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**PARKING AUTHORITY
REGULAR MEETING VIA ZOOM VIRTUAL VIDEOCONFERENCE
AND TELECONFERENCE
JANUARY 24, 2024**

ATTENDANCE:	Eric Rains, Chairman Jud Aley Peter Fullam Matthew Seebeck Pamela Parkington
STAFF	James Travers, Director, TMP Bryan Lutz, Asst. Parking Director, TMP
OTHERS:	Stathis Manousos, LAZ Parking Rocky Legesse, LAZ Parking Stephanie Pelletier, WSP Andrew Lee, WSP Richard Leso, CTDOT

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, DECEMBER 20, 2023.

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

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

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

3. ENGINEERING AND PROJECT REPORT

a. Discuss- Walk Bridge Project ENRR Impact-WSP

Mr. Lutz said the Walk Bridge project construction has begun, and a large impact is coming to East Norwalk, and he invited the Walk Bridge team to give a high-level overview of that impact as well as the commuter lot that is located on East Avenue off of exit 16 which is a 40-space lot that has been striped and has fencing around it. He said the Parking Authority may be tasked to add signage so that transient parkers can park in the lot that will be used by the permit holders for East Norwalk as well.

Ms. Pelletier said she is the PR consultant in the public information team for WSP who are the program manager, on behalf of the State of Connecticut Department of Transportation's Walk Bridge project as well as the Time 2 projects which is part of the local bridges heading east towards the Walk Bridge. She introduced Andrew Lee, who is the Office Engineer on the project for WSP and Mr. Leso who is the Transportation Engineer from the State of Connecticut, Department of Transportation, District 5. She said that they look forward to the opportunity to continue having the partnership discussions.

Mr. Leso said that during construction coordination with the stakeholder is vitally important to the success of the project and maximizes the utility that they can deliver to the public and opportunities such as this are always welcomed and appreciated. He provided a high-level overview of the Time 2 projects. He said that Time 2 is a major sub-component of the Walk Bridge program and is an acronym for Time Improvement and Mobility Enhancements that aim to replace aging railroad infrastructure in an effort to increase speed therefore by reducing trip durations on the New Haven line. The work to be performed in Norwalk under his project includes the replacement of the railroad bridge over Fort Point Street and the realignment of Fort Point Street to resemble a more conventional type intersection and will be replacing the super structure of the railroad bridge on Osbourne Avenue, replacing the railroad bridge over East

Avenue, replacing the super structure for the railroad bridge over Strawberry Hill Avenue, and the improvements to and replacement of the East Norwalk Railroad Station.

Mr. Lee said the very first closure will be early in the spring and will be closing the East Norwalk station for three weeks to install the underground detention system in the north parking lot, and at the conclusion of the three weeks the station will reopen exactly how it is currently, and when the station is closed, they will be turning over the commuter lot at 180 East Avenue to the city to allow the commuters to use the lot during construction. He said later on this summer the station will be closed again to begin the work on the north platform and will again be for three weeks and after that the station will open again however, it will be open with limited parking because all of the parking spaces on the north side along the platform will unfortunately not be accessible so those folks will be allowed to park at the lot at 180 East Avenue, and will be that way until 2025 for the completion of the north platform where once again will have a three week closure to complete the final steps of the station, and at that point the north platform will be opened and completed and will be the final station configuration He said starting in 2026, they will begin on the south side and will be the same process as was done on the north side, and in late 2026 or early 2027 they will begin working on the south platform and at that time there will not be a station closure and the south platform will be completed in 2027 and will end with another three week closure to complete the last few items and will turn the station back over to the Parking Authority. Mr. Travers asked how the train riders will be notified of the closure. Mr. Lee said once they receive the firm dates from the contractor they will share them with the Parking Authority, as well as to Metro North, and Metro North will alert the riders and the Parking Authority can work with Ms. Pelletier to alert the permit parkers, and there will also be signage at the stations. Mr. Rains asked if during the three-week closures if there will be no rail service to the East Norwalk station. Mr. Lee said that is correct and will be bypassing the East Norwalk station and continue through. Mr. Rains asked if when the commuters park in the lot located at 180 East Avenue if they will need to go to the Westport Station, and if so, how do they do that. Mr. Lee said “yes” either the Westport station or the South Norwalk station. Mr. Travers said that Mr. Lutz will be working with Mr. Legesse and Ms. Pelletier on notification for the permit holders and having those permits transferred to the South Norwalk station for that time.

Mr. Lee shared photos of the commuter lot and said that it is a 40-space lot that has been paved and striped and will be fully illuminated and the contractor is working to install the final fixtures. He said it will become a Park Mobile site to allow transient as well as permit parkers to park there and noted that the driveway into the parking lot will also be a shared access to the construction yard adjacent to the parking lot. Mr. Travers said it is anticipated that the overflow lot will be slightly in excess of the parking spaces that are available today and will not have less spaces than there are today. Mr. Lee agreed and said we will never take more than the 40 parking spaces that are currently at the East Norwalk station. Mr. Travers said that staff will work on the signage to let people know where the overflow parking is available. Mr. Travers asked if the Parking Authority would recoup any revenue as part of the project. Mr. Lee said he does not know of any agreements that were made early on and that would have happened during the pre-construction phase between the CTDOT and the City of Norwalk. Mr. Rains asked where the agreements can be found. Mr. Travers said the city refers to Ms. Valadares for a lot of the references and is hoping to get some clarification on the agreements that pertain to the Parking Authority’s assets. Mr. Lee said that we can speak with the Rights of Way legal department at the CTDOT to request copies of the agreements and share them with the Parking Authority.

Mr. Alely said on the New York bound side there is a physical building and asked if that will also be replaced. Mr. Lee said he believes that is being removed to allow for the larger platform. Mr. Alely asked if there would be any interior space for people to wait for the train. Mr. Travers said

there is a future land development agreement in place with Spinnaker to provide a station place on both the New York and New Haven bound side, but they will not be an asset that is managed by the Parking Authority, and going forward it would be assets owned by the developer and managed by the developer. Mr. Aley asked if it would be an interior heated space. Mr. Travers said “yes”. Mr. Rains asked if there would be further parking impacts related to that or does the existing parking configuration would remain the same. Mr. Travers said the parking that is currently there will be maintained and should not lose parking as a result of that. Mr. Lee agreed and said we are not tending to take more parking spaces and he believes with the configuration on the New York bound platform a few more parking spaces will be gained.

Mr. Fullam asked in which months will the closures take place. Mr. Lee said the first closure will be in early spring, and the second one will be during the summer and the closures in 2025 will be later in the year. Mr. Leso said the closure dates are subject to change due to material and availability. Mr. Rains said from a parking perspective that the Parking Authority will work with Ms. Pelletier on a better response then having the customers go to the Walk Bridge website for details as there are more likely to go to the Parking Authority website and as the timing of the closures become more definite there would be a better way to respond. Ms. Pelletier said they have been talking about different communication tactics and will be collaborating with the Parking Authority and will cross promote each other and will also include it in the weekly construction newsletters and the goal is to give the permit parkers and customers as much notice as possible. She also said in the immediate area of the East Norwalk train station there are many businesses that rely on the train station for their employees to travel and will be reaching out individually to those folks. Mr. Lutz said on the operations side we will have constant contact with the permit holders as well as the transient parkers and have specific communication templates handy for when the closures will be occurring.

Mr. Travers said that staff continues to work with the CTDOT and all of Cemetery Circle from East Avenue down to Gregory Boulevard will have all new streetscape and sidewalks on both sides and the introduction of bike lanes and those improvements will potentially start to take place later this year.

Mr. Rains said the Parking Authority greatly appreciates the team’s willingness to attend the meeting and have this conversation and want to be a partner on this very exciting project, and the engineering feat that is being pulled off is astounding, and he would love for that to be what people think about when they talk about the project as opposed to being inconvenienced. Mr. Travers also thanked the team and said we look forward to many more updates and to having more frequent updates now that the project has really started to get underway as it would be beneficial to the team. Ms. Pelletier said the Walk Bridge office is open and is located across from the Maritime Garage and encouraged people to sign up for the newsletter and to follow us on social media.

b. Update- YDG Exterior Repairs & Improvements

Mr. Lutz provided an update and said the bids opened on January 12, 2024, and are now closed and the goal is to have a recommendation to the Parking Authority for the February meeting. Mr. Travers said the bids came in below what was expected. Mr. Fullam asked how many bids were received. Mr. Lutz said there were eight.

4. FINANCIAL AND OPERATING REPORT

Mr. Manousos reported and said the financials look very strong and the December fund balance is favorable to budget mostly coming from the expense side and revenues were on budget. He said on the expense side there were a number of favorable variances and the largest one similar to last month was in snow removal. He said year to date the fund balance is also favorable to budget due to both revenues being over budget, and expenses being below budget, and in the year-to-date comparison from last year the total revenue is up. He said that total revenue was up 4.2% compared to last month and 7.1% compared to last year. Transient activity is up 13.2% compared to last month, but year to date is down 1.1% compared to last year. Permit activity is down 1.2% compared to last month, but is up 4.0% compared to last year, and permit revenue is up 3.5% compared to last month and is also up 5.6% compared to last year.

Mr. Manousos reported on the variance report and said there were no major variances on the revenue side but there were a few on the expense side and that part of it was due to Lametta Construction for the asphalt repair project at the entrance to Lower Haviland Deck and there was a sewer line backup, so they needed to be excavated and repaired, as well as repairs to the bobcat machine that were needed.

Mr. Manousos reported on the systemwide activity and said there were fewer transactions overall, but revenue was higher systemwide by 11,000 transactions and there is a higher average transaction value that's offsetting even more for the reduction in the on-street activity.

Mr. Manousos reported on the permit sales and said they continue to be stable month to month but there has been an increase year over year as employees are returning to work and the permit activity has been up 4%. He said the year-to-date activity for on street parking activity and revenue are both down compared to last year, and there has been a shift in payment behavior from coins to credit card and Pay by Cell so even though there are few transactions overall it was somewhat offset by the increase in the credit card and Pay by Cell transactions which carry a higher average transaction value. Mr. Rains asked if the fee for Park Mobile can be tracked to see how much goes where. Mr. Manousos said "yes". Mr. Legesse said what is being seen as revenue in the financial statement is the net total revenue that goes to the City of Norwalk and the Park Mobile fee is not included and the .35 cents transaction fee which is what Park Mobile collects as their source of revenue. Mr. Rains asked if the credit card fee gets deducted from the .35 cents that is collected. Mr. Legesse said the credit card fee gets deducted from the revenue that the City of Norwalk collected. Mr. Rains said it doesn't align to him if Park Mobile received the .35 cents transaction fee and the Parking Authority pays the bill for the credit card fees.

Mr. Manousos reported on the parking enforcement and said ticket issuance and revenue are both up compared to last year, but are down compared to fiscal year 2022, and that ticket issuance was up 14% and revenue was up 12%. He said the citation revenue counts for just over 21% of system revenues year to date, and 15% is from the original fines, and late fees account for almost 6% and year to date 72% of the system revenue are from the fines, and 28% are from late fees. He said that the revenue from the beach was \$3,400 of the total violations were from the beach and approximately 78% of people are paying their citations online.

Mr. Manousos reported on the tickets issued versus demand analysis and said the demand ratio went down in December.

Mr. Manousos reported on the Pay by Cell and said that both activity and revenue continue to be strong year over year and follows seasonal trends, and the overall transaction for the month is down from \$3.05 to \$2.92 and that Pay by Cell accounts for approximately 27% of activity and 13% of systemwide revenue.

5. NEW BUSINESS

a. Discuss- Credit Card Fee Overview and Next Steps

Mr. Lutz said that Mr. Manousos will present the current credit card fees and the next step is for staff to find competitive companies to see what they can offer as well as analyzing the fees and where they are going. Mr. Manousos presented and said there are three components that make up the credit card costs that include interchange, assessment and processing and the processing fee is the only fee that we have control over. He said when the credit cards costs are budgeted it is very difficult to project what it is going to be so historical averages are used and apply them to the different locations. Mr. Travers said we wanted to get to the baseline and will be presenting the last three months of the invoices to the providers to see what they come back with.

Mr. Seebeck said we have asked folks to adapt to Park Mobile and they have used the platform and people are utilizing Pay by Cell and the public impression is that the .35 cents processing fee that they are paying covers this, and the public assumption is that the Parking Authority receives the full dollar and this illuminates for everyone that the Parking Authority does not receive the full dollar and he appreciates everyone's efforts on this and he hopes there is a world that we get closer to that full dollar. He said it is his understating that the law in the State of Connecticut that states municipalities are the only entities in the state that are allowed to recoup credit card transaction fees through a payment processing portal and is something we can look at as we move forward with the potential changing in pricing and price transparency.

Mr. Travers said several years ago when the State of Connecticut imposed a sales tax on parking the Parking Authority opted not to transfer that sales tax to the general public that is using it and the Parking Authority is absorbing that sales tax as well because a rate increase was never done and that is something the Parking Authority might want to look at while "right sizing" everything and staff will continue to present all of that information to the Parking Authority so that we can make full and educated decisions.

b. Discuss & Vote-ENRR Procedures During Walk Bridge Closure

Mr. Lutz said there are 110 permit users at the location that will be affected as well as the transient customers and as stated earlier communication is key and to be proactive and by telling customers what is going on is going to help them to make decisions about parking. He said the website will be updated, we will have email templates that he and Mr. Legesse have been working on and will also increase the signage. He said staff is also recommending allowing the 110 permit users at the East Norwalk Railroad Station to have access to the South Norwalk Garage during the three-week closures and in turn have flyers and website notifications giving the transient customers notifications and options on where they can park during those times.

**** MR. ALEY MOVED TO APPROVE THE ENRR PROCEDURES DURING THE WALK BRIDGE PROJECT AND TO ALLOW THE PERMIT USERS TO HAVE ACCESS TO THE SOUTH NORWALK GARAGE DURING THE THREE-WEEK CLOSURES.**

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

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

6. OLD BUSINESS

a. Update- Handicap Compliance- Multi-Space Meters

Mr. Lutz provided an update and said we are working on programming the system and does not foresee that taking more than two weeks and the goal is to have it completed by the middle of February.

Mr. Manousos said that today is sadly his last meeting and will be moving on to some other opportunities and although he is excited it was a very difficult decision and he will miss the staff as well as the board, and he hopes to see them in the future on a personal level. Mr. Lutz thanked Mr. Manousos for everything he has done for him as well as the Parking Authority, and all the years he has spent in Norwalk and wishes him the best of luck on his future endeavors. Mr. Rains said it was great working with Manousos and wished him the best of luck in his next steps and would love to hear of his progress. Mr. Travers said on behalf of the Parking Authority and the City of Norwalk he thanked Mr. Manousos for his years of service and trying to improve the assets and the experience people have in parking and wished him the best of luck.

7. MOTION TO ADJOURN

**** MR. ALEY MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

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

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dilene Byrd