



PARKING AUTHORITY PUBLIC INFORMATIONAL MEETING FEBRUARY 20, 2019

ATTENDANCE: Richard Brescia, Chairman
Michael Harden, Vice Chairman
Jud Aley
Tom Vetter

STAFF: Kathryn Hebert, Director of Transportation, Mobility & Parking
Dilene Byrd, Secretary

OTHERS: Rita Azrelyant
(See Attached sign-in sheet)

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Brescia opened the informational meeting at 5:30PM.

Mr. Brescia started the meeting by saying the most important part of the meeting will be the comments that are received and that this is the first meeting but there may be a few additional meetings scheduled. He said that a plan has been developed and that it is a work in progress, and that it was put together to be included in the budget request for next fiscal year and the impact to the budget was not large and most of the output will be the cost of the paint.

Mr. Brescia provided a history and said that in 2014 the Parking Authority had gotten involved in outreach in South Norwalk and Wall Street to revitalize the area. He said that in 2016 that the purchase of meters was included in the capital budget request for the Wall Street area, and that he had met with Mayor Rilling last summer and recommended installing metered parking, the concept of angled parking and a fee schedule. He said that Mayor Rilling supported the ideas and is the right thing to do for the Wall Street area.

YANKEE DOODLE GARAGE

Ms. Hebert presented and said that there are a lot of exciting things that are going on in the Wall Street area and that parking is front and center. She provided an overview on the improvements and investments that the Parking Authority to the area which includes the new Parking Management Plan and angled parking. She said that the Parking Authority has invested approximately \$2 million dollars over the last few years in the Yankee Doodle Garage and the Wall Street area. New security cameras, doors and elevators have been installed at the Yankee Doodle Garage and the all of the lights have been replaced with LED lights and artistic lighting was installed on the outside of the garage. She said the funds were also spent on infrastructure repair to the garage which included drainage, concrete repairs and waterproofing, and that funds were also invested in paving the Wall Street and Mechanic Street parking lots and proposed for next year are ADA compliance work.

NEW PARKING MANAGEMENT PLAN

Ms. Hebert provided an overview of the Parking Management Plan that the Parking Authority has proposed for fiscal year 2020 and said that the hourly the current rate is .50 cents per hour and the proposed fee would be reduced from to 25 cents. Monthly permits would be reduced from \$38 to \$25, and the vehicle storage rate would be increased to \$76 per month and on-street parking would be reduced from .75 cents to .50 cents an hour. Hours of operation would be extended by three hours, from 6:00PM to 9:00PM. And multi-space meters would be added.

Ms. Hebert said that the current number of on street parking that the Parking Authority oversees and manages is 254 spaces in the Wall Street area. She presented the proposed Wall Street reverse back-in angled parking plan and said there will be a net of thirteen parking spaces in the Main, River and Wall Street areas. Mr. Brescia said that back in angled parking is the way to go and if the Parking Authority decides to implement the back in angled parking and it will require a lot of education and a lot of outreach will be done. He said that bike lanes will also benefit from the back in angled parking.

ANGLED PARKING (VIDEO)

Ms. Hebert presented a video from Auburn that showed the benefit on back in angled parking which is a more secured way of parking in an angled parking space.

Mayor Rilling said that there was head in angled parking on both sides of Wall Street many years ago and studies now show that head in parking is dangerous and gave an example of an incident that he recently had on Frank Esposito Way where a driver who was parked head-in, next to an SUV that was blocking his view and the driver backed out blindly into the side of his car. He said that there is currently back in angled parking on Elizabeth Street and from the reports he has received it seems to be very effective. He thanked the Parking Authority for developing the plan and said the main thing they would like to accomplish is to bolster the Wall Street area.

It was asked if this will just be done in the Wall Street area or will this be a city standard. Mr. Brescia said if this is found to be successful and works well in the Wall Street area they will make a suggestion to the Common Council.

Mr. Alan stated concerns for people dining outside and bicyclists with reverse back in parking.

Mr. Discala asked how much sidewalk will need to be taken for construction. He also suggested while during construction to have bollards installed to elevate the concern that was stated regarding outside dining and bicyclists. Mr. Brescia said this is a test and the curbs will not be changed but if it works well and is well received a blueprint will be done for a permanent concept moving forward. Mr. Discala said that he grew up in the Wall Street area and that he loves it and wishes the Yankee Doodle Garage was utilized more. Mr. Brescia said the Parking Authority is hoping that it will be.

Mr. Dubois of Factory Underground Studio said the parking has made Wall Street less desirable to shop in the area and suggested residents are given a pass for parking rather than having to pay to park, and also extending the time limit from two hours to four hours. He said the best way to revitalize Wall Street is to reduce or eliminate parking fees. Mr. Brescia said there has not been a fee to park in the Wall Street area in a very long time and there has been research done all over the country and paid parking creates turnover.

Mr. Marc Alan, director of marketing and publicity at Factory Underground Studio, said more meters outside of just the angled parking in the area would be a benefit to the neighborhood.

Mr. Mushak said he was first resistant to the idea, but his opinion was changed after observing angled, back-in parking in a number of midwestern cities. He said when he first heard about it he was completely skeptical and thought this looks crazy but it is so much better when you're pulling out.

It was asked if the back in parking will be on both sides of Wall Street and if not will there be any consideration to do that. Mr. Brescia said "no" it will only be on the one side at this time but he thinks ideally down the road that would be nirvana. It was suggested that meters are installed outside of the angled parking area. Ms. Hebert said that the concept is that there will be one multi-spaced meter for every 10 parking spaces, and there will be plenty of signage to direct people to the correct meter.

Mr. Fullam stated that getting turnover is critical and the biggest complaint he hears from his customers is that there are no parking spaces available, but that is a concern about the back in angled parking because of the width of the street. He said he is all for trying to get people to slow down and getting people to park in the garage and suggested additional signage is installed. He also suggested decreasing the sidewalk width and dedicating one lane into the parking garage on Burnell Blvd and that would attract people that are going to the courthouse to park in the garage.

Mr. Greether suggested that as part of the study to look at making Burnell Blvd a two way street which would help with the occupancy of the parking garage. He also suggested a higher parking rate on the street to help drive people to park in the garage, and installing the angled parking in front of the garage as part of test plan and it would help the pedestrians feel safer in that area. He said he agrees with using just paint as part of the test plan as it minimizes the construction costs and it's a data gathering mission and will allow engineers to get data to make better decisions for the city.

Ms. Corbett said that signage is very important because it's hard to find the parking entrance at the Yankee Doodle Garage

Ms. McGuire said that the back in angled parking will make the area safer for pedestrians and will make it a lot easier to pull out of a space, and would also increase the bike traffic which is what that want. She suggested installing the angled parking on Burnell Blvd. and bottom of Main Street towards Freese Park. She also suggested for safety concerns that the stored cars at the Yankee Doodle Garage that are stored near the stairway be located to the top floors and reserve the second floor for people that work in the area.

It was suggested that the time limit be increased from two to three hours.

Mr. Schuerch suggested a number of unmetered spots or free short term parking. Mr. Mushak stated that uses the free 15 minute parking in Webster Lot and there is a huge demand for them.

Mr. Brescia closed the informational meeting at 6:35PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dilene Byrd

2/20/19

Sign-In sheet

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