

**GREAT FALLS PARKING ADVISORY COMMISSION**  
**Minutes of June 18, 2012**

**Members Present:** Phil Kiser, Darren Brown, Dave Campbell

**Members Absent:** Chuck Fulcher

**Staff Present:** Wendy Thomas

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

**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 asked if there were any changes to the May 21, 2012 meeting minutes. Mr. Campbell made a motion to approve the minutes and Mr. Brown seconded. All being in favor, the motion passed.

**OLD BUSINESS**

There was no Old Business.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Garage Improvements**

Ms. Thomas said she followed up with Carl Walker and asked Bill Mahler about providing a prioritized list for work on the parking garages with available funding for this fiscal year. She has not yet heard back from him, but said she had been out on vacation last week, and today there is no voicemail on the phone system. She said that once she hears back from him, she would forward information to the Parking Advisory Commission (PAC). Mr. Mahler told her that some of the cost estimates were incorrect in the report. One example was the cost estimate for putting in a drain on the 6<sup>th</sup> floor was reported at \$15,000 and should have been \$1,500. She spoke with him about striping, waterproofing, and electrical work for the North Garage.

Ms. Thomas said they were contacting vendors for bids on pigeon netting for the South Garage and power washing pigeon excrement. Mr. Gagnon said he has received a bid from Skyline Services, but was waiting to hear back from other vendors. He also said one of the maintenance employees removed over 20 nests in the South Garage, but the pigeons were coming back. The problem is not as severe in the North Garage.

Ms. Redeen said that Jean Price told her that there is water leakage on the windows in the South Garage and much of the drywall is ruined. Ms. Price asked the BID if they would fund repair as needed. Ms. Redeen suggested Ms. Price contact Ms. Thomas and inquired if this was addressed in the structural report. Ms. Thomas said it was not part of the structural report, and that she would follow up with Ms. Price.

**Revenue Audit**

Ms. Thomas asked Mr. Gagnon to update the Commission on audit procedures for Standard Parking. Mr. Gagnon said per their contract, they are required to have an outside audit performed on an annual basis. In addition, there are policies and procedures for revenue collection. He invited the Commission and staff to observe their procedures any time. He explained that two people collect revenue together at the meters and service lots and make deposits. He said there are localities that use only sealed canisters and employees do not touch the money, but we have open canisters in Great Falls. Purchasing locked canisters would be quite expensive. Mr. Gagnon said that the last external audit was done about 10 years ago, and he did not receive any actual reports from that audit.

He said it is possible to audit each meter with special software, but cost is an issue. Mr. Campbell said that to try to make incremental improvements would be haphazard, and it would be best if one day a complete overhaul of the meter system can be done. Ms. Thomas said she thought the Downtown Access and Circulation Plan report will hold some recommendations about modernizing operations.

### **Block by Block Revenue Report**

There was discussion about incomplete reports, and Mr. Gagnon said he could supply more reporting. Mr. Kiser noted that people do not like to park a block further than they shop. Central Avenue continues to be the main source of meter revenue. Mr. Campbell noted the drop in revenues in blocks such as where Penny's Gourmet To Go used to be located. He pointed out that on the block where his store is located, revenue is half what it was two years ago even though there are more businesses on the block and his business has increased. The number of Courtesy Parking spots is the same and his business is up about 20 percent. He noted that the 400 block shows the same trend. It was noted that if the period was Easter week two years ago but not Easter week this year, that could make a difference.

Mr. Kiser suggested 8-hour meters to replace the older style 2-hour meters. Discussion followed about the possibility of locating used meter heads. Ms. Thomas had located some for sale in Iowa for \$35 per meter. The Commission encouraged her to follow up on those.

### **Establishing a City Administered Parking Program**

Ms. Thomas said the City Manager had requested her to research the cost of the City administering the Parking Program. She produced a report and had a discussion with the City Manager. He said he would not bring this up with the City Commission as part of the current City budget process, but if PAC wanted to explore the issue further and make a recommendation to the City Commission, he would be willing to take that forward to them. Mr. Kiser asked about the term of the contract. Mr. Brown read the portion of the contract which states cancellation may be made with 60-days written notice prior to June 30 of any given year. The current contract expires December 31, 2013, so the earliest possible cancellation would be June 30, 2013 with 60-day notice. Ms. Thomas noted it would take a lot of discussion and action of the City Commission to move forward. Mr. Brown stated that there was nothing to lose by exploring the option, and Mr. Campbell said he thought there were less expensive options for administering the Parking Program. Mr. Kiser said that individual repair services could be more expensive if the City administers the program. Mr. Gagnon said that labor costs must reflect the prevailing wage, so that estimates are too low. Ms. Thomas clarified that labor would be at City wage levels, not prevailing wage levels.

Ms. Thomas said she would visit with the Missoula parking program administrator at the upcoming parking conference and get some comparison figures to Missoula. She also said she could research the cost of using outside services as compared to the cost of the City's internal service charges.

**MOTION:** That the Parking Advisory Commission continue to explore the City taking over the Parking Program or the development of a Parking Commission to take over the administration of the Parking Program, and possibly in conjunction with the Business Improvement District.

Made by: Mr. Brown  
Second: Mr. Campbell

VOTE: All being in favor, the motion passed.

Ms. Thomas explained that she had discussed with the City Manager the possibility of the Parking Program being administered by a group such as the Downtown Partnership that is forming. This would allow them to use funds from parking revenues to help fund their operations and parking could pay for a portion of an administrative salary. Funds could also be used to maintain and modernize the Parking Program. This may also allow for more

matching funds and innovative programs with Downtown merchants. Ms. Thomas said the City Manager's response was that PAC can bring forward a proposal if they so desire.

Ms. Thomas will be at the PIPTA conference in Seattle on July 16, the next regularly scheduled PAC meeting. The commissioners agreed to hold the next meeting on July 23 instead.

### **Monthly Revenue & Expense Report**

Ms. Thomas said the current month-to-date citation revenue is correct in this report; there had been an error in previous reports on carry overs. She noted the revenue was on target for budget projections. Ms. Redeen asked about accounts receivables for citations. Ms. Thomas said there were generally about 300 citations written per month that were unpaid in that month. She said that in her experience, there is never a month where there are more citations paid than written. If the Parking Program sends unpaid tickets to City Court, the revenue collected should be deposited in the General Fund and not the Parking Program. However, at this time, it appears that if an unpaid ticket actually goes to court, the revenue is being deposited into the Parking Fund.

### **BOARD DISCUSSION**

Mr. Kiser inquired about the possible sale of the parking lot near the Rescue Mission. Ms. Thomas said she will meet with the City Attorney this coming Wednesday. She said in her opinion the sale will hinge on whether the City Attorney considers it the responsibility of the City for environmental cleanup of any fuel tanks which may be underground. If the City was responsible, the price of the lot would no doubt be too high for the Rescue Mission to purchase. They could consider a long-term lease from the City. Ms. Redeen said the Great Falls Development Authority may have Brownfield funds to assist the Rescue Mission in cleanup of the site if it was required. Ms. Thomas said the State has a fund for cleanup, but there is no money in the fund.

Ms. Thomas presented a letter which requested members of PAC to join the new Downtown Partnership (DP). Mr. Kiser said he was probably not going to spend much time in Great Falls this winter. Ms. Thomas said she anticipates attending the meetings on behalf of PAC. Ms. Redeen said meetings would be held on the fourth Wednesday of each month at 11:00 a.m. Ms. Redeen noted that the \$1,000 membership requirement has been waived for the City in lieu of staff involvement. Ms. Thomas said that the fee for PAC might be able to be waived, but that the Parking Fund could contribute the fee if the Commission members wanted to join the Partnership. Ms. Redeen said that PAC could appoint Ms. Thomas as their official representative, but that PAC members would still be welcome to attend any and all meetings. Ms. Thomas offered to forward all meeting minutes from the DP to PAC. It was agreed to wait until the next PAC meeting to review the Parking Fund budget before committing the membership fee to the DP.

Ms. Thomas asked Mr. Gagnon about a customer of the Tap House Grill that was ticketed for being at a Courtesy Parking Spot longer than 2 hours. Ms. Thomas said she thought that if someone was parked in a Courtesy Parking spot, they would not be ticketed unless the owner of the business called in a complaint. Mr. Gagnon said the 2-hour limit always applies. Ms. Thomas said there is no 2-hour limit notice on the block. PAC members agreed that there is a 2-hour limit that is enforced but there should be signage on that block. It was also noted that the information should be in the contract for Courtesy Parking, although commission members thought it is in the contract already.

Ms. Redeen said there were four dying or dead trees on the corner of 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue North between 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Streets, and three of those are newer trees. The City Forester and Tilleras Landscaping suggested someone is spraying weed killer in the area and it is affecting the trees. Mr. Gagnon said that Standard Parking employees use fertilizer. He is not aware of anyone spraying weeds in parking lots this year but it is practice to spray weeds when needed. He will inquire about weed spraying with his employees. It was suggested there may be soil contamination. Mr. Gagnon said he noticed vandalism in the area, and Ms. Redeen said there had been mulch theft. Mr. Kiser said there are about five trees on Central and Fifth that he would like removed. He said they are ruining the building.

Ms. Redeen asked about the policy when someone pulls over at a meter to talk on their cell phone. Mr. Gagnon said that attendants should inform the driver that they need to plug the meter if they are going to be stopped at the meter for an extended period of time. The attendant then walks on and returns at a later point and asks the driver to plug the meter if they have not done so.

Ms. Redeen said two different citizens reported to her that a parking attendant told her to move her vehicle and did not even suggest plugging the meter. Mr. Gagnon said that if they were parked in an end zone or illegal spot, they should move, but otherwise they should be politely asked to plug the meter. Ms. Thomas asked Mr. Gagnon to give a polite reminder to the parking attendants.

Mr. Kiser asked if there were any applicants for the Parking Advisory Commission. There have not been any. Ms. Redeen said she posted the opening on Facebook. Commission terms are listed on the City website. Ms. Thomas said she could bring information on member's terms to the next meeting.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, July 23, 2012. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:18 p.m.