

GREAT FALLS PARKING ADVISORY COMMISSION
Minutes of the November 21, 2024 Meeting

Chair Inge Buchholz called the Parking Advisory Commission meeting to order at 3:31 p.m. in the Planning and Community Development Conference Room at the Civic Center.

Members Present: Inge Buchholz, Chair
Jayson Olthoff, Vice Chair
Carol Berg
Katie Hanning
Nathan Laidlaw – via Zoom

Ex-Officio Member: Kellie Pierce - **Absent**

Staff Present: Brock Cherry, Director
Lonnie Hill, Deputy Director
Andrew Finch, Sr. Transportation Planner
Alaina Mattimiro, Associate Planner
Jamie Nygard, Sr. Administrative Assistant

Others Present: Jenn Rowell, with the Electric via Zoom, Tena Grigsby with SP+, Evan Pryor with Metropolis via Zoom

Meeting Minutes: Ms. Buchholz asked if there were any comments or corrections to the September 19, 2024 Parking Advisory Commission meeting minutes. Mr. Olthoff stated there needed to be a change from Ms. to Mr. Olthoff in the motion approval for The Parking Advisory Commission, recommending to the City Commission that improvements commenced to the North Parking Garage, including new signage, structural improvements, and a new gate system. Mr. Olthoff motioned to approve the updated minutes, and Ms. Hanning seconded.

Vote: All in favor, the motion passed.

New Business

Staff Presentation regarding the North Parking Garage September and October Performance

Alaina Mattimiro, Associate Planner, presented to the Commission. She offered a PowerPoint presentation with the total number of North Garage, Kiosk, and Passport utilization for September and October 2023 and 2024. She stated that there was a 39% increase in daily users. She also showed a daily revenue graph.

Ms. Mattimiro stated that the City's Communication Specialist will work with Staff to produce videos and other public engagement material explaining how to use the Parking kiosks and Passport App. She also stated that permanent signage and instructional materials placed near the kiosks are being explored.

Mr. Cherry mentioned that Staff aims to provide a user-friendly experience for the public. He also noted that one bid has been submitted for signage at the North Parking Garage.

Ms. Hanning wanted to know if a demo kiosk could be available for the public to try at various public outreach events.

Mr. Cherry stated that some immediate items must be fixed at the North Parking Garage, starting with a standpipe issue and leaky stairwells. The previously approved Parking TIF request must be amended to include the new expenditures, as the previous request explicitly named other projects and did not include those.

Discuss Long-Term Parking Strategies and Steps – Operations and Capital Improvement

Mr. Cherry stated that a month-to-month contract is in place with SP+. He noted that outdated parking technology in the North Parking Garage and surface lots is likely deterring users from utilizing these facilities. He also mentioned that having user-friendly systems is essential. Furthermore, Mr. Cherry highlighted that millions of dollars in deferred maintenance are associated with the Parking Program's assets.

Mr. Cherry stated that the parking budget depends on general fund subsidization and that the general fund has been tapped.

Mr. Olthoff inquired if anyone could create an educational video for the public. Mr. Finch responded that the information must be vetted, so it should be produced through the City. Mr. Cherry stated that the City would create the materials but requested that the Commission assist in sharing them.

Ms. Hanning suggested adding signage for the garage indicating \$5.00 for all-day parking.

Mr. Cherry discussed with the Commission, and it was decided that there would not be a Parking Advisory Commission meeting in December. Mr. Cherry hopes another sign installation quote and a draft of the updated TIF approval will be available for the January meeting.

Mr. Cherry asked the Commission whether they believed that adding more kiosks would help alleviate parking issues downtown. Ms. Hanning replied that while the kiosks were quite expensive, she agreed that all parking solutions should be uniform and acknowledged that the surface lots also needed kiosks. Ms. Buchholz suggested that having additional kiosks would be beneficial. However, Mr. Olthoff disagreed, stating that improving signage would be a more effective solution. Ms. Berg emphasized the importance of education, urging all Commissioners to independently brainstorm ideas on educating the public before the next meeting. Ms. Hanning stated that the QR code should be accessible to everyone. Mr. Laidlaw stressed the need for consistency, noting that surface lots and garages should be prioritized. Once revenue is generated from those, additional kiosks can be added to the streets.

Any additional parking-related items the Commission would like to identify for future discussion.

Ms. Buchholz recommended providing free holiday parking from Thanksgiving through Christmas. Mr. Cherry noted that the parking budget is decreasing, so a long free parking period could be financially detrimental. In response, Mr. Finch added that the City Commission must approve any changes from past years. Mr. Cherry also stated that a press release would be issued to inform the public about the information.

Ms. Berg inquired about the booting progress, and Ms. Grigsby replied that it would not commence until December 1, 2024.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:17 P.M.