

**GREAT FALLS PARKING ADVISORY COMMISSION**  
**Minutes of the May 16, 2024 Meeting**

The Parking Advisory Commission meeting was called to order by Chair, Inge Buchholz, at 3:30 P.M., in the Planning and Community Development Conference Room at the Civic Center.

**Members Present:** Katie Hanning, Chair  
Carol Berg  
Inge Buchholz  
Jayson Olthoff

**Ex-Officio Member:** Kellie Pierce

**Members Absent:** Nathan Laidlaw

**Staff Present:** Brock Cherry, Planning & Community Development Director  
Lonnie Hill, Deputy Director Planning & Community Development  
Andrew Finch, Sr. Transportation Planner  
Jamie Nygard, Sr. Administrative Assistant

**Others Present:** Jenn Rowell, with the Electric, Tena Grigsby, SP+, Bob Kohler, SP+

**Meeting Minutes:** Ms. Buchholz asked if there were any comments or corrections to the minutes from the April 18, 2024 Parking Advisory Commission meeting. Seeing none, Ms. Hanning motioned to approve the minutes, and Mr. Olthoff seconded.

**Public Comment:** None

**Vote:** All in favor, the motion passed.

**Commission Actions**

**Discuss North Garage Free 2-Hour Parking Trial:**

Mr. Cherry stated that the City Commission approved the recommended trial for the 2-hour free parking in the North Parking Garage. He also stated that advertising the trial was identified as crucial for the success. He presented to the Commission some proposed material. He stated that it is important to make it very clear and easy. He also presented a flyer for the downtown businesses and a banner to put up at the parking garage. There was some discussion amongst the Commission on what would be the best advertising and Mr. Hill showed the Commission, on Google Maps, where the placement of the banners would be.

Mr. Cherry stated that the stairway is currently locked in the North Parking Garage and wanted feedback from the Commission about them being unlocked. He asked Ms. Grigsby if there has been loitering by pedestrians and she stated that there has been a few people walking around the garage. Ms. Pierce stated that it would be important to let the Great Falls Police Department know that the stairwells were going to be unlocked and they could maybe increase patrol. The upper level will still be unlocked, but if the demand is great, opening up the upper level may be necessary.

Mr. Kohler asked if there was any history of vandalism or vagrancy in the parking garage. Ms. Grigsby responded that there has been but with the new lighting and cameras, it has slowed down. There are still people sleeping in the ramp, but not in the stairwells because they are locked. Mr. Cherry stated that the activity will be monitored closely.

Ms. Pierce stated that she would send out a Doodle survey to find a time for the Commission to gather to handout materials to downtown businesses.

**Discuss Metered Handicap Parking being free but monitored:**

Ms. Buchholz stated that several years ago she came to the Commission Meeting and asked for free handicap parking. She stated that handicap parking should have a time limit of 2 hours as there are several cars that stay in the handicap spots all weekend. Mr. Cherry stated that Staff can draft a Resolution that would need to be brought before the City Commission. He stated that Staff will look at the history as to how the free handicap parking spaces came to be and if there are any laws that protect the ADA class.

Mr. Finch stated that there should be some rationale as to why the handicap parking should be moved to a 2 hour limit and also as to why it should be free for the first 2 hours.

Ms. Buchholz asked if there was enough handicap parking spaces downtown. Ms. Hanning responded that there was a count done a few years. Mr. Finch stated that Public Works is working on getting Staff a current count and will also be painting the spots in 2024.

**Items to schedule for future meetings:**

Ms. Buchholz stated that there are three apartment buildings around her business, and every Saturday there are no parking spaces available as tenants use all of the spaces. Ms. Grigsby responded that it is marked that there is a 2 hour time limit, but there is no enforcement on the weekends.

Ms. Hanning wants to look at the state of the current meters and the future of the parking system. Mr. Cherry stated that at a future meeting, SP + can give a presentation on the current state and what the future of the infrastructure is.

Ms. Berg asked who was in charge of parking at Parks. Mr. Cherry responded that Park and Rec is in charge. Mr. Finch added that parking in a park is allowed from dawn until dusk.

Ms. Hanning wants an update on fees and credit card fees.

Mr. Cherry stated that at every meeting, there will be status update on any feedback the City is receiving.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

None.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:20 P.M.