



**PARKING AUTHORITY
REGULAR MEETING
OCTOBER 23, 2019**

ATTENDANCE:

Mayor Rilling
Richard Brescia, Chairman
Michael Harden, Vice Chairman
Jud Aley
Eric Rains

ABSENT:

Tom Vetter

STAFF:

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

OTHERS:

Stathis Manousos, LAZ Parking
Rocky Legesse, LAZ Parking
Rita Azrelyant, Consultant
Peter Fullam
Carol Sulheim
Lee McIntire

CALL TO ORDER

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mayor Rilling thanked the Parking Authority for the work that they have done. He said that he has been contacted by a lot of the residents and merchants regarding the change in parking in the Wall Street area and asked the Parking Authority to consider the following requests:

- Extend the free parking in the Wall Street area until after the holidays.
- Add some 15-30 Minute free parking spaces in certain areas.
- Add proper loading and unloading areas for deliveries.
- Add ADA parking spaces on each of the streets with a no parking fee.
- Add Free or larger windows of time for free parking after a certain time each day.
- Add Parking meters to certain areas.

Mayor Rilling said that he also has a problem with the paid parking in front of the funeral home on Mott Avenue and asked the Parking Authority look at the area and make the necessary changes. He said there is no such thing as a perfect plan and only perfect planning and sometimes “we just don’t get it right” and he appreciates the changes the Parking Authority is willing to do, and the merchants and residents would also appreciate it.

Ms. Carol Sulheim –Cornerstone Community Church

Ms. Sulheim came forward and said that they are a merged church combining four congregations and provided an overview of the events that are held at the church and said that they also have a daycare onsite. With the new parking meters on Mott Avenue combined with the fact they are enforced until 9:00PM it is a concern on how it will impact the attendance, and they are holding their rummage sale over the weekend and are concerned there will be lower attendance because people will have to pay to park. There is limited parking in their lot and there have already been issues with people parking in their lot to spite the fact there is signage stating it is for the church patrons only. While she understands the need for turnover the hours of the meters need to change and should stop after 5:00pm. There also needs to be better communication with the city and stakeholders, and when the city decides to make changes that impacts the business’s as much as this change did that “snail mail” letters need to be sent because they are not getting the information, and there would have been far more people at the meetings had they known about them and the current way the notifications are going out does not work. Finally, please fix the notification at the website because the meeting address is listed at 11 North Water Street and only when the agenda is downloaded is it clear they are held at the Yankee Doodle Garage.

Peter Fullam-104 Wall Street

Mr. Fullam came forward and said that he has had a business on Wall Street for over 50 years and Mayor Rilling has already addressed a lot of the issues tonight. He said that a lot of his

customers are not comfortable using the app to park and should not have to walk down the road to use a paystation and requested installing parking meters. He also said that he does not agree with the reverse angled parking and that he has not seen it done anywhere else around Norwalk and does not want to be used as “test parking”. He distributed a letter to the members of the Parking Authority with his points and recommended a professional parking study of the area be done and said that parking needs to be simple for people. He also suggested that signage is installed making people aware there is a moratorium on the parking fees and each day that goes by there is a business that is losing customers.

Nancy McGuire

Ms. McGuire came forward and said that she is glad the retailers are having their voice heard and that she does not have a personal opinion on the parking but she is an advocate for the angled parking, and was delighted that people now have to slow down because prior to that it looked like an alternative to I-95. The complaints regarding the back in angled parking are well taken and finds it strange that Norwalk is the only town in the area to have it but she will leave that up to the Parking Authority and the retailers to decide what should be done with that. She said she would like to advocate for more parking on the Burnell Bridge and that it would be helpful for any of the events in the area and encouraged that the City of Norwalk to reopen the Wall Street Railroad Station.

Lee McIntire

Mr. McIntire said that he has been in Norwalk all of his life and unfortunately ever since this parking went into effect he has heard nothing but bad comments about it and not a single person has praised it. He said there is a lot of negativity in Norwalk right now and the Parking Authority is “killing the local business” and asked if the retailers were spoken to before this was implemented.

NEW BUSINESS

1. APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM THE REGULAR PARKING AUTHORITY MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2019.

- ** MR. ALEY MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS AMENDED.**
- ** MR. RAINS SECONDED THE MOTION.**
- ** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

2. APPROVE THE EXTENSION OF WALL STREET LIMITED ENFORCEMENT HIATUS PAST NOVEMBER 1, 2019.

Mr. Brescia said that he agrees with the request to extend the hiatus on enforcement past November 1, 2019 and asked that the members of the Parking Authority to approve extending the learning period through the holidays until January, 2020, except for the tickets that would be issued under normal circumstances.

Mr. Rains said his initial thought was that a schedule was laid out and the reasons to have done it haven't changed so he didn't support the idea of extending the introduction period. He said after speaking earlier today with Mr. Brescia regarding some of the reasons why it makes sense to do this he would agree and the goal is to implement something that is a best practice for the parking needs of Norwalk, but if it is better to slow the implementation down then he supports that. He said that the Parking Authority should use the extension to filter through the comments because there is not time on the current schedule to do that.

Mr. Harden said that he agrees with extending the enforcement and have time to do outreach with the community, but he does not think it should be for that long of period because everything will slow down in January as it always does, and he is hesitant to implement parking enforcement at that time. He also said previously when the Parking Authority has had a change in operation there was a grace period prior to even courtesy cards being issued and something happened here prematurely, and if they had not done anything expect paint the markings on the street we not have been in the situation that we are now in. He suggested on December 1, 2019 to begin issuing the courtesy cards

Mr. Brescia said that rational behind choosing January 1, 2020, was from a suggestions that were made at the last community meeting, and suggested holding a public hearing at least once before the end of the year after the Parking Authority meets and identifies the area we want to tweak and that he thinks it's important to have the public be part of the solution. He also suggested a special Parking Authority meeting to discuss just this subject. Mr. Rains said he wants to be sure the motion in no way indicates that managed parking is not necessary in the Wall Street area, and he does not want a message to get out that it is okay that the revenue that is generated from the rest of the city pays for the work that is done in the Wall Street area, and in his opinion never abandoned the idea that managed parking is good for Norwalk.

Mr. Aley suggested if extending the enforcement is implemented that signage is installed with the information so that the public is aware.

**** MR. HARDEN MOVED TO APPROVE PAST NOVEMBER 1, 2019, THROUGH DECEMBER 1, 2019, TO CONTINUE THE RELAXED ENFORCEMENT, ON DECEMBER 1, 2019, BEGIN THE COURTESY WARNING PERIOD, AND ON JANUARY 1, 2020 THE ENFORCEMENT WOULD BEGIN. THE NORWALK PARKING AUTHORITY WILL USE THE TIME ALLOTTED WITH THE DELAYED**

ENFORCEMENT TO FINE TUNE THE PARKING POLICIES AND PRACTICES FOR THE AREA.

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

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION

A. CHAIRMAN REPORT

1. Wall Street

Mr. Rains said that when the Parking Authority is fine tuning the policies it should be noted that there are reasons why it makes sense to have a Parking Authority and reasons why it is good for the city to have a Parking Authority, and that has to somehow be threaded through the messaging that without a Parking Authority the revenue that is required to maintain the assets to the tune of \$7 million dollars would become a tax burden, and if for no other reason alone the Parking Authority is making Norwalk better tax wise by having a Parking Authority. Mr. Brescia agreed and said that if there is not a Parking Authority it becomes a city cost. Mr. Aley suggested that information be included on the website.

2. Strategic Plan- Review and Approve

Mr. Brescia distributed a draft copy of the Strategic Plan and said that he tried to simplify it and that it is important to establish the priorities for the city. He said by developing a Strategic Plan it will help anyone new coming in to understand what the Parking Authority is doing and where it is going. He said if pricing practices are going to be reviewed it should be done now because that would need to be part of the budget that the Parking Authority will begin building in January. He said he also included the circulator and that it is very important issue as a near term goal because the ability to move people from the Wall Street area, SONO and the East Norwalk area and back is important and that it would complement the Wheels 2 U program. He said he would like to assign Mr. Harden and one other member of the Parking Authority to begin to work on the circular concept, and Mr. Aley and one other member of the Parking Authority to begin working on the pricing practices to bring back to the Parking Authority for discussion.

The Parking Authority members went through the draft Strategic Plan and decided what to keep in the plan and what to remove. Mr. Rains suggested changing “demand parking” to “analyze parking rates and timing”. Mr. Brescia said that a policy will need to be created on how to handle the parking demands.

Mr. Rains suggested an analysis of what could be done to the current assets to facilitate economic development today and Repurpose, modify to enhance commerce/economic development immediately and use the fund balance as an option. He said if the Parking Authority is truly going to have a role in economic development that it should be an immediate point to focus on. Mr. Brescia requested that Ms. Casey identify areas where the Parking Authority can be helpful. Ms. Casey said she thinks it will be a helpful conversation to have and each of the departments that they work with have their list of projects and funding that is allocated to those projects, and suggested looking at a map and identifying where the parking assets are located and to identify opportunities and determine if the city has active projects or initiatives in those areas, and to partner with them in some way to include additional enhancements while the contractors are still on site. Mr. Brescia said the wayfinding/branding will also fall under that category.

Mr. Brescia suggested exploring to see if an entrance to Wall Street from the Yankee Doodle Garage. He also suggested beautifying the walkway from Webster Lot into SONO.

Mr. Brescia suggested exploring parking permit program and find ways better to manage it. Mr. Harden suggested that it include the residential parking permits and that there are neighborhoods just outside of the urban core that can benefit from it.

Mr. Aley suggested exploring an access point from Belden Avenue into the Yankee Doodle Garage for vehicles.

B. CAPITAL PROJECT REPORT

Ms. Valadares reported and said the miscellaneous repairs at all of the Parking Authority Garages have been completed and that the final walk-thru is scheduled for October 25, 2019.

The Law Department issued the contract for Giacorp Contracting yesterday for the guardrail installation at the Yankee Doodle Garage and there will be a pre-construction meeting held on Monday with the contractor.

The handicapped work at the Yankee Doodle Garage on the Burnell Blvd entrance will be done by Deering Construction and they have a lot of contacts with the city this year and this got pushed to a lower priority. She said they are not sure if they will be able to complete the work this year and will most likely be completed in the spring.

The grant application for the water quality grant for Webster Lot was submitted but have not yet received a response.

A total of 271 sensors will be installed by the end of this week and that 240 will be installed in the Wall Street area and 31 in SONO.

C. OPERATING AND CAPITAL BUDGETS

Ms. Hebert said the Finance Department has a shorter schedule this year to get requests submitted and staff will have the draft operating budget distributed to the Parking Authority by December, schedule budget discussion/and or workshops in January and schedule a public hearing in February. The capital budget request is due by November 8, 2019 and Ms. Valadares has met with LAZ to determine what will need to be done from an infrastructure point of view, and staff met today to determine what will need to be done for revenue control. She said staff also discussed the residential parking permit program, the Webster lot, and branding and signage for access to the parking facilities as well as in the parking facilities from floor to floor. She said if there is anything else related to the Strategic Plan that will need to be included in the budget request she will need that by next Monday afternoon. Ms. Casey said that staff will send the members of the Parking Authority the list of projects that was submitted to the CFO as a draft list and it will be added to the next meeting agenda for discussion and submit a final list after the next meeting.

D. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Ms. Casey said now that the restructuring is in place she has requested that each of the Directors from each of the departments identify all the projects that they anticipate working on in fiscal year 2020/21 and the operating or capital requests including personnel needs that will be required and how each of those project initiatives are tied back to the POCD.

Ms. Casey said they had project \$3.8 million dollars in revenue through Building permitting and licensing this year for FY2020 and are over 60% of that projected revenue already.

Ms. Casey said that an RFP will go out in the next number of weeks that for big belly compacters containers that work off of solar and compact the garbage and have worked with DPW to have them picked up more often.

Ms. Casey said that staff has also discussed putting some funding in Wall Street/West Avenue for streetscape improvements. She said there will be a match program where the city would match up to 100% of a certain amount if the store owner or tenant of that building is to make an investment.

E. FINANCIAL REPORT

Mr. Manousos reported and said that parking revenue is up over 8% over budget for the month and are up over 6% year to date which is mainly due to the transient activity for the mall project and citations issued at the beach. He said that the expenses are under budget for the month and compared to last year are up over 7% related to the payroll for

extended operations. Transient activity is up over 4% compared to last year and over 82% of transactions system wide are made through credit cards

F. OPERATIONS REPORT

Mr. Manousos reported and said that the Pay by Cell activity is still showing a strong increase and the average transaction is \$4.13 and it up 1.6% compared to last month. The year to date Pay by Cell transactions are up over 36% from last year and revenue is up almost 27%. Enforcement is up 44% year to date mainly due to ticket issuance at the beach. He reported on the Courtesy Card program and said that year to date they had chosen 18 days and that 1,069 courtesy cards have been issued and the value of the additional meter time was \$534.50 and of that 78 people overstayed the 20 minute grace period and received tickets, and the total value of the courtesy cards that were given was \$24,775.00.

Mr. Manousos reported on the Ambassador program and said they are still seeing the same trends as far as location and what types of issues staff is having interactions with customers, and are seeing that 31% of the interactions have been at Webster Lot and the next closest is the North Water Lot. He said the top two inquiries are how to use the paystations and general information.

G. OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Aley distributed a draft copy of his 9:00AM parking proposal and proposed that a there is a test period done on Wall Street area beginning January 1, 2020. He said that it will help local businesses. Mr. Brescia suggested that the item be added to next month's agenda for a vote.

Mr. Rains said the questions regarding how to use the paystations is an easily identifiable problem. Mr. Harden suggested simplifying the signage that is currently on the pay stations and suggested a pilot program be done.

ADJOURNMENT

- ** MR. RAINS MOVED TO ADJOURN**
- ** MR. ALEY SECONDED THE MOTION.**
- ** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:20PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Dilene Byrd