

GREAT FALLS PARKING ADVISORY COMMISSION
Minutes of March 7, 2016

The Parking Advisory Commission meeting was called to order by Bill Mintsiveris at 3:05 p.m. in the Rainbow Room of the Civic Center.

Members Present: Kenny Volk, Dave Snuggs, Bill Mintsiveris

Members Absent: Chuck Fulcher, Dave Campbell

Staff Present: Craig Raymond, Director P&CD; Connie Rosas, Sr. Admin Asst; Joelle Marko, CD Tech

Others Present: Fred Burow, City Commissioner; Joan Redeen, Great Falls Business Improvement District; Jenn Rowell, Great Falls Tribune; Tracy Houck, City Commissioner; Tena Grigsby, Standard Parking

Meeting Minutes: Mr. Mintsiveris asked if there were any changes to the minutes of the February 22, 2016 meeting. There being none, Mr. Snuggs made a motion to approve those minutes. Mr. Volk seconded and all being in favor, the motion passed.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

NEW BUSINESS

Item 1. Downtown Parking Plan

Mr. Raymond asked the group if there were any questions regarding the budget and revenue information that was sent out for review. Mr. Snuggs requested clarification on whether or not the total revenue for 2014-2015 was a negative number; Mr. Raymond stated the figure, in fact, was negative. The negative revenue was partially due to maintenance of the elevator in the North Garage. Mr. Raymond also clarified expenses related to payroll for Standard Parking (SP+) and the City of Great Falls are separate; the City of Great Falls does not pay SP+ employees' benefits directly.

Credit card convenience fees were discussed as part of the budget reports. The smart phone app, Passport Parking, continues to be utilized but Mr. Raymond said usage had dropped a small amount since the initial kickoff. He stated he spoke with representatives from Passport and discussed ideas to increase the app usage.

The group discussed ways to let the public know that the PAC is planning a public comment meeting on April 7th. Ms. Redeen mentioned using the Downtown Great Falls Association (DGFA) and the Neighborhood Council Coordinator, as well as press releases with the Great Falls Tribune. Mr. Snuggs and Mr. Mintsiveris volunteered to visit businesses personally to relay the message.

The group decided they would like to craft a survey for people to fill out prior to the public meeting. The survey will include questions about the demographic of the people attending the

meeting, what types of parking they utilize, how often they come downtown, how satisfied they are with parking downtown and if they have any suggestions for the program. The results of this survey can then be discussed at the public meeting. The survey will be a good starting point for a dialogue with the public about the downtown parking plan.

Commissioner Houck discussed parking in residential areas in the downtown parking district. She was concerned that patrols had been increased and more tickets were being given. Ms. Grigsby said that enforcement has not changed; neither increased nor decreased in the residential districts.

Mr. Snuggs believes that incentivizing parking downtown will help bring more revenue to the parking program. He feels by relaying these new ideas to the public, the public will realize that the PAC is really working hard to make the program better. Trial and error will be the key to helping the parking program succeed in the future.

Mr. Raymond recently attended a parking conference and he discussed what he learned at the conference; advances in meter technology were the main focus. He stated that new meters downtown would be a great addition, but are more than likely cost-prohibitive.

Increasing revenue is a major need for the parking program. Mr. Raymond believes that a question regarding how to increase those revenues should be included in the survey. Commissioner Houck said she thought using the term "increasing revenue" would not be as effective as phrasing it in a way that asks how can we make parking safer and more practical for the public. Improvements also cost money, and how to raise that money should be addressed.

The parking program endured a major overhaul in 2014-2015 with regards to parking fines, fees overall development of the program. Meetings were held and the current program and fee/fine schedule are the result. That plan was developed prior to the departure of Asurion and the program needs to be slightly altered. Commissioner Houck suggested giving the public a little history of the program at the April 7th public forum, and the group agreed.

OTHER BUSINESS

The next PAC meeting will be March 28th, 2016. Mr. Raymond reminded the PAC to email him or Ms. Rosas if they had any business to add to the agenda for future meetings. He said the PAC meetings are open to the public and having an agenda that is more specific will be beneficial to the public as well as the PAC.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Redeen reminded the PAC that the Downtown Streetscape project will begin March 14th, 2016. Every Tuesday morning there will be a public construction meeting at the Neighborworks Learning Center. Meter fees during the project will be shared by United Materials and the City of Great Falls.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:26 p.m.