

GREAT FALLS PARKING ADVISORY COMMISSION
Minutes of May 9, 2016

The Parking Advisory Commission meeting was called to order by Chair Bill Mintsiveris at 3:00 p.m. in the Planning and Community Development Conference Room of the Civic Center.

Members Present: Dave Snuggs, Bill Mintsiveris, Dave Campbell, Kenny Volk

Members Absent: Chuck Fulcher

Staff Present: Craig Raymond, Director P&CD; Tom Micuda, Deputy Director, P&CD; Connie Rosas, Sr. Admin Assistant, P&CD

Others Present: Jenn Rowell, Great Falls Tribune; Tena Grigsby, Standard Parking; Brad Livingston, Chamber of Commerce, Fred Burow, City Commission

Meeting Minutes: Mr. Campbell motioned to approve the minutes of the April 18th meeting. Mr. Volk seconded. All being in favor, the motion passed.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

NEW BUSINESS

Item 1. Block by Block Meter Inventory

The group discussed the meter inventory documents. There were increases in revenues in some areas, while others have decreased. The results reaffirm the areas where the Parking Advisory Commission (PAC) feels meters could be removed and/or have the time limits reevaluated. Mr. Raymond recommended the PAC take note of meters that could be removed, as well as meters where time limits could be changed. Those recommendations will then be brought to the City Commission.

Item 2. SP+ Parking Study Update

One recommendation from the SP+ study is moving towards automated meters on the streets, and pay stations in the garages and surface lots. To support this upgrade, rates would more than likely need to be increased, which was not an idea supported by the PAC. The discussion shifted back to removing the meters completely; Mr. Raymond warned that oftentimes the "honor system" simply does not work. Mr. Mintsiveris reminded the group that the results of this study are just a small sample of ideas that can possibly be put in place to benefit the downtown parking plan.

Security in the garages was also discussed. The study mentioned upgrading the lights in the south garage to energy efficient LED lights. Though the rates charged in the garages are lower than comparable cities, the study urged against raising any rates until equipment upgrades and major repairs are taken care of. Mr. Snuggs said securing the garages and making them safer could only increase revenues and make parking downtown more practical.

Mr. Volk agreed that revenue should be increased as much as possible, but he also believes that cutting back on expenses is just as important. He does not believe downtown will see many more vehicles parking for increased revenue, so cutting costs may be more vital to the success of the parking program than increased revenues. Automating the meters and toll stations will cut payroll costs and is one way to achieve that. Mr. Mintsiveris does not believe that automated meters are the answer, but does support automated pay stations in the garages.

Item 3. 2017 Proposed Parking Budget

Mr. Raymond stated that there were few changes to the overall budget. Changes in the parking program software, ticket revenues and snow removal contracts with the City are reflected in the proposed budget.

Item 4. PAC Member Presentations

Mr. Mintsiveris said that Saturday enforcement should end; paying for enforcement when there is no revenue from the meters is counter-productive. Mr. Mintsiveris stated that he believes meters should be eliminated in the future and parking needs to be incentivized in the surface lots. He understands that this will not create much revenue, but it will not lose revenue.

Mr. Volk suggested that the group work backward to try and make the parking program solvent. Opening a dialogue with SP+ about bringing the parking program to solvency is necessary to accomplishing the mission that the PAC has set out to achieve. Solvency needs to be attained before the group can focus on the mission statement of encouraging a good environment in the downtown area.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Raymond suggested the group develop a recommendation for the City Commission to remove some meters and make changes to the residential parking program. The group will present their ideas at the June 21st City Commission meeting. Mr. Mintsiveris would like to discuss meters, Saturday service, lights in the parking garages and the residential parking program at the next PAC meeting and bring the results of that discussion to the City Commission.

The next PAC meeting will be May 23rd, 2016 at 3 pm.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Livingston agreed with Mr. Volk's approach to the parking program. He said the City needs to be upfront with SP+ about their contract and what they do for the parking program. They are only doing what has been asked of them. If the City is not satisfied with what SP+ is doing, there needs to be a dialogue between the two parties. Mr. Raymond stated that SP+ has been receptive in the past to adapting to unique requests from the City.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:24 p.m.