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**PARKING AUTHORITY
REGULAR MEETING VIA ZOOM VIRTUAL VIDEOCONFERENCE
AND TELECONFERENCE
JUNE 26, 2024**

- ATTENDANCE:**

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

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 EACH SPEAKER

There were no public comments this evening.

2. DISCUSSION AND ACTION RELATED TO MINUTES FROM THE PARKING AUTHORITY MEETING WEDNESDAY, MAY 22, 2024.

Under Call to Order change “5:30PM. to 6:00PM”.

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

**** MR. FULLUM SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

3. ENGINEERING AND PROJECT REPORT

a. Update- TMP 2023-01-YDG Exterior Repairs and Improvement

Mr. Lutz provided an update on the Yankee Doodle Garage exterior repairs and improvements and said a lot of progress has been made, and he shared pictures of the progress. He said all the ribs have been cut on the alleyway side as well as the Belden Ave. side and the contractor is scheduled to complete this part of the project next Monday, and there is a walkthrough scheduled for tomorrow to coordinate the next phase of the repair which will impact some other parking spaces, but the garage will continue to remain open.

Mr. Alely asked if any special attention was paid to the joints. Mr. Lutz said there was very detailed planning regarding the joints in the garage and that is why the first cut was very important and everything went well. Mr. Alely said in looking at the photo it looks great, but looking at the end cap that the contractor had formed he could imagine that the water from wind driven rain getting into the joint and freezing and becoming a maintenance issue. Mr. Lutz said some of the areas where water is penetrating the structure will be patched and should be addressed by the completion of this phase of the project.

Mr. Fullam asked when they cut the first vertical piece and why they didn't make it a little lower and leave the rebar out of it completely. Mr. Lutz said he cannot comment because he doesn't know the reasoning behind it, but he will contact Mr. Sugarman and report back.

4. FINANCIAL AND OPERATING REPORT

Mr. Legesse reported on the parking revenue and said they finished the month with a negative fund balance and was due to slightly missing the budget revenue by 3.7% as well as a 24.3% increase in operating expenses. He said the main underperformance on the revenue side came for the Maritime Garage, Haviland Deck, and Webster Lot. He said in the prior year comparison revenue is up compared to last month due to increased permit and violation revenue.

Mr. Legesse reported on the expenses and said the 24.3% increase came from the accrual that was approved last month under the repairs and maintenance.

Mr. Legesse reported on transient activity and said it is down for the month and is also down compared to last month as well as last year and the major decline that they are noticing for transient activity is Haviland Deck, the Maritime Garage, as well as on street activity.

Mr. Legesse reported on permit activity and said it is up 1.3% compared to last month and is up 5.5% compared to last May and is up 4.2% compared to last year. He said the permit revenue is up 5.2% compared to last year month and is up 6.4% compared to last May and is year to date is up 4.6% compared to last year. He said the increase in demand for May is mainly due to increased permit sales at Webster Lot for the Walk/Bridge project.

Mr. Legesse reported on the variance report and said there was a variance for repairs and maintenance due to the expenses were higher for the month due to accruals that were approved last month, and there was a variance for security services due to the expenses being higher for the month due to the replacement of the security cameras at the SNRR garage and Webster Lot. Mr. Seebeck asked what is driving the increase in office expenses and tickets. Mr. Legesse said the office expenses are supplies that are needed for the office and may be over budget depending on the usage of the supplies but are under budget for operating and office supplies combined. He said on a year to date and the tickets for the SNRR and Maritime Garage were ordered in July and was a bulk order and balanced out on a year-to-date basis and is over budget for the year because they were ordered at the beginning of the year for the full year and had underbudgeted the amount for the year for ticket expenses.

Mr. Legesse reported on the systemwide activity and said overall the transient activity is 2.8% below last year and revenue is 5.1% above last year because a majority of the transient revenue are from the higher transactional values areas such as the Maritime Garage, the overflow lot and the SNRR.

Mr. Legesse reported on permit sales and said they are continuing seeing an increase in demand at the SNRR, Haviland Deck, as well as the Yankee Doodle Garage and over the past month the Walk Bridge project has added over 30 permits to the Webster Lot. He said that permit revenue year to date represents 33.9% of the total system revenue.

Mr. Legesse reported on the on-street parking and said the transient activity is down 11.1% and are seeing a decrease in leisure and nighttime activity and are noticing North Main Street, South Main Street, and areas in SONO are seeing a lot of empty spaces during lunch and dinner time hours and is reverse in Wall Street/Main Street area where they are seeing an increase in activity. Mr. Lutz said the initiatives that they have made over the last couple of years have made the Wall Street area more business friendly. Mr. Fullam said there is a developer that has bought over 40 properties, and he has no opinion of him except that when he buys the properties, he fixes them up rents them out and holds true with a lot of these restaurants that are doing good business, so he believes some credit is owed to him as well.

Mr. Legesse reported on the parking enforcement and said ticket issuance and citation revenue was up due to the beach opening for the season, and the ticket issuance is coming mainly from the beach operation. He said for the month of May there were 69 citations paid for a total value of \$8,840 from the beaches.

Mr. Legesse reported on the tickets issues versus demand analysis and said they are seeing a decline, but this does not include the citations from the beach and still remain at 2.6% compared to last month and the prior year's comparison.

Mr. Legesse reported on Pay by Cell and said the Pay by Cell transactions represent 31% of transient demands and 32% of transient revenue. He said there is an increase in Pay by Cell usage and in the coming months will include the breakdown between off street and on street transactions and currently is evenly divided but if broken down by on street spaces zone by zone the variance would be huge.

5. OLD BUSINESS

a. Update- 15-minute free parking- Wall Street

Mr. Lutz provided an update of the 15-minute fee parking on Wall Street and said there have been numerous updates in the piloted area of Wall Street this past year and have pretty much all been received as positive. He said most of the angled parking has been eliminated, clearer signage has been added, as well as the addition of the 15-minute free option to the meters that was done last month. He said the Parking Authority continues to be innovative and he is looking forward to taking what we have learned in this piloted area and spreading these best practices citywide.

Mr. Lutz reported on the information from May and said there were 553 impressions for the free 15-minute option and was used on average 33 times per day. He said this data will continue to be helpful in understanding what is going on at the curb level.

Mr. Fullam noted that most of the people that came into his store didn't even realize the free 15-minute option and said that education to the public is still huge and suggested maybe looking into better signage to keep the public informed on what is actually happening. Mr. Lutz said that outreach needs to improve, and he fully understands that and hopefully will have this option citywide and will have this announced a lot more effectively and widespread. Mr. Rains suggested that when this option is available to have a discussion with the Visit Norwalk marketing folks that do the postings to get this information out that this is available in the Wall Street area.

b. Update- IPMI Conference

Mr. Lutz said the International Parking Mobility Institute conference was held earlier this month and he visited numerous vendors and noted that he looked at high speed overhead doors and has a meeting scheduled with one of the vendors in mid-July. He also noted that mobile app vendors and there were a lot of discussions regarding municipalities using a multi-vendor approach to improve the customer experience by giving more choice to the users and he is currently looking into more information on that. He said he also met with some park connect vendors and there is a lot of innovation with park systems integrating with EV chargers and being able to reserve an EV charger. He said they also attended multiple seminars on best practices improving the customer experience, EV infrastructure, crisis management, and modernization of curb management. He said it was a great conference and connected with a number of city officials and other parking colleagues and he hopes members of the Parking Authority will be able to attend next year.

Mr. Fullam asked if there was anything at the conference that really stood out as something that Norwalk could implement going forward that is better than what we currently have. Mr. Lutz said the multi-vendor app was very interesting, but he is reserved to give judgement on that yet because he has not yet seen any studies that it is a valuable app, and one of the priorities that we need to take to heart in improving the park systems at both the South Norwalk Garage and the Maritime Garage. He said some of the park systems are integrating artificial intelligence into their

system and improving the ingress and egress times in the garages is something of priority. He said the other thing that stood out was the EV charging infrastructures.

6. NEW BUSINESS

a. Discuss/Vote- Regulation Change

Mr. Lutz said now that the pilot program in the Wall Street area has pretty much proved successful it is time to look at expanding the best practices to the rest of the city and the parking assets. He said the first step is to discuss and update the confusing two- and three-hour restrictions to a clearer three-hour restriction, update the signs and how they are posted, and implement the unique free 15-minute option for the assets citywide. He said this option has been very positive in an innovative way of managing the curb and he received a few phone calls for businesses in South Norwalk asking when the free 15-minute option will be available.

Mr. Lutz read the following into the record from Adam Greenbaum of AGW Partners:

I am writing to you in support and excitement of the changes that you are making to make parking less of a burden on small business owners in Norwalk. We are extremely thankful for you and your team's initiative and thoughtfulness. Please let me know if there is anything I can do further to support this initiative along with future ones.

Mr. Lutz said the data we have collecting through the pilot program showed a decrease in related violations by 11% and shows that the customers have been understanding of the regulations which he assumes that the simplified and clearer signs working, and confusion is not as rampant which caused a number of past violations. He said this would also sync up all the neighborhoods by having an importantly consistent time regulation throughout Norwalk leading the customers to be better aware of parking in Norwalk and leading to that improvement on the customer experience. He said once implemented we are confident that we will see similar improvements, and customers are spending more time enjoying their time in Norwalk instead of worrying about parking, which helps with that experience and more importantly helps the local businesses have a better start to their engagement with their customers. He said it is good to see these improvements and is asking the Parking Authority to vote to expand these best practices we learned during the pilot.

Mr. Fullam asked other that the free 15-minute option what other changes would occur in South Norwalk. Mr. Lutz said the three ways to pay sign would be changed and the two- and three-hour regulation would turn into just a three-hour regulation which would avoid any confusion that people used to have.

Mr. Aley asked if anybody has any concerns about decreased turnover. Mr. Lutz said most of the data that they collected shows that a majority of the transactions are approximately 2 hours and 15% in the Wall Street area were over three hours and Mr. Legesse brought up a good point that some of the restaurant customers would receive a violation because of the two hour time limit changed while they were there and would feel pressure to have to leave the restaurant within two hours and that pressure has now been elevated in the Wall Street area.

Mr. Fullam said he is concerned about part-time workers working for three hours and parking in front of a retail store. Mr. Lutz said we want to have that business outreach where we are informing the business owners, managers, and hopefully employees to park in the off-street locations and

sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't and if the regulation is three hours and someone wants to park there is not much that can be done but are not really seeing a large percentage of those users there. Mr. Legesse said it would also cost more to park on the street for the three hours at the meter than it would be to park in the lots.

Mr. Aley said we are trying to normalize the system throughout and make it consistent but said the post office in South Norwalk has 15 minutes of free parking and the post office on Belden Avenue is 30 minutes and he thinks they should both be the same.

Mr. Aley said in the Wall Street district the start time is 9:00AM and in South Norwalk is 8:00AM and would like to see the 9:00AM start time in South Norwalk too.

Mr. Lutz said he would like to get some data on this before any changes are made and will bring some recommendations to the July meeting so the Parking Authority can make an informed decision on the two items.

Mr. Seebeck asked if the Parking Authority controls the parking spaces in front of the post office. Mr. Lutz said that is something he needs to verify.

**** MR. SEEBECK MOVED TO APPROVE ADJUSTING THE ON STREET PARKING REGULATION TO REFLECT A 3-HOUR MAXIMUM, THE ADJUSTMENT TO THE SIGNS AS DISCUSSED, AND THE NORMALIZATION OF THE COMMENCEMENT HOUR TO REFLECT THE PILOT PROGRAM FROM WALL STREET.**

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

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Rains thanked Mr. Lutz for all his continued hard work and focus on all the things that are going on and thanked Mr. Legesse for his focus on the reporting that he does at it is certainly helpful.

Mr. Lutz said the July meeting will be held in the conference room at the Yankee Doodle Garage but will also have a hybrid capability. After further discussion it was recommended to have the meeting on July 17, 2024, so that all the members can attend.

7. MOTION TO ADJOURN

**** MR. SEEBECK MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

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

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:55PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dilene Byrd