue breakdown in the metered district for the next meeting. Later in the summer, he will be conducting an occupancy study.

The next Parking Advisory Commission meeting will be Monday, May 16, 2011 at 3:00 p.m.

There being no further business, the Commission adjourned at 4:22 p.m.