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**PARKING AUTHORITY
REGULAR MEETING VIA ZOOM VIRTUAL VIDEOCONFERENCE
AND TELECONFERENCE
APRIL 28, 2021**

ATTENDANCE: Michael Harden, Chairman
Eric Rains, Vice Chairman
Jud Aley
Tom Vetter

STAFF Jessica Vonashek, Chief of Economic and Community Development
James Travers, Director, TMP
Garrett Bolella, Asst. Director, TMP
Vanessa Valadares, DPW Principal Engineer

CALL TO ORDER

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

1. PUBLIC COMMENT

Todd Zabriskie- 14 Main Street

Mr. Zabriskie stated that he owns CT Surgical located at 14 Main Street and noticed that in other parts of town the Parking Authority has allowed some 15 minute parking spaces. He said that his cliental is mostly senior citizens and by having a few 15 minute parking spaces in the Main Street lot would make it a lot easier for them.

2. DISCUSSION AND ACTION RELATED TO MINUTES FROM THE PARKING AUTHORITY METING WEDNESDAY, MARCH 24, 2021.

**** MR. ALEY MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MARCH MEETING AS
SUBMITTED.**

**** MR. RAINS SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

3. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Mr. Harden said that the Parking Authority is doing a great job with the programs that we have implemented and the way we have been managing the Parking Authority has been going very well and people are happy. He said he pulled a statistic out for the percentage of tickets issued incorrectly and is only 0.15% and the Parking Authority needs to be proud of that and the more we speak positive on how well things are going the better things will go.

4. FINANCIAL AND OPERATING REPORT

Mr. Manousos provided an update on the requests that were made at the last meeting and said we are still working on a plan that will be reviewed by staff regarding the vegetable garden and present to the Parking Authority at the next meeting.

Mr. Manousos provided an update on some of the initiatives and said it has been confirmed that the real time communications with the handhelds is working and now just have to have the \$5 discount for the same day payments programmed. He also said that the handheld LPR system that was suggested by Mr. Travers has been implemented. Mr. Legesse said that has been live for the past three weeks and has improved the quality of issuing tickets.

Mr. Manousos reported and said there is still an operating loss for the month but is getting better and that the revenues are 40% under budget for the month and 48.5% year to date, but we are beginning to see more activity. He said the expenses are down 16.1% for the month and 29.4% year to date and the significant increase in the debt service was a big contributing loss on the expense side as well as snow removal costs.

Mr. Harden asked if there has been an update from the DOT regarding ridership. Mr. Travers said that the latest update from the DOT is that 21% of ridership has returned and the good news is that it has steadily increased since January.

Mr. Manousos said that 77% of revenues was collected via credit cards and the average transaction for Pay by Cell was \$2.47 which is down compared to last month by 35%. He said the number of transactions year to date are down 33% compared to last year and revenue is down 54%

Mr. Manousos reported on the Customer Courtesy program and said there were 20 program days for the month and over 1800 courtesy cards were issued, the value of the additional meter time that was given was over \$900, there were 480 violations after the courtesy time had expired and the value of the courtesy cards issued was over \$33,000.

5. ENGINEERING AND PROJECT REPORT

Ms. Valadares reported and said the bid opening was held yesterday for the calking at the South Norwalk Railroad Station and we received four bids and the results were very competitive. She said that Desmond will be reviewing them and will be on the May Parking Authority agenda for approval.

Ms. Valadares said the water quality improvements at Webster Lot have not yet been put out to bid and we just received the wage rates yesterday and will be finalizing the bid package and are hoping to advertise by next week.

6. NEW BUSINESS

a. Discuss and vote- 15 minute parking space redesign

Mr. Harden said there has been a noticeable amount of people that have mistaken the 15 minute parking spaces for regular spaces and vice-versa and have received a violation. He said the parking spaces are currently marked with a small sign and requested options so that the 15 minute parking spaces are clear. Mr. Rains suggested removing the parking meters. Mr. Travers said a lot of the tickets that were issued were through a pay station and not a parking meter. Mr. Aley suggested installing the "old style" meters in those spaces so that it is clear that they are 15 minute parking spaces. Mr. Travers said that he does have some concerns regarding painting the street and rather than installing meters would like to look at installing more paystations which would also help to aid in the enforcement. Mr. Harden said the spaces need to be better identified and asked Mr. Travers would could be done now. Mr. Travers suggested using feather flags as a test. Ms. Casey said we have just spent a lot of time going around the urban core removing the feather flags because they have been overtaking some areas and we had received numerous complaints so we need to be extremely thoughtful and she is concerned about the number of flags that would need to be installed.

Mr. Rains said he does not see the need for this discussion for the few people that have been confused about the spaces and just like any other regulation we are all expected to understand what we are doing and suggested maybe being more relaxed on the forgiveness of a ticket on those spaces. He said the Parking Authority has had many discussions regarding ways to decrease clutter on the street so he does not think feather flags should be installed nor does he think painting the street is an option.

Mr. Harden requested that the Parking Authority continue to think about options and in the interim have relaxed enforcement on the 15 minute parking spaces because clearly there is some confusion.

b. Discuss and vote on phone charging stations

Mr. Travers said when he had toured the train stations he had noticed that they are absent of phone charging stations and that is a service that we have come to expect in most public facilities. He presented some options of phone charging stations and said the cost is approximately \$3,500 and suggested engaging the Snyder Group to options regarding branding them. Mr. Harden agreed and said that four stations will be needed. Mr. Rains suggested that instead of installing standalone stations to install USB ports through the station. Mr. Travers said that staff will look into wall mounted options and report back to the Parking Authority.

c. Discussion on parking rates for Liberty Square, and Wall and Washington areas

Mr. Harden said the reason for this item is to discuss changing the parking rates on Washington Street, Liberty Square and Wall and Washington areas to \$1.00 because when it was implemented it was under a starting plan and we are now at a place where a decision needs to be made on where the rates should be. Mr. Aley said based on research the most desirable parking should have the higher rate and we have that balance and the Washington Street area is the most desirable in the city, and Wall Street is up and coming but suggested leaving that rate at .50 cents. Mr. Travers said he agrees and that the demand is not yet in the Wall Street area and does not justify a higher rate, and the investment for Liberty Square is also not yet there and suggested increasing the rate at this time and agrees with the fluctuation of rates based on demand. Mr. Aley suggested reducing the rate to \$1.00 at the North Water Street lot that is north of the aquarium because it underutilized.

d. Re-brand/Re-logo NPA

Mr. Travers said based on the last meeting we have engaged the Snyder Group to look at a rebranding of the customer facing portion of the Parking Authority to “Park Norwalk” so that when we reemerge from the pandemic want to invite the customers back to a new look.

Mr. Snyder presented three options for the rebranding and fielded questions from the Parking Authority. Mr. Travers said a lot of the conversation was around creating a unique identifier that could stand out on its own. Mr. Aley suggested doing a focus group before a decision is made. Mr. Harden said that Mr. Snyder did a fabulous job on the rebranding options requested that Mr. Snyder send the presentation deck to the members of the Parking Authority for further review.

e. Presentation of snow emergency signage

Mr. Travers presented a versatile sign that can be used in the lots and can be used for events as well as for snow emergencies and would be blank when not in use. He said this will also help to

create a welcoming environment for people to park. Mr. Harden asked if they are used in other communities where he can see an example. Mr. Travers said “yes” there are some in Norwalk on the main roads as well as in Stamford and in the theatre district in New Haven. Mr. Harden requested that staff present a map of where all the snow emergency are currently and where staff is proposing to install the versatile signs. Mr. Rains also requested the addresses of where they are in New Haven so that the Parking Authority can see.

f. Presentation on Art Exhibit and expansion

Mr. Travers said there are two proposals for River Street and SONO and each of the proposals are similar and the frames will allow the art work to be rotated, and the curating fees are the same at \$700 per show. He said they also spoke about engaging the schools as well as Norwalk Community College.

7. OLD BUSINESS

a. Presentation Real Time Communications/Ticketing & QR Code

Mr. Manousos said that Mr. Legesse had contacted the vendor regarding the QR code initiative and that it will take six to eight weeks for the vendor to program and will have an updated report at the next meeting.

b. Presentation and discussion- Adjudications update

Mr. Harden asked if there are any updates about resuming the adjudication hearings. Ms. Vonashek said not at this time but there will be a positive update provided at the next meeting.

c. Discuss and Vote- Haviland Painting Quotes

Mr. Legesse said that we have received one quote for the painting of Haviland Deck and are waiting on two additional quotes.

d. Update on the removal of Bollards

Ms. Valadares said one of the reasons the bollards were installed in the Wall Street area was because we need to be sure when the cars back into the parking spaces that the rear of the car is not over the sidewalk, and there was also a concern from the neighborhood association that cars would hit existing trees. She said that another option can be looked into but we need to ensure that the cars do not go over the sidewalk. Mr. Harden said all of the feedback that the Parking Authority has received has been negative and the Parking Authority agrees that they should be removed and suggested the tire stops installed into the parking spaces. Mr. Aley asked if the parking was put back to nose in parking if the safety concerns would be eliminated. Ms. Valadares said tire stops would be used in those spaces. Ms. Vonashek said the goal of is to remove the yellow bollards and it needs to be determined what options are possible to have them removed and maintain safety but also Parki have them more clean and stream lined. Ms. Valadares

said that DPW and TMP staff will work on some alternative solutions and report back to the Parking Authority at the next meeting and suggested removing a few to start

- e. Discuss and approve proposals from Bob Abriola expanding Art in Parking Places to the SONO Train Station and the Yankee Doodle Garage

This was discussed under item 6f of the agenda.

Mr. Aley said that he received a call from a retailer on Wall Street stating that he loves the 15 minute parking but the enforcement is “hit or miss” and asked if the enforcement can be more consistent with the 15 minute parking spaces.

Mr. Aley said there is no parking in front of the coffee shop and luggage store on Wall Street and suggested that at 15 minute or full time parking space be installed.

8. MOTION TO ADJOURN

**** MR. VETTER MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** MR. RAINS SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:55PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dilene Byrd