

GREAT FALLS PARKING ADVISORY COMMISSION
Minutes of June 20, 2011

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

Staff Present: Wendy Thomas and Phyllis Tryon

Others Present: Dave Gagnon and Joan Redeen

Call to Order: The Parking Advisory Commission meeting was called to order by Chairman Kiser at 3:01 p.m. in the Rainbow Room.

Meeting Minutes Mr. Campbell made a motion to approve the minutes of the May 16, 2011 meeting as written. Mr. Brown seconded the motion, and the motion passed 4-0.

Old Business

Parking Budget, FY 2012

Ms. Thomas updated the Parking Commission on the current budget process. She stated she included parking citation revenue be placed into the parking fund. She received a call from the City Manager about the proposed budget inquiring whether she proposed raising parking rates. The answer is negative. The City Commission will be reviewing proposed budgets toward the end of June. Ms. Thomas invited the Parking Commission to participate in supporting the proposed budget with the City Commission.

Courtesy Parking Program, Tap House Grill

Ms. Thomas stated that the owner of Tap House Grill on Central Avenue is requesting four courtesy parking spaces. Based on parking reports, this is one of the prime areas for generating revenue. Ms. Thomas said she would like to approve two courtesy spots. However, Tap House Grill has significant frontage on Central, and the Parking Commission had discussed allocating courtesy spaces based on frontage. She researched courtesy parking rates and found the fee was reduced in 2003 from \$30 to \$20 per month, and estimated revenue based on block counts is as much as \$40 per space in this area. Mr. Kiser noted the business takes up more than half a block, and the owner has two businesses. He suggested offering four courtesy spots. Ms. Thomas confirmed the Commission was comfortable with the \$20 courtesy parking rate. The Commission will review rates for delivery zone parking and courtesy parking at a future meeting.

Parking Validation

Discussion ensued regarding merchant validation for garage parking. Ms. Thomas stated Santa Rosa, California has a validation program for \$.50 on the dollar. Mr. Kiser stated that shoppers in Great Falls want to park in front of businesses and that parking garages were not considered as convenient. Mr. Campbell noted that Iowa City has a program for discounting validated parking. Ms. Redeen recently noted a program in which a community offered a free first hour in the parking garage. Ms. Thomas stated there are businesses in town that have validation programs, although it was noted there are no retail businesses in the program. Businesses can purchase parking tokens through Standard Parking. Mr.

Campbell noted that Iowa City, with a population of about 65,000, offers 33% discount bus and parking ramp rates for members of the Downtown Association and 20% off for non-members.

New Business

Introduction of New Commission Member, Charlie Bruckner

Mr. Kiser welcomed new Commission member, Charlie Bruckner. Mr. Kiser explained some of the goals of the Commission were to control patrolling costs and encourage downtown shopping.

Meter Bags/Construction Downtown

Ms. Thomas stated that rates for bagging meters are not clearly spelled out in City code. She finds documentation from the past that the rate was set at \$3 per day, but Standard Parking charges \$2 per day. She also found that there is nothing in existing Code requirements for parking spaces that deals with downtown parking. There were variances granted in the past to suspend parking requirements for downtown, but nothing in the new code addresses this. She has requested a Planner draft an amendment to the Land Development Code which would codify parking provisions for the downtown district.

Ms. Thomas stated she will be discussing the meter bag issue with the City Attorney next week, and suggested the Commission bring forth a recommendation. Discussion followed regarding the varied circumstances with each development project downtown and whether to tie exemption for bag charges to the building permit valuation. Ms. Thomas will come back with information for the Commission to consider.

Parking Rates Inquiry/Universal Pass Survey

Ms. Thomas developed a 5-question parking survey which included a question on a merchant parking validation program. She is going to tie the survey into the Downtown Association email list and the City website with an answer period of two weeks. Ms. Redeen suggested tying it to the Chamber email list. Mr. Kiser also suggested posing a universal pass as "question a day" through the Great Falls Tribune polling question.

Discussion followed about universal passes, which would require updating technical equipment. Mr. Kiser stated he would respond to the letter from the person from White Sulfur Springs about her comments on parking issues with downtown.

Ms. Thomas said she would email the Commission as soon as the parking survey is posted, which should be before the next meeting.

Mr. Gagnon called UPS regarding delivery vehicle passes. He has sold one pass.

Mr. Campbell passed out information from the Missoula website on parking myths.

Monthly Revenue and Expense Reports (4/11)

Ms. Thomas reviewed revenue and expenses for the past month. Mr. Campbell requested comparison information on last year's figures. He said it could be useful as an indicator of downtown business.

Parking Study Information

Ms. Thomas spoke with Anne Guest in Missoula and Ms. Guest stated that Dennis Burns with Kimley-Horn Engineering is a well-known international parking expert. Ms. Guest is bringing Mr. Burns into Missoula and is willing to cover the cost to bring him to Great Falls to meet with Ms. Thomas regarding a parking study.

A brief discussion followed regarding the Missoula Oops ticket program.

Public Comment

Mr. Kiser opened public comment. There being none, public comment was closed.

The next Parking Advisory Commission meeting will be Monday, July 18, 2011 at 3:00 p.m.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the Commission adjourned at 4:10 p.m.