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**PARKING AUTHORITY
REGULAR MEETING VIA ZOOM VIRTUAL VIDEOCONFERENCE
AND TELECONFERENCE
NOVEMBER 20, 2024**

- ATTENDANCE:**

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

James Travers, Director, TMP.
Bryan Lutz, Asst. Parking Director, TMP
- OTHERS:**

Rocky Legesse, LAZ Parking
Howard Benson, Flash Parking

CALL TO ORDER

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

1. PUBLIC COMMENTS PUBLIC COMMENT, LIMITED TO THREE MINUTES FOR EACH SPEAKER

Mr. Lutz read the following statement from Mr. Rains into the record in response to a letter that was received on October 23, 2024, from the East Norwalk Neighborhood Association:

The NPA has a responsibility of managing parking in a way that benefits all users including residents, community groups, and businesses while maintaining fiscal prudence and solvency. Our mission is to promote economic development by using proven best practices and creating opportunities within the community through the availability of well-maintained and managed parking spaces. We achieve this through balanced parking programs that operate self-sufficiently without receiving city funds. It should be noted that if city funds were required to subsidize the public parking, this would likely come from an increase in the mill rate from residents' property taxes. The revenue that is generated from parking is reinvested into all our facilities citywide ensuring these assets remain in a state of good repair. Properly managed parking improves the users' experience and supports local commerce by ensuring parking availability and convenience. The NPA is not in a position to change the practice from paid parking to free parking at any of its locations. The NPA continually balances its operations by creating and enhancing programs such as comprehensive citywide residential parking programs to address various parking needs within the community. All NPA financials are publicly available on the Park Norwalk website.

2. DISCUSSION AND ACTION RELATED TO MINUTES FROM THE PARKING AUTHORITY MEETING WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2024

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

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

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

3. DISCUSS/VOTE- PROCUREMENT OF FLASH/PARKONECT PARC SYSTEM

Mr. Lutz said when he first stepped into his role one of the immediate and significant tasks, he was handed was to find a parking access and revenue control system which is called a park system for both the Maritime Garage and the SONO train station. The importance of this project was underscored by the clear instructions he received to identify a system that met all the operational needs while providing a seamless experience for users. To ensure we made an informed decision we embarked on a thorough vetting process of the top park manufacturers over the past year. The journey was an extension of efforts that LAZ Parking had initiated prior to his tenure here. He said that each vendor was evaluated meticulously and one vendor that had stood out during the evaluations was Flash Parking as they offered comprehensive features, innovative technology, and a user-friendly interface that aligned perfectly with their requirements. Additionally, their proposal was highly competitive with their competition making them a standout choice. The Purchasing Department has also vetted the proposal and has given support for this procurement if the board decides to move forward. He said with Flash Parking on board they are confident in the ability to meet their objectives and look forward to the improvement this system will bring. He said the total cost for Flash Parking for both garages would be \$581,379.

Mr. Lutz introduced Mr. Benson of Flash Parking.

Mr. Benson provided an overview of their system and said they want to be a partner in sharing the Parking Authority's successes and growth with them and the connected platform has not only designed to

grow but will manage the initial and ongoing costs and will include a three-year warranty on all parts and warranties and the modular design makes it easy to upgrade as well as to repair. He said that over-the-air updates would be done but would never affect the operation of the facility. There is also an offline mode that will capture all the transactions even if the system goes offline and all the systems are PCI compliant. The system comes with over 400 standard reports and is the only parks manufacturer that has integration into every major navigation platform. and the LPR will be part of the system and the LPR camera is designed just for garages and has AI technology.

Mr. Fullam asked if there is an annual service contract that comes with this. Mr. Benson said not for the first three years because all parts and labor are included in the warranty. Mr. Fullam asked what happens after the three years. Mr. Benson said a service contract can be initiated but they have done a lot of work with LAZ parking and others and given the tools to maintain the system, he provided a sample of the costs, and they are typically half of what a park manufacturer's service agreement is. Mr. Fullam asked what the typical cost is. Mr. Benson said on average, the costs are normally 10% to 15% of the overall cost of a system generally with 5% to 7% increases per year but they do no more than 7% ever and the increases are no more than 5% so the cost is quite reasonable so the cost in the fourth year would be less than \$30,000 to \$35,000 as the site work would not need to be warrantied. Mr. Lutz asked if that is the cost for both locations. Mr. Benson said "Yes". Mr. Fullam asked what if there is not a service contract but there is a need for service. Mr. Benson said the service rate of \$177.40/hour. Mr. Lutz said if the Parking Authority decides not to get a service contract after the fourth year there can be a cost analysis done to see what is being spent and make a business decision if a service contract is needed or not. Mr. Aley asked for those customers without a service contract how many hours are typically billed out per location. Mr Benson said it varies.

Mr. Fullam asked Mr. Travers for his opinion. Mr. Travers said he and Mr. Lutz have worked on this since day one and did not make a rush to judgment realizing there are some challenges with the existing system and wanted to make sure the new system offered state-of-the-art technology to the users and stands behind this 100% as it will make a measurable experience in these garages.

Mr. Aley asked what the funding source would be. Mr. Travers said that prior capital funding has been allocated for the system and is under the budgeted amount that was allocated and has procured this through a cooperative agreement that ensures the correct dollar amount is being paid.

**** MR. ALEY MOVED TO APPROVE THE PURCHASE OF THE FLASH/PARKONECT PARC SYSTEM IN THE AMOUNT OF \$ 581,379.**

**** FULLAM SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

4. ENGINEERING AND PROJECT REPORT

a. Update- TMP2023-01-YDG Exterior Repairs and Improvement

Mr. Lutz provided an update and said that drains are being installed for the final part of the project and the drains were ordered last week and will be scheduling the work once the drains are in.

b. Update- NPA2024-02-Aesthetic Enhancement at YDG

Mr. Lutz provided an update and said last month he reported that the aesthetic enhancement project had gone out to bid but unfortunately did not receive any bids. He said a thorough analysis was conducted with THA and known structural contractors who reviewed the bid. Throughout the analysis had discovered that timing was an issue, and the work was particularly challenging so taking this into account they will be reissuing the bid shortly. Additionally, they will be working closely with the Purchasing Department to expand the reach to attract bidders.

5. FINANCIAL AND OPERATING REPORT

Mr. Legesse reported and said they finished the month of October strong on both the revenue and expense side and said revenues were over 2.5% over budget and expenses were 4.2% under budget. Meter revenue was strong for the month due to the blocked-off spaces for construction both in the SONO and Wall Street areas. The monthly revenue was also strong and is mainly due to the YMCA parking lot which was unbudgeted for this fiscal year coupled with a slight increase in the SONO train station garage monthly revenue. The revenue for the month for violations was underbudgeted which is a good sign that most of the revenue is not coming from violations and was 3.3% under budget for the month. He said the expenses were under budget for the month which is favorable, and the savings were due to payroll and repairs and maintenance for the month.

Mr. Legesse reported on the variance report and said that meter revenue was over budget by 28.8%. The building's repair and maintenance were under budget which was mainly due to the overhead gate repair and for some electrical work that was budgeted but never occurred. He said the overhead gate is at the end of its useful life and anticipates replacing the overhead gates towards the end of the year. The permit violation management was over budget due to a missing invoice being paid in October. The vehicle expenses were higher for the month due to two enforcement vehicles that needed repair and are reaching the end of their useful life, and he has been working with Mr. Lutz on a vehicle replacement proposal that will be submitted in the coming months. Mr. Seebeck asked if there was a vehicle maintenance program. Mr. Legesse said there is a local business in Norwalk that tracks all the repairs and maintenance, and they make a determination based on those records to replace a vehicle.

Mr. Legesse reported on transient activity and said it is 12.7% compared to previous years. However, they are noticing transient activity increasing slightly and stabilizing. We are also monitoring the month of November, and it seems to be trending in the right direction. He said the highest revenue came from the SONO train station, SONO facilities, and on-street parking.

Mr. Legesse said permit sales are strong which is mainly due to the increased usage at the YMCA parking lot as well as a slight increase at the SONO train station.

Mr. Legesse said that activity for on-street parking is down compared to the last few months but is beginning to see a slight increase in October. He said the loss in parking spaces has also contributed to the loss in transient activity. He said although the activity is down the revenue is up due to the blocked spaces in the SONO and Wall Street areas.

Mr. Legesse reported on enforcement and said there was a slight increase in October as activity has increased compared to prior months and the higher citations for expired meters are occurring in the SONO area followed by the Wall Street area.

Mr. Legesse reported on the ticket issuance versus demand analysis and said demand is slightly increasing and the average for the four months is 3.2% and prior years were at 2.73%. He said there is an increase in ticket issuance on Washington Street and staff is monitoring to see why ticket issuance is higher. Mr. Aley asked if the old signage was still on Washington Street. Mr. Legesse said “yes” but Mr. Lutz has been working closely with Park Mobile. Mr. Travers said they are waiting for the last of the signage to come in from Park Mobile. He said they saw an improvement once the signage was installed in the Wall Street area and will see that here as well

Mr. Legesse reported on the Pay by Cell Activity and said there has been an increase in transactions, but revenue is down and the areas that are showing a decline in activity but have a higher dollar value are in the SONO off-street area as well as the SONO train station overflow parking lot.

6. NEW BUSINESS

a. Discuss and Vote- Annual Rate Review

Mr. Lutz said last month there was a discussion on how the Parking Authority absorbs the 6.35% on meter and transient revenue and the discussion prompted a closer examination of how the Parking Authority reviews its rates and identified an opportunity to enhance and standardize the rate review process to ensure it both comprehensive and consistent. The proposal is to conduct annual rate reviews while allowing for additional reviews if extenuating circumstances arise to align with our fiscal planning, we recommend that these annual rate reviews take place before December ensuring they are completed before the fiscal year budget discussion begins. The systematic approach will allow the Parking Authority to make informed decisions, adapt to changing conditions, and maintain financial solvency while providing value to our customers.

Mr. Seebeck agreed that this is a good way to approach the rates, especially in advance of December when the Parking Authority begins to look at the numbers for the following year. Mr. Fullam also agreed that it should be looked at annually.

**** MR. ALEY MOVED TO APPROVE THE PARKING AUTHORITY AND CITY STAFF TO PERFORM AN ANNUAL RATE REVIEW PRIOR TO DECEMBER.**

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

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

b. Discuss and Vote- 2024 Rate Proposal

Mr. Lutz presented the 2024-25 rate proposals and said in the first chart the current rate will not change but the sales tax will now be absorbed by the consumer, and the second chart shows a similar tax inclusion but also recommends minor rate increases for certain locations and most of the rate increases are concentrated on Wall Street and the recommendations for Liberty Square and the SONO train station parking lot are based on the increase in demand.

Mr. Travers said in 2020 when the state enacted a 6.35% sales tax on parking the Parking Authority at that time opted not to pass that tax onto the consumer, so the Parking Authority has been paying \$25,000-\$27,000 per month in sales tax. He said they are proposing rate increases in the SONO train station lot and Liberty Square as they would like to balance by rate and stabilize the parking spaces and have them there to support Liberty Square otherwise, the rate increases will be taking place in the Wall Street area as they are some of the lowest rates, and there were

recent changes in the Planning and Zoning code that eliminated parking requirements and there is an approved development for the Wall Street area as well as a pending development in the Wall Street area that we believe to be under parked and the demand for parking will be placed on city assets so want to make sure those spaces remain available to be able to support the retail in the area. He said as we see the forecast of demand increase, we want to increase the rate to balance them out at the same time to avoid user “sticker shock”. Mr. Seebeck noted that this is a minimum increase that will be felt more at the pay station than for people who have already adapted to an increased rate on the Park Mobile platform.

Mr. Aley asked if the monthly permits would be increased. Mr. Travers said they looked at the permit for the Yankee Doodle Garage will be going from \$25 to \$35.

Mr. Aley suggested that the item be tabled until the next meeting and going forward if there are items like this that will be going to the Parking Authority for a vote to either provide the data ahead of the meeting or make an action item the following month.

Mr. Aley asked what the other future development will be in the Wall Street area. Mr. Travers said it will be a long-stay hotel on Isaac Street that has been approved by the Planning & Zoning Commission with a less than 1.1 parking ratio but did fall into the guidelines of the no parking requirement. He said the other development that is coming up for review is at 24 Belden Avenue and will include a 91-car parking garage that will be parking deficient from standards in other areas of the city that do not have a parking minimum reduction.

Mr. Fullam asked if the post office employees pay the same rate as everyone else at the Yankee Doodle Garage. Mr. Legesse said “Yes” they pay the rate of \$25/month.

Mr. Aley asked if there was some way to measure capacity usage at the Yankee Doodle Garage. Mr. Travers said that Park Norwalk does traffic counts so they can be turned into occupancy counts and can provide that prior to next month's meeting.

Mr. Fullam asked if McMahon Ford still leases some spaces on the top floor of the Yankee Doodle Garage. Mr. Travers said “yes” but they pay the extended rate which is a considerably higher rate and is not one of the rates they are proposing to be increased.

7. OLD BUSINESS

a. Update-Regulation change

Mr. Lutz provided an update and said they were successful in getting an agreement that was transferred from LAZ Parking to the Parking Authority and is now in the process of receiving the Park Mobile signs and is hoping to have them installed before the holiday shopping season, and once the signs are installed will be releasing the free 15-minute parking citywide to all the multi-space meters.

Mr. Seebeck noted that next month's Parking Authority meeting will be held on December 18, 2024, due to the holiday.

8. ADJOURNMENT

**** MR. FULLAM MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

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

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:26 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dilene Byrd