

PARKING AUTHORITY

December 18, 2019

ATTENDANCE:

Richard Brescia, Chairman
Mike Harden, Vice Chairman
Eric Rains
Jud Aley
Tom Vetter

STAFF:

Jessica Casey, Chief of Community and Economic Development
Kathryn Hebert, Director of Transportation, Mobility and Parking
Vanessa Valadares, DPW Senior Engineer

OTHERS:

Stathis Manousos, LAZ Parking
Rocky Legesse, LAZ Parking
George Tsiranides, Common Council Member
Rita Azrelyant, Consultant
Matt Carleen
John Lesko

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Brescia called the meeting to order at 6:02PM.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Matt Cerlen

Mr. Carleen said that he is speaking on behalf of Yoga 202 and said he had taken over the business in April and the parking situation is still a big threat for the business. Since July 1, 2019, when the changes to the parking occurred that included a rate decrease at the Yankee Doodle Garage that pushed customers to the street, the Main Street Lot began charging during the day which affected his business and the meters were installed on the street. The parking was already scarce prior to the changes and buying their employees monthly permits has had an unquantified financial effect on how his business is impacted. He said they have lost customers citing parking is the reason and have clients not show on their first session citing that parking was a concern and there is an impression that something is still broken. There are two things he sees that the Parking Authority can help them with which is establishing a validation program prior to enforcement on January 1, 2020 to mitigate the changes, and the moratorium on the parking be extended if the validation program is not ready. He asked that the rates and hours be looked at during the budget cycle at the Yankee Doodle Garage and the Main Street Lot. He thanked the Parking Authority for the communications and said they have done a much better job in the past few months and he looks forward to working with the Parking Authority.

John Lesko

Mr. Lesko stated that he has been the Manager of the Hoyt Cognetta Funeral Home for almost 10 years and he had purchased it last year and he is proud to be part of the Wall Street Community. Before the paid parking and back in angled parking was established there was a lot of foot activity, and parking on the opposite side of the street coming up East Wall Street seemed to be a very good fit. One of the things he was concerned about was people trying to cross the street because no one walks down the street and crosses in front of the restaurants, and since the bike lanes were installed he has yet to see a bike come up the hill. He said he feels the Wall Street area needs help and that it has been set back with the parking, and he was the one who was installing the free parking signs over the paid parking signs after the moratorium was put into effect. He said he knows people were paying and that was a concern of his and asked where that money will go because it is not fair that the Parking Authority keep money that was paid to them in error and suggested the over \$8,000 funds that were collected go to a community charity. He said he would also like to see a longer moratorium and more time is needed to help the restaurants and the small business owners to establish themselves and build a little bit more and they are not SONO which is well established, and the Wall Street area is in a building period and asked that the Parking Authority find some way to mitigate the cost for people who are coming to do business in the area. He said his other concern is that he has wakes at night and don't feel his patrons that can't park in his parking lot to have to pay to park in order to pay their respects and his constituent on Mott Avenue is having the same problem.

NEW BUSINESS

1. APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM THE SPECIAL PARKING AUTHORITY MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2019.

On page 3, change "AM" to "PM".

**** MR. ALEY MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 18, 2019 AS AMENDED.**

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

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

2. APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM THE PARKING AUTHORITY MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2019.

**** MR. HARDEN MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 20, 2019 AS SUBMITTED.**

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

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

3. DISCUSSION AND ACTION ON WALL STREET DISTRICT PARKING VALIDATION PROGRAMS.

Mr. Manousos said that they were asked to come up with a program that would help the merchants in the Wall Street area and he presented a draft validation program. He said they had labeled the program Park, Shop and Dine and the idea of the program is empower the merchants to control their validations and give them to their customers at their own discretion and set their own guidelines. The system would use either tokens or the Park Mobile system through individual business accounts. They are looking for an implementation date of February 1st but may be able to get part of the program out sooner and recommend a six month pilot program and at that point look at the data and present it to the Parking Authority. The program would be valid at all of the on street meters, the Yankee Doodle Garage and the Wall and Main Street lots.

Mr. Manousos gave an overview validation program using tokens and said that they have already ordered standard tokens but they will create some designs that the Parking Authority can approve. The tokens would be done on a pre-paid basis and would be sold to merchants in advance in the quantities that they want and suggested setting a minimal amount and sold at a discounted rate. The tokens would be used as coins and have a .50 cent value and the business owners would determine how they are distributed. Mr. Brescia asked if tokens can be purchased and used the following day. Mr. Manousos said that would depend on the restaurant's policy for distributing the tokens. He said they are recommending selling the tokens to merchants for 50% off as a pilot program with some minimum purchase with the Parking Authority subsidizing the other 50% and the Park Mobile work the same and would bill the merchant for 50%. He said staff will work with each business owner to assist them in setting up the program for their establishment if needed. He also recommended that a limit be set and the Parking Authority subsidizes \$50 per account for the trial period of six months so the merchant would receive \$100 in value and there will be an application stating the rules and regulations of the program. Mr. Brescia said he wants the limit to be flexible per order rather than for the length of the pilot program and suggested turning that responsibility over to LAZ and report back to the Parking Authority on a monthly basis. Ms. Casey said it is important that when the tokens get implemented that the app also get implemented at the same time so there is one set of communications because we have learned over the past couple of months the more concise and direct our communications are the better. Mr. Rains said there is a cost associated with rolling out the program and suggested that the funds the Parking Authority received for parking when it was technically free be used for the startup costs.

Mr. Manousos gave an overview of the validation program through the existing Park Mobile platform and said it will be used at the same locations as the tokens and each business owner would set up their own business account, and LAZ staff could assist them if needed and they would be able to customize the promotion that they want. Mr. Rains asked if the merchant would need to have the Park Mobile App. Mr. Manousos said "no" they would just need to give their license plate to the merchant unless they are part of a group then they would need the Park Mobile account. Mr. Harden said he is currently doing a test and when someone comes in he enters their license plate number into his Parkmobile account for a period of one hour and he can add additional time if they want to stay longer, and the license plate is not saved into his account as it would be on a personal Parkmobile account. If they come in with a large party he will send a special promotion code to the event planner and if anyone in the party has Parkmobile they will

use the promotion code when they arrive, and the ones who don't have a Parkmobile account they can either download the app or just give him their license plate number and he will enter it into his account. Mr. Rains asked who pays the convenience fee for using Parkmobile. Mr. Manousos said it would be paid by the merchant. Mr. Rains said when someone gives their license plate to the merchant to enter into their Parkmobile account how with they know when it has been activated and when it expires. Mr. Manousos said they will need to look into the piece further but the merchant will get a notification that the plate is getting ready to expire. Mr. Brescia said this is a pilot program so there will be some bumps in the road but the record that LAZ has of hearing complaints is that 2/3 of the people have come to have their ticket reevaluated have had the ticket dismissed or reduced. Mr. Tsiranides asked what will happen if someone receives a ticket in the time it takes for someone to get from their car and get the restaurant to have the merchant enter their information. Ms. Hebert said it would work similar to the Bow Tie Cinemas validation program. Mr. Manousos said in those cases of someone receiving a ticket would be far and few between and will be addressed on a case by case basis. Mr. Rains asked if pre-paid parking can be purchased at a discount rate. Mr. Manousos said "no" and that the validation program is meant to be for merchants.

****MR. RAINS MOVED TO APPROVE MOVING THE WALL STREET DISTRICT PARKING VALIDATION PROGRAM FORWARD.**

****MR. VETTER SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

4. DISCUSSION AND ACTION ON WALL STREET DISTRICT SHORT TERM PARKING LOCATION PLAN

Ms. Hebert presented and said that the Parking Authority has received many requests to consider short term options for customers in the Wall Street area. In response they had called over 40 businesses in the area and are proposing 24 short term parking spaces that will be strategically located throughout the Wall Street district to support those needs. On December 16th the Traffic Authority had approved the short term locations and tonight the Parking Authority will discuss the 15 or 30 minute time limit parking and the rate which staff is suggesting is free. If approved tonight she is expecting an implementation date by February. Mr. Harden said he proposes that the spaces be 15 minute because a 15 minute space had a direct purpose and 30 minute parking is difficult to define. Mr. Brescia asked how many new 30 minutes parking spaces would be installed around the corner from the Post Office. Ms. Hebert said "three". Mr. Brescia asked the members of the Parking Authority if they agree to keep those 30 minute parking spaces. The members of the Parking Authority decided that the three parking spaces be changed to 15 minute free parking for consistency and will revisit as needed.

**** MR. HARDEN MOVED TO APPROVE THE WALL STREET DISTRICT SHORT TERM PARKING PLAN AS AMENDED TO INCLUDE CHANGING THE THREE 30 MINUTE PARKING SPACES ON WALL STREET TO 15 MINUTE FREE PARKING.**

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

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

5. DISCUSSION AND ACTION ON MOTT AVENUE HOURS OF OPERATION

Mr. Harden discussed the parking spaces on East Wall Street in front of Hoyt Cognetta Funeral Home and suggested that when there is a service that they put out a sign that tells the constables not to enforce parking and if the Parking Authority agrees draft a letter to LAZ. Ms. Hebert said she suggested to the Funeral homes that they collaborate on a plan because the issue of parking is between 4:00PM and 9:00PM when wakes are being held. Mr. Rains asked what the next kind of business is that may feel slighted if this business gets this. Mr. Harden said the restaurants at the bottom of East Wall Street. Mr. Rains said that he agrees something can be done but there is already a system in place where bags can be purchased to block off the parking spaces and suggested modifying that program. Ms. Hebert said that staff will work on a proposal with LAZ and bring it back to the Parking Authority for discussion.

**** MR. ALEY MOVED TO TABLE THE ITEM.**

**** MR. HARDEN SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

6. APPROVE THE SPECIAL PARKING AUTHORITY BUDGET WORKSHOP ON MONDAY, 1/13/20, 5:30PM.

**** MR. ALEY MOVED TO APPROVE THE BUDGET WORKSHOP ON MONDAY, JANUARY 13, 2020 AT 5:30PM.**

**** MR. HARDEN SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Harden left the meeting at 6:25PM.

INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION

A. Chairman Report

Mr. Brescia reported and asked that the Parking Authority look at the details of the operating budget that staff has prepared because he is concerned with some of the things and there may be changes we want to consider. He said the Parking Authority will be involved with making decisions about the SONO TOD Spinnaker project and he wants that to be a part of the important evaluation. He said he doesn't think it will be an impact to the budget but it will

impact the ability to explain what the parking requirements are and how the Parking Authority interacts with them.

Mr. Brescia asked Ms. Casey to provide a brief overview on the parklets. Ms. Casey said parklets have been implemented by cities all across the country any are an innovative use to parking spaces to allow for an extension of the sidewalk for outdoor dining or seating. She said not only do they have an economic benefit but they also have a benefit of slowing the traffic down as well as for streetscape improvements and traffic improvements. There have been some requests to extend the sidewalks on East Wall Street for outdoor eating areas and said there may be a creative way to that and it may be a parklet where in the summer months the parklet can be set up and used for outdoor dining, and in the fall the owner of the parklet buildout would take the pieces and store them and the parking space would then be free for the rest of the year. She said they would not lose the parking spaces in perpetuity but would allow for an economic development use and work with the businesses to determine what parking spaces are eligible for the parklet. She said the cost of the parklets vary from \$2,000 to \$100,000 depending on how built out it is and the process can be anywhere in between three months and 12 months. Mr. Brescia said the parklets will be further discussed at the budget workshop.

Mr. Aley said that he had suggested that there be parking in front of Freese Park on Main Street and Ms. Hebert had gotten approval at the December Traffic Authority meeting to install four additional parking spaces.

Mr. Brescia said that there is an abundance of parking at the SONO Collection and that is a conversation that the Parking Authority will need to have when discussing joint ventures and parking opportunities. He said a team will be put together to meet with the representatives of the SONO Collection to see if there are any opportunities for parking for commuters.

Mr. Brescia said there is a plan for the Webster Lot that is in the early stages and asked Ms. Hebert to provide a brief overview. Ms. Hebert said there were two studies done and that one was done in 2004 and another in 2016 but never move forward for a variety of reasons. Staff is looking to do a collaboration with the redevelopment Agency to expand on the studies to see what can be done in the Webster Lot to add some development. Mr. Rains asked when groups can begin to be put together to begin discussing the development. Ms. Casey said the time to stop studying and start doing is now and Ms. Hebert, The Redevelopment Agency and herself along with her staff will work to figure out a master plan and funding requirements for the Webster Lot.

B. Capital Project Report

Ms. Valadares reported and said the punch list for the repairs at the garages was being worked on and are waiting on one last repair to be completed and it will then be closed. She said she is waiting on the shop drawings for the guardrail at the Yankee Doodle Garage and will be a spring installation as well as the entrance on Burnell Blvd. The legal department has the contract for Green Infrastructure at Webster Lot and once completed the design will begin. All of the sensors and repeaters were installed by late November but the gateways had to be reprogrammed and should be operational in January.

C. Financial Report

Mr. Manousos reported and said parking revenue is 3.1% under budget for the month and 4.5% compared to last year due to increased transient activity and meter revenue from the mall construction. He said the expenses are under budget almost 10.6% and are down almost 6% compared to last year. He said the transient activity year to date is up 0.6% for the month and is up 0.7% compared to last year. Transient activity for the month is down 5.2% compared to last month and is up 5.0% compared to last year following seasonal trends. Permit activity is down 1.5% compared to last month and is down 7.3% compared to last year. Permit revenue is down 5.3% compared to last month and is down 6.7% compared to last year.

Mr. Manousos said that 81% of revenues were collected via credit card. The average Pay by Cell transaction was \$4.13 and the number of transactions is down 2.3% compared to last year. The number of transactions compared to last year are up almost 42% and revenue is up 27.5% compared to last year and almost 14% of total transactions are paid through Pay by Cell and just over 7% of revenue system wide. Due to the beach and Oyster Shell Park the ticket issuance is up over 23% and revenue is up over 33.5% but taking out the parking violation issuance at the beach and Oyster Shell Park ticket issuance is down over 12% which equates to almost 1100 tickets.

D. Operations Report

Mr. Manousos said that ticket issuance and revenue is up compared to last year. He said there were 16 program days for customer courtesy program in November and 92 program days year to date. There were 586 courtesy cards issued for the month of November and 4,253 year to date. There was \$293 in free 20 minute metered time for the month and over \$2,100 year to date. 84 tickets were issued after the courtesy time had expired for the month and 305 year to date. The value of tickets for the courtesy cards had they been issued for the month is \$ 12,550 and \$98,700 year to date.

E. Other Business

Mr. Brescia said that Ms. Hebert had sent a map of where the pay stations are located in the Wall Street District and at the budget meeting he will be discussing where additional pay stations can be installed that would minimize the amount of walking for customers in the winter.

F. Next Parking Authority meeting: Wednesday, January 22, 2020 at 6:00PM.; Yankee Doodle Garage, Norwalk CT.

ADJOURNMENT

**** MR. VETTER MOVED TO ADJOURN**
**** MR. RAINS SECONDED THE MOTION**

The meeting adjourned at 7:55PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Dilene Byrd