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PARKING AUTHORITY
REGULAR MEETING VIA ZOOM VIRTUAL VIDEOCONFERENCE
AND TELECONFERENCE
OCTOBER 25, 2023

ATTENDANCE: Eric Rains, Chair
Matthew Seebeck, Vice Chair
Jud Aley
Peter Fullam
Pam Parkington

STAFF Garrett Bolella, Asst. Asst. Director, TMP
Bryan Lutz, Asst. Parking Director

OTHERS: Stathis Manousos, LAZ Parking
Rocky Legesse, LAZ Parking

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Rains called the meeting to order at 6:00PM

1. PUBLIC COMMENT, LIMITED TO THREE MINUTES EACH SPEAKER

Moina Noor- 15 Pequot Drive

Ms. Noor said she is the President of the Norwalk Library Board of Trustees and that last year the library became a polling location for District A and the library is delighted to provide the service to the residents. She is here to support the request of Sherelle Harris, the Director of the library, that the Parking Authority waive parking tickets on election day and allow for free parking on Mott Avenue on election day, November 7th from 6:00AM to 8:00PM. This year the large lot behind the library is not available and currently the patrons are using the Eagles parking lot and while it is a good temporary solution it is a bit further from the entrance to the library. We need to make voting as easy as possible for our residents, especially the elderly residents and free parking on Mott Avenue would go a long way in making that happen.

Ms. Noor said the library is also hosting and Indie Author Day from November 3rd through November 5th and will have over 100 authors all over Connecticut coming for this event and would like to work with the Parking Authority to come up with solutions for the large crowd that is expected that day by offering free on street parking on Mott Avenue.

2. DISCUSSION AND ACTION RELATED TO MINUTES FROM THE PARKING AUTHORITY MEETING, WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2023.

**** MR. ALEY MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS SUBMITTED.**
**** MR. SEEBECK SECONDED THE MOTION.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

3. FINANCIAL AND OPERATING REPORT

Mr. Manousos reported and said for the month of September the operating surplus was favorable to budget and year to date and the parking revenue side is under budget for the month due to violations, the Maritime Garage, and Haviland Deck but were offset from increases at some of the other facilities. He said the expenses are 4.6% under budget due to not doing as much repair work as what was projected. He said that transient revenues are down compared to last month and that is due to seasonal trends and saw reductions at the Maritime Garage, Webster Lot, and the North Water Lot but are over budget year to date.

Mr. Manousos reported on the permit activity and said that it has been stable and that the revenues were up slightly due to the McMahon Ford billing which happens each month until the car count is done.

Mr. Manousos reported on the Walk Bridge project impacts and said that some of the spaces on Elizabeth Street had to be blocked off due to construction work but there is no financial impact to the Parking Authority because it is a 2-hour timed parking space area with no fee. He said in the second week of November seven spaces of on street parking will be removed and they will be installing a crane in the North Water Street lot. Mr. Lutz said that the North Water Street lot will be affected as well and a total of 50 parking spaces will be affected during the four-day installation.

Mr. Manousos reported on the variance report and said there was only one item to report on, which was for the building repair and maintenance, and was due to not as much work being completed as was projected for the month.

Mr. Manousos reported on the systemwide activity and said it was stable year to date compared to last year but on the revenue side was higher than last year which is due Webster lot, Yankee Doodle Garage, and especially the railroad station facilities where the average transaction is higher.

Mr. Manousos reported on the permit sales and said the activity is stable. He said the on-street activity and revenue year to date are down through September due to seasonal trend activity and the SONO area represents 53% of the transactions and 67% of the revenue compared to the Wall Street and West Avenue areas.

Mr. Manousos reported on the enforcement and said the ticket issuance was up year to date which is related to beach citations over the summer but is down compared to last month due decreased beach activity and back to school. He said that violation revenue accounts for 22 ½% of systemwide revenues.

Mr. Manousos reported the ticket issuance versus demand and said this month the ratio is the same as last month.

Mr. Aley asked why transient revenue is down. Mr. Manousos said overall systemwide is .6% below last year but on street was down 11% and may be partly due to in 2022 there was a lot more meter bag revenue which took some metered spaces offline, as well as the transition to multi-space meters has resulted few transactions but may have higher ticket values, but staff will look into it and report back.

Mr. Manousos reported on Pay by Cell and said the activity and revenue is up year to date. The average transaction was down three cents in September to \$2.91 and systemwide the average transaction is \$2.22. The Pay by Cell transactions represent almost 22% of system demand and just over 11% of the revenue systemwide.

Mr. Lutz presented the changes that he and Mr. Legesse had made to the Park Norwalk website and said they made changes to the parking map to show the hours of operation and rates when applied so that people have good information about parking. He said they have also updated the contact information. Mr. Manousos applauded Mr. Lutz and said in the short time that he has been here he has been so helpful and is glad he is here. Mr. Legesse agreed and said that he has been phenomenal.

4. ENGINEERING AND PROJECT REPORT

a) Update- South Norwalk Train Station Roof Repair

Mr. Lutz provided an update and said the contractor will be onsite tomorrow to address some of the leaks to be sure there are not continuing issues and they should be completed by Friday.

5. NEW BUSINESS

a) Discuss and Vote- Norwalk Public Library Election Day Request

Mr. Lutz said the library is recommending that parking on Mott Avenue be free during election day and staff is also recommending that and follow what was done last year which was provided parking that is unenforced on Mott Avenue between the hours of 6:00PM to 8:00PM on November 7th.

**** MR. SEEBECK MOVED TO APPROVE TO SUSPEND ENFORCEMENT OF PARKING PAYMENT ON MOTT AVENUE ON ELECTION DAY.**

**** MR. FULLAM SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

There was a discussion on the request to offer free parking on November 3rd through November 5th for the Indie Author Day. Mr. Rains said that there is a funeral home that is down the road that has varying sizes of people that attend funerals and they have never requested free parking for a big gathering and additionally, he thinks parking should become part of people's planning. He said he is hesitant to make parking free on an event basis because it should be part of their planning, and with the Yankee Doodle Garage being in close proximity as well as on street parking on both West Avenue and Mott Avenue he does not think it is appropriate to leave parking out of whatever entity or group is planning.

Mr. Bolella said there are eight 30-minute timed spaces in front of the library, and he believes there is an ability to post emergency no parking signs for those spaces as part of the special event application with no impact to the Parking Authority. He said there will be a lot of authors at the library on those days and this would help to manage the arrivals and departures. Mr. Rains said that may address the comment regarding the elderly needing closer parking, but he does not feel in this instance that they are viewing parking as part of their event. Mr. Seebeck said the Parking Authority has started establishing a fairly solid precedent on this topic and he thinks the solution for loading and unloading and expanded handicapped parking in the immediate adjacency is appropriate, but for anyone that has come to the Parking Authority for events chaser tickets have been provided to ensure that other entities get paid and have tried to promote the adjacency of the Yankee Doodle Garage and proximate street parking so he leans toward Mr. Rains comments on ensuring that parking is participated in by guests. Mr. Aley said he also agrees with Mr. Rains and the funeral home that is down the street regularly has large groups of people and is a good opportunity to educate people, so his opinion is to deny the request but does support Mr. Bolella's suggestion of offering the eight spaces that are non-metered.

**** MR. ALEY MOVED TO DECLINE THE REQUEST FROM THE LIBRARY FOR FREE STREET PARKING ON MOTT AVENUE ON NOVEMBER 3RD , NOVEMBER 4TH AND NOVEMBER 5TH AND APPROVE PROVIDING THE EIGHT 30- MINUTE TIMED PARKING SPACES ON MOTT AVENUE.**

**** MS. PARKINGTON SECONDED THE MOTION.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

b) Discussion- Bike area at Yankee Doodle

Mr. Aley said even though he is a member of the Bike/Walk Commission he is not in favor of the bike area at Yankee Doodle garage at this time because to do anything substantial a few parking spaces would need to be taken and he does not think there is a demand at this point. He said there is a bike rack inside the Maritime garage which has been there four to five years and in that time period he has only seen one bicycle parked there. He said he is not opposed to putting additional bike racks outside of the Yankee Doodle garage. Mr. Bolella said the Wall Street improvements are moving forward and this spring will be implementing the first phase from Main Street to Brook Street and have diligently working on the remainder of the improvements to the rest of the Wall Street neighborhoods and are currently pushing forward with the design for the improvements on Wall Street, Belden Avenue, and River Street and will be brought to the community to identify opportune locations those types of infrastructures such as bike racks.

c) Discussion- Walk Bridge Impact

Mr. Lutz said he will be receiving newsletters on the updates on the progress of the Walk Bridge project and recommends that everyone go to the Walk Bridge website to sign up for the newsletter. He said the crane assembly will begin on November 13th and will impact the 50 spaces for four days at the North Water Street lot and will use the website to update people on the closures and alternate routes that they can park. He said as the project moves forward the East Norwalk Railroad Station will be affected, and some assets will be taken as well. Mr. Rains said that Ms. Pelletier suggested adding the QR code to the Parking Authority's information so that people are being referred to information that they are distributing, and he thinks that will be helpful in the Parking Authority playing a role in communicating where the road closures will be and to help people to better navigate. Additionally, he suggested in the near future the Parking Authority meet with the Walk Bridge project team to discuss how to get people to the parking places as the impact of the project becomes more evident. Mr. Lutz agreed and said it's close to 160 spaces that will be affected in East Norwalk and will definitely need to plan ahead of that so that alternative options can be given. Mr. Rains said if the Parking Authority is interested it can be arranged to have the Walk Bridge team present a project update in the next few months and would be good to identify ways that the Parking Authority can be a conduit for information for not only people visiting from out of town but for residents as well.

Mr. Rains suggested that when the Wall Street improvements begin it would be a good idea to have something built into the Parking Authority's communications to keep people up to date on what is happening related to access to parking. Mr. Bolella said an engagement plan can be looked at with Park Norwalk and can report back on that each month and will keep providing updates throughout the project. He also suggested a standing item for the Walk Bridge projects update on the agenda so that staff can provide the short long-term impacts to the Parking Authority.

Mr. Bolella noted that the Parking Authority will be reimbursed for the parking spaces that will be taken in the North Water Street lot for the Walk Bridge project. Mr. Lutz said their permit is contingent on them paying that fee and is expecting payment in the next week.

d) Discussion- ENRR Sunday Parking Numbers

Mr. Lutz presented and said the north side of the East Norwalk Railroad Station is free on Sundays so the transactions that he is presenting are solely on the south side of the lot and over the past year averages approximately 44 transactions every Sunday so it is a decent revenue generator so it is the recommendation of staff that since the Walk Bridge project and the Yankee Doodle project are impacting the parking assets expanding any Sunday parking could be difficult. Mr. Legesse said that there was construction being done in the fall of last year, so the transactions were lower but once the agreement was completed with Spinnaker the transactions began to increase and now average approximately 15 paid parkers on Sunday's, and in addition to that the permit parkers also park in the lot. He said that Spinnaker has a pizza restaurant and resident parking that is paid parking so offering free parking in the lot while Spinnaker is charging would be inconveniencing paid customers. Mr. Aley said that free parking is already offered on all of the street assets on Sunday's and the restaurants benefit from that and realizes that cant be done all of the time, but when he looks at the New Haven bound side of the East Norwalk Railroad Station it is adjacent to four to five restaurants that may benefit from it but also realizes that it is complicated with the variety of different zones, but his thought is if the Parking Authority gives a boost to all of the restaurant in the SONO and Wall Street areas on Sundays that can be done for these restaurant owners in East Norwalk. He said he was not aware of the free parking on the north side on Sundays and although its great it does not benefit the restaurants but with this new information, he would like to think about this and may bring it up again in the future but asked that the Parking Authority think about the possibility of free parking and what it might do for those businesses on Sunday's. Mr. Rains noted that the parking spaces are also full Monday through Saturday. Mr. Bolella suggested that staff pull the number of transactions and do some occupancy counts including the permit holders that use the lot. Mr. Lutz also suggested conducting a rate survey.

6. OLD BUSINESS

a) Update- 15-Minute Free Option

Mr. Lutz provided an update and said they are working on getting the signs ordered and should be here in three to four weeks, and the signage comes at a very opportune time so that some of the Park Mobile signage issues can be addressed. He said he is still working with Park Mobile to be able to offer a zero rate without a transaction fee. Mr. Bolella said having clear and concise messaging through the signage is important and in addition will be increasing the number of wayfinding signs to the multi-space meters that were installed and want to take every step to make this a successful pilot so that it can be rolled out in the future throughout the city and will serve as a model. Mr. Aley asked the status of the signs with the QR code being lowered. Mr. Lutz said the signs will be updated to have the QR code at the bottom of the sign as well as redesigning the Park Mobil app, so the QR code is larger and strategically placed.

b) Update- Lease with Norwalk Transit District at Yankee Doodle Garage

Mr. Lutz provided an update and said that the contract was executed by the Transit District, and he has sent the contract to Mr. Rains to have the contract fully executed so that the lease can begin on November 1st.

7. ADJOURNMENT

**** MR. FULLAM MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** MS. PARKINGTON SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:05PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dilene Byrd