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Members of the public who wish to provide public comment are encouraged to submit those via e-mail in advance of the meeting. For these comments to be read into the record, they should be submitted at least three hours in advance of the meeting start time. Please email Brian Lutz blutz@norwalkct.gov to provide written comment prior to the meeting.

**PARKING AUTHORITY
SPECIAL MEETING VIA ZOOM VIRTUAL VIDEOCONFERENCE
AND TELECONFERENCE
OCTOBER 23, 2024**

- ATTENDANCE:**

Eric Rains, Chairman
Mathew Seebeck, Vice Chairman
Jud Aley
Peter Fullam
- STAFF**

Jim Travers, Director, TMP.
Bryan Lutz, Asst. Parking Director, TMP
- OTHERS:**

Rocky Legesse, LAZ Parking

CALL TO ORDER

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

1. PUBLIC COMMENT, LIMITED TO THREE MINUTES FOR EACH SPEAKER

Mr. Lutz read the following comment into the record:

Good evening, Parking Authority members, staff, and Mayor Rilling,

Due to a prior commitment, I am unable to attend this evening's Parking Authority meeting however, I would like the following statement added to the record. The East Norwalk Neighborhood Association respectfully requests that you reconsider the decision not to provide free weekend parking in commuter and neighborhood lots citywide. As you know many of these lots in East Norwalk proper are underutilized by commuters from Friday evenings at 6:00 PM through Sunday yet these same lots would be beneficial for supporting our local retail, restaurant, and service businesses, and in some cases would help to alleviate overflow residential parking in areas that have weekend social, civic, and religious activities. At the very least residents would be interested in understanding why the board is opposed to free parking especially since there does not seem to be any analysis on file that would support this decision and because there is already free parking on Sundays. A financial analysis of the revenue and expenses from these lots may uncover not only a very minimal loss of revenue but would likely conclude that there would be savings due to reduced enforcement hours. Since the city is staff to the Authority, we are requesting an independent review by TMP and the finance department of the Friday to Sunday cost revenue associated with the commuter and neighborhood lots that are currently under the pay-to-park system including Liberty Square, Veteran's Park, 180 East, the East Norwalk station, East Avenue North, Fort Point Street, and East Avenue South. It is our hope and have heard the hope of many businesses and residences that you will reconsider the current policy and consider solutions that will allow for adequate turnover and would be a win-win for the residents, visitors, the city, and the authority.

Sincerely,

Diane Cece

2. DISCUSSION AND ACTION RELATED TO MINUTES FROM THE PARKING AUTHORITY MEETING WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2024

****MR. SEEBECK MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS SUBMITTED.**

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

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

3. ENGINEERING AND PROJECT REPORT

Mr. Lutz reported on the concrete repairs at the Yankee Doodle Garage and followed up on Mr. Seebeck's question from the last meeting regarding the warranty/maintenance plan and said there is a five-year warranty on the product and there should be minimum wear and tear considering

the location of where the product is laid. He said it will be added to the maintenance review each week and report any issues to GL Capasso and he will contact the contractor that is performing the work, and they will address it.

a. Update- TMP2023-01-YDG Exterior Repairs and Improvement

Mr. Lutz provided an update on the Yankee Doodle exterior repairs and improvements and said the project is running very smoothly and is almost completed.

b. Update- NP2024-02-Aesthetic Enhancement at YDG

Mr. Lutz provided an update on the aesthetic enhancements at the Yankee Doodle Garage and said the bid opened last week, but unfortunately did not receive any bids and is now collaborating with THA who is the designer for the plan to come up with alternative solutions. Once there is a clear understanding, they will coordinate with the purchasing department and go out to bid and will keep the authority updated as that moves forward. Mr. Fullam asked when the bids were due back. Mr. Travers said the bid opening was last week and was out for three weeks which is the typical bid period, and they are diligently working on getting the best pricing.

Mr. Lutz provided some operational updates and said at the YMCA lot there was an issue with ensuring the trees were protected. He is coordinating with the city's arborist to look at the trees and ensure that we are doing our best to protect them and will put that into place. He said they are currently working with a project manager from RMS Corp. which is the construction company that is doing that work and just received an agreement with them and have agreed to reapply the asphalt to the lot once they are done and repair any damages that may occur when they are using the area. Mr. Rains said he imagines the lot will be getting a lot more use and asked if it is properly lit or if any other improvements are needed. Mr. Lutz said staff can look to and come up with a comprehensive improvement plan. Mr. Travers thanked Mr. Lutz and Mr. Legesse for working on this and that it was a win-win.

Mr. Lutz provided an update on the East Norwalk Railroad Station overflow lot and said it was put into operation due to the Walk Bridge project and the East Norwalk Railroad Station improvements by the DOT. He said the plan is for that to be the overflow lot for the spaces that they take away in the future for those projects and are working on wayfinding signs from the train station to get to that lot, but in the meantime have an agreement in place with VOX Church and they will be renting 20 spaces from 8:00 AM to 1:00 PM on Sundays. Mr. Fullam said that is a busy area and asked if there was a crosswalk. Mr. Lutz said there is one that is at the intersection to the south of the lot and one at the intersection to the north of the lot. Mr. Travers said they are encouraging them to use the crosswalk and not cross mid-block but will not be installing a crosswalk. Mr. Travers noted that there are times that the lot will be empty, and the

lot is not owned by the city and is DOT property but there is an obligation for the permitted users to have a place so can't provide additional permits so we allow it to be a transient lot with the understating that the permit holders become the primary users when it is available and the city has not paid for it and have not paid for any of the restorations and are all paid for by CTDOT which is all part of the agreement.

Mr. Lutz provided an update on the SONO train station lot and said they lost the parking spaces for the Spinnaker Development and have started the remediation project and Mr. Legesse, and his team set up a customer service outreach tent and were very proactive in informing all of the customers that usually park there for other parking solutions and plan ahead. He said they are being directed to the garage at this point and have 15%-20% occupancy before the garage is full and is going well.

4. FINANCIAL AND OPERATING REPORT-LAZ

Mr. Legesse reported and said they finished the month with a strong fund balance and that they outperformed in the meter revenue which was mainly due to meter bags being sold for the construction projects in the Wall Street and SONO area. He said that transient parking was under budget for the month which was mainly due to the Maritime Garage and the Webster Lot. He said the Maritime Aquarium reached out to say that they are noticing a decline in attendance and there were not enough customers coming into the movies at Webster Lot, but all the other facilities were either on budget or just over budget. He said they are seeing more monthly parkers and are mainly seeing that in the train station garages and parking lots and permit revenue is increasing coupled with the addition of the YMCA lot. He said the parking violations are almost on budget for the month. He said the total revenue was over budget by 0.2%.

Mr. Lutz said he has been looking at a lot of articles and social media posts stating that a lot of people will be returning to work by January and need to put our best foot forward by looking at rate structures and seeing how we can recommend a change of rate on permits and transient parking.

Mr. Lutz said the Parking Authority absorbs all the parking taxes for transient and metered revenue and at the next meeting staff will be bringing recommendations on new rates and how the sales tax can be shifted so the Parking Authority does not have to absorb the sales tax.

Mr. Lutz said some potential tenants are interested in the Lobster Craft space and are working through the details and will be bringing recommendations to the authority.

Mr. Lutz said they were approached by the Department of Aging and Disability Service Bureau of Education and Services for the Blind regarding the vending and food services at the South Norwalk Train Station. There is a Connecticut Statute that allows this department to take over operations for vending and other food services and write the first refusal for anything that gets added. If the authority would like to rent out another space in any of the locations will need to give them notice so that they can bring it to their committee to see if they can operate it effectively or if they would like to put vending machines. The Parking Authority does not need to

have the vending machines, but it is a nice amenity that we provide the variance will be there as we planned on having that vending income for the entire year and have now lost that. Mr. Travers said they also have the right have right of first refusal on retail space, but the department is very small and doesn't often respond to physically rent out space but must get a waiver from them to lease out space, but we have received a letter from them to claim the revenue from the vending machines. Mr. Seebeck said he is unclear on the status of the lease with Black by Demand. Mr. Travers said a waiver was provided for Black by Demand and received a waiver for the Lobster Craft space.

Mr. Travers discussed the decision that was made to go to the property manager versus doing this inhouse and have gotten quality tenants and multiple responses to fill spaces in a relatively short time and now there is someone that they can contact for issues and was a massively great win for that decision that was made.

Mr. Seebeck asked if the revenue that was already earned gets transferred to this organization or is just going forward. Mr. Travers said "No," Mr. Seebeck said the Parking Authority had spent some money to fix up the area and asked before this if the expenses were covered. Mr. Travers said "Yes".

Mr. Legesse reported on the expenses for the month and said they were below budget by 5.9% and were mainly due to payroll savings, operating expenses, and some building repairs and maintenance.

Mr. Legesse reported on the variances and said they include a variance for operating expenses, signage, tickets, building repairs and maintenance, and permit/violation management.

Mr. Legesse said the systemwide transient activity is 14.4% below the prior year and most of the decline is due to the Maritime Garage and the Webster Lot. He said they are seeing an increase in credit card usage and app usage which is approximately 80% of transient revenue. Mr. Travers said they have shared the decrease in transient activity with business development and requested that future reports be broken down by area.

Mr. Travers said they have had several conversations with the post office regarding the walkway in Wall Street area have solicited the assistance of Senator Blumenthal to contact the Postmaster in Washington and have had subsequent meetings with the team and have a preliminary approval.

Mr. Legesse reported on the permit side and is seeing an increase in permit demand at the train station facilities and Haviland Deck and is expecting the usage to increase and is monitoring capacity closely.

Mr. Legesse said there is a decline in on-street transient activity which is mainly due to spaces being taken away by construction, but the revenue is over budget because the majority of the payments are coming from meter bags.

Mr. Legesse reported on the parking enforcement and said the ticket issuance is declining but did see an increase in violation collections in September which could be due to the collections from the beach violations.

Mr. Legesse reported on the Pay by Cell and said for the first time it is down 0.8%.

5. OLD BUSINESS

a. Update- Regulation change

Mr. Lutz provided an update and said the signage is complete on West Avenue and the meters have been updated and represent the 9:00 AM to 9:00 PM. He said they are working on how to approach SONO so that the signs can be changed properly and the regulations for the meters all at the same time, but there has been a delay in getting some of the signage for SONO. Mr. Lutz said once the signs have all been updated the 15-minute free option will be uploaded citywide.

6. ADJOURNMENT

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

**** MR. ALEY SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dilene Byrd