

GREAT FALLS PARKING ADVISORY COMMISSION
Minutes of June 15, 2015

The Parking Advisory Commission (PAC) meeting was called to order by Chair Darren Brown at 3:00 p.m. in the Rainbow Room of the Civic Center.

Members Present: Darren Brown, Chuck Fulcher, David Campbell, David Abbott

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Garrett Norman, Planner I; Craig Raymond, Director P&CD

Others Present: Brad Livingston; Tena Grigsby, Standard Parking; Joan Redeen, Downtown Business Improvement District

Meeting Minutes: Mr. Brown noted that he was present at the May 18, 2015 PAC meeting. The minutes reflect that he was absent. There was a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Mr. Fulcher seconded, and all being in favor, the motion passed.

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

Item 1. Monthly Review of Revenue Report & Budget

There was no discussion about the revenue report or budget performance.

Item 2. Asurion Memo

Mr. Raymond said that Lee Nellis, Deputy Director, had started drafting the Asurion Memo as a general overview of where the Parking Program is at financially and action the City might take with the loss of Asurion revenue. Mr. Raymond requested input from the PAC. Mr. Campbell said Lot 8 has been sold out monthly, so there may be additional revenue to capture by leasing the private lot across from Wells Fargo for parking. Mr. Raymond said it would take 16-19 monthly leases to make that profitable. Ms. Grigsby said there is another company besides Asurion that leases spaces that also may not renew their lease, and therefore there will be more available spaces.

There was discussion about the Wells Fargo building being for sale, and parking there will also decrease there even if that bank retains a downsized office. In past discussions with the owners about leasing that lot, Mr. Raymond said the owners wanted just enough to pay property taxes and insurance.

Ms. Redeen said DBID has been approached about overseeing the Parking Program, and she said that is a slim likelihood.

Mr. Raymond said he would like to present the Asurion Memo to City Commission as soon as possible. Mr. Brown said he didn't think parking rates could be increased again. Rates are being increased in July already. Mr. Campbell suggested raising lot prices and decreasing garage prices to encourage parking in the garages. There was discussion about how to provide creative

solutions to parking issues for businesses and how to increase public awareness of the parking garage availability. After much discussion, Mr. Raymond talked about eliminating parking meters and also broached the idea of a downtown parking assessment district. There was further discussion about how to keep vehicles from parking long-term in front of downtown stores if there are no meters.

PAC members inquired whether the City is purchasing a new software system for the meters. Mr. Raymond said we are losing money with the system we currently have. Ms. Redeen suggested Mr. Raymond talk to Bozeman about meter removal. She said they took out the parking meters and it is her understanding they are not happy with the result. Mr. Fulcher said he continues to advocate for removing the meters in a downtown core test area. Mr. Raymond said one option which he does not endorse is to remove all meters and only retain enforcement for the lots and garages. Most of the cost of the program is in enforcement, but he wasn't sure if the garages could sustain themselves.

PAC agreed the memo reflected current reality for the Parking Program.

MOTION: That the PAC is in agreement with contents of the Asurion Memo.

There was a question about the possibility of any significant changes or suggestions by the City Manager. Mr. Raymond said the City Manager had a few questions and would like to have some information on LED lighting, but there are no major changes.

Made by: Mr. Campbell
Second: Mr. Abbott

VOTE: All being in favor, the motion passed.

Item 3. Great Falls Rescue Mission Lot Lease Agreement

Mr. Brown said that when this item had been discussed in the past, the PAC wanted written into the lease agreement that the City and the Rescue Mission could cancel the lease with notice; he did not see this written into the agreement. Discussion followed about the number of days such a notice should be and it was agreed that 60 days seemed appropriate. Mr. Raymond said that if the negotiation on this lease agreement wasn't already so far along, he is not sure he would recommend these terms (\$1 per month lease payment) given the loss of revenue to the Parking Program with Asurion's departure from Great Falls. He said the Rescue Mission is giving something of value with this lease, but the City Parking Program needs revenue and the City Commission is sure to ask the question about revenue.

After further discussion, PAC expressed that they would like to table this issue for future discussion.

MOTION: That the PAC table the discussion on the lease agreement with the Great Falls Rescue Mission.

Made by: Mr. Abbott
Second: Mr. Campbell

VOTE: All being in agreement, the motion passed.

PAC provided Mr. Raymond with some background information on past discussions with the Celtic Cowboy about leasing a portion of the City parking lot near their location and information on other businesses that lease spaces in that lot. The last PAC discussion on that topic was that the City would not enter into any lease agreement with the Celtic Cowboy. PAC suggested Celtic Cowboy employees can park in the south parking garage. Mr. Raymond thought perhaps there could be some valet spaces in front of the hotel. There was further discussion about reduced rates for employees of downtown businesses parking in the garages as well as signage and marketing for the Parking Program.

Item 4. Lee Nellis Resignation

Mr. Raymond said Mr. Nellis resigned as of June 2 and returned to Wyoming.

OTHER BUSINESS

There was a discussion about the possibility of a parking assessment for downtown.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Redeen said that Mr. Nellis had wanted to get a planter installed downtown. Mr. Raymond said that in light of the Asurion situation, he doesn't want to spend that much money out of the budget, although he liked the idea of the project. There was discussion about revising how to approach the project and still spruce up the area in discussion.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:58 p.m.