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**PARKING AUTHORITY
REGULAR MEETING VIA ZOOM VIRTUAL VIDEOCONFERENCE
AND TELECONFERENCE
September 23 , 2020**

ATTENDANCE:

Michael Harden, Chairman
Eric Rains, Vice Chairman
Jud Aley

ABSENT:

Tom Vetter
Richard Brescia

STAFF:
and Parking

Kathryn Hebert, Director of Transportation, Mobility
Vanessa Valadares, DPW Principal Engineer

OTHERS:

Stathis Manousos, LAZ Parking
Rocky Legesse, LAZ Parking
George Tsirinides, Common Council

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment this evening.

CALL TO ORDER

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

1. APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM THE PARKING AUTHORITY MEETING HELD WEDNESDAY, JULY 22, 2020

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

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

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

2. APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM THE SPECIAL PARKING AUTHORITY MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 12, 2020.

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

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

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

A. Chairman Report

There was no report given.

B. Webster Parking Lot- Mike Oz Request

Mr. Harden said Mr. Oz had sent a letter to the Parking Authority stating that he includes his parking fees in his leases to his tenants, and his issue is that the parking fees have been changed and when they go up he does not pass the increase along to his tenants but absorbs them. He said in the letter he has requested that we come to an agreement on a parking fee and an increase on a per year scale that he can rely on and include in the lease to his tenants. Ms. Hebert said that Mr. Oz had attended the meeting in February and presented the letter and thoughts to the Parking Authority and then Covid-19 hit and things changed and that is why there has not been a response to the letter.

Mr. Aley said he would like to look at the letter and the current rates and what the increases have been over the past few years before responding. Mr. Harden agreed and

suggested that the Parking Authority begin having a discussion along with Mr. Oz if needed and come to a conclusion with him that can be voted on at the next meeting.

Mr. Rains said this was not discussed sooner because there was a period of no parking fees so we felt the urgency was off. Mr. Harden agreed and said the parking rates are still currently reduced but said the issue should still be addressed and followed up on. Mr. Rains agreed and suggested that the whatever the Parking Authority does agree to that the time with no parking fees and reduces parking fees are factored in to the decision at least for the current year.

C. N. Water Street Lot- Seaport Request

Mr. Harden said that the Seaport Association has contacted him stating that they run their ferries from the North Water Street lot during the summer months and have requested that they be granted a single parking space for the captain of the ship. He said he thinks it is a good way for the City of Norwalk and the Seaport Association to work together.

Mr. Rains suggested offering a space at the Maritime Garage because the restaurants and businesses rely heavily on the North Water Street Lot.

Mr. Rains asked if the parking will be affected by the Walk Bridge project. Ms. Hebert they are discussing moving the parking further under the bridge and that parking lot will become an active park. Ms. Valadares also said beginning next year the demolition of the IMAX Theatre will begin and some of parking spaces may need to be taken for the setup of the cranes. Mr. Rains said given the unknowns of the Walk Bridge project that a parking space at the Maritime Garage be offered to them.

D. West Washington Street Temporary Parking Installation

Mr. Harden said the project was again tabled at the last Traffic Authority meeting. Ms. Hebert said last month the Traffic Authority had requested that staff redesign the concept plan of 15 parking spaces to 13 and moving the center line because they had some concerns. She said that staff had presented the changes back to the Traffic Authority at their last meeting and they still have some concerns that included traffic backing up onto West Washington Street.

Mr. Aley said he would like to meet with Mr. Yeosock and Ms. Hebert because he has some ideas that may alleviate their concerns about double parking.

E. Marketing Plan

Mr. Rains said there is currently a transition that is in process with the data and information from the previous promotional person to the new people, and at the same time are working with the new people on the scope of their agreement so that they can take that information and transfer and integrate it into the new management of the marketing effort for businesses, primarily around parking assets that that the Parking

Authority manages. He also said there was a meeting held this week to discuss the scope of the contract with the company that was selected.

F. Back in angled parking

Mr. Harden said that back in angled parking has been installed for over a year and when it was installed we had discussed it was an experiment and he wanted to discuss how the test was going. Mr. Legesse said they have seen an increased use in the back in angled parking spaces and although they have received some complaints overall there is a higher usage especially on River and Wall streets. Ms. Hebert said it has also increased the parking capacity in the area. Mr. Rains said it is also safer to pull out from a back in parking space then it is to back out onto the street.

Mr. Harden said one of the complaints that he has received is the look of the bollards and Mr. Aley had suggested changing the color to something more pleasant to look at. Mr. Aley said his personal preference would be to remove the bollards all together but he understands that there may be safety issues so if they have stay he would like to remove the yellow sleeves for something nicer and that there are a variety of different options. Mr. Rains said that the bollards improve the pedestrian and bicycle safety so the bollards should not be removed. Ms. Hebert said that the sleeves are reflective for safety reasons. Mr. Aley said he will place an order for a sleeve for the bollard and present it at the next meeting.

G. Haviland Deck Garbage containment area

Mr. Harden provided a background and said that the Parking Authority had given some space on the lower Haviland Deck to the coop to move all of their garbage dumpsters and have one common garbage area.

Ms. Valadares said that over a year ago some of the property managers had requested to improve the fencing area to install a compactor to make it cleaner and were in a rush to get the project going but to date the nothing has been started. Mr. Rains asked what the problem is we are trying to solve. Mr. Harden said it is a garbage issue and by giving them the space as a step toward solving some of the issues but after giving them the space nothing ever developed.

Ms. Valadares suggested that a letter be sent from Mr. Harden as the Chairman of the Parking Authority and include a deadline as an incentive for them to move forward. Ms. Hebert suggested that the letter be sent by the Law Department along with a letter from the Parking Authority as a collaborative effort to help clean up the area to help maintain and sustain economic development. Mr. Tsiranides agreed and said a lot of funds were invested in that back area and it was proposed in a way it was going to be utilized and is a different purpose than it currently is be used. He also suggested that if they do not comply within a certain timeframe that they should have to reapply.

H. Financial and Operating Report

Mr. Manousos reported and said in August the parking revenue was well under budget for the month and year to date due to Covid-19 and the reduced demands on the system. He said the expense side is the same due to the reduction of expenses and projects that have been deferred and other expenses to temporarily minimize the loss. He said the revenue for the month is down compared to last year but is up compared to last month which is a positive trend. Mr. Rains requested that the revenue is related to the parking violations at the beach be reported as a separate item that won't skew the rest of the numbers.

Mr. Manousos said systemwide transient activity is down but up from last month and the rail facilities have taken the hardest hit in terms of activity and demand. He said that the permit activity is down from last year but has been stable the last couple of months. He said the one thing that represents the increase in activity and revenue is from the August activity at the Maritime Garage due to the increase in attendance at the Maritime Aquarium.

Mr. Manousos said the Pay by Cell revenue has still been strong but has showed a decline due to Covid-19. He said that the transactions and revenue was up compared to last month but is down from last year. He said the average transaction is slightly down from July and August due to the impact of the South Norwalk Railroad Station.

Mr. Manousos said there is a big decline at the Webster Lot due to lack of commuters using the rail line which is reflected in the revenue as well as the Pay by Cell activity. Mr. Legesse said the movie theater being closed is also a factor for the reduction.

Mr. Manousos said the revenue and activity at the Yankee Doodle Garage year to date has been down almost 50% and the revenue spike is due to some catch up payments from McMahon Ford. He said that the transactions have increased on Wall Street due to the rate changes and the revenue is stable, and the Main Street Lot is still rebounding.

Mr. Manousos said that on street parking is down for both revenue and activity but is beginning to rebound especially on the Pay by Cell side.

Mr. Legesse reported on the Text to Park and said for the month of June there were 383 transactions, July 939 transactions and 1017 in August. He said the online reservations was rolled out in June and had 30 users, July had 105 and in August 144.

Mr. Manousos reported on the parking enforcement and said ticket issuance is down significantly and going forward can identify how much of the revenue that was collected from the month from beach citations. Mr. Aley asked if it is possible to look at ticketing in comparison to transient activity and get a ratio.

Mr. Manousos said for this past July and August there was 761 tickets issued, at the and last year in the same time period 3200 tickets were issued so it is down 76% and the tickets do not include the beach or Oyster Shell Park.

Mr. Manousos reported on the courtesy card program and said they have been running the program every day, and the current activity compared to last year by mid-fiscal year will hit the number of courtesy cards that were issued the entire last fiscal year. He said year to date we have issued 2,852 courtesy cards and last year for the twelve months had issued 8,000 so are already at 35% of what was given out last year, and the same goes for the meter time that was given out. He said the value of the tickets year to date

that were not issued was \$59,000 and last \$184,000, so by those measures the program continues to be successful.

Mr. Manousos said there are no adjudications of tickets to report because there has not been any hearings so there is no data to share. Ms. Hebert said due to the social distancing guidelines staff is working with the Law Department to establish a virtual hearing process.

I Capital Projects Report

Ms. Valadares reported and said that Desmond is on board for on-call engineering and have begun the design for the calking of the stairwells at the South Norwalk Railroad Station and it should be completed by the end of the year and go out to bid.

Ms. Valadares said green infrastructure improvements at the Webster Lot has been delayed so she is not sure the project will be finalized for the spring as expected. Mr. Rains asked who will be responsible for maintaining the water quality for the infrastructure once they are built. Ms. Valadares said that is being discussed. Mr. Rains asked if the vendor can report on the projected maintenance costs. Ms. Valadares said "yes".

Ms. Valadares said the exterior light fixtures at the Yankee Doodle Garage are being repaired and will be upgraded.

J. Other Business

Mr. Rains asked if it is possible to investigate Pay by Cell on half hour increments on street instead of a full hour.

Mr. Rains said that there is a trash compactor at the Maritime Garage and asked if there is an arrangement with restaurants for the use of the compactor. Mr. Legesse said that is owned by the condo units and they manage it and sublease it and he has reached out to the condo management requesting to have the contract with the restaurants cancelled because the garbage is creating an odor.

Mr. Aley said in looking at the transient activity for August 2019 versus August 2020 it is way down and the South Norwalk Railroad Station parking lot has an average of four transactions per weekend. He proposed making the surface lots at the South Norwalk and East Norwalk Railroad Stations free on Sundays for the next six months as a pilot. Ms. Hebert asked Mr. Manousos present the data at next month's meeting so that it can be voted on.

Ms. Hebert read the following:

I am speaking to you during the last few weeks of my 33-year career at the City of Norwalk. The retirement package that the City of Norwalk offered is good for me and my family, I had to consider it and I will be 'retiring' and my last day (along with others) is Friday, 10/9/20. I leave you all in a better place.

I find the word 'retiring' somewhat amusing especially for someone like me who has had a very successful career and continues to contribute in so many meaningful, impactful ways and with all the energy, multiple skill sets, diverse capabilities and education that I started out with but now with so much more experience and reach. And, while I will not be retiring in the traditional sense, not yet, way too many years left for that, I am ready and happy to begin the next chapter in my life.

In deciding to take the package now, it forced me to reflect on an exceptionally long and successful career with the City of Norwalk. Over the years, I was offered many opportunities to leave and do something else, but I stayed. It was not totally about the money for me, but about value, but it was always about Norwalk. To me Norwalk is an incredibly special place, it has so much vibrancy, diversity in every way and it resonates. I used to chuckle when people would say nothing ever happens and why you are still there. Well not true. Look around. So much has changed in a wonderful way, so much has been created in the past 33 years, it is quite amazing. Why - because of people like me who love this city, who want to see it grow and still maintain that beautiful and magical essence, who understand and have the vision and skills to see it and make it happen. The last 33 years working for the City of Norwalk has been an amazing experience, sometimes a roller coaster but the outcome always positive.

What an amazing ride this has been, how it would open all sorts of doors, how parking has become the center spoke to everything everywhere; Mayor Moccia appointing me to the Arts Commission as the Mayor's business liaison knowing my love and passion for arts and culture; Mayor Rilling who I've known for 33 years, who worked alongside my father and brother in law as police officers, you are Mr. Norwalk through and through and I want to thank you for the opportunity you gave me promoting me to Director of the newly created Department of Transportation Mobility and Parking, recognizing my experience, education and skills to successfully create and lead the department.

As I mentioned before Mayor Knopp asked me to staff, develop and build the newly created Parking Authority in 2002. When I agreed to take this on, I thought, its parking, how hard can this be. After extensive review and finding out that there were no business systems, no technology, no staff, negative maintenance with garages literally falling down, no organization, little to no significant revenue, I knew I had my work cut out for me, but I knew then I was in it for the long game, that this would take some time to build. And I knew that I would NOT do it alone, that it would take an awesome team. And here we are.

This task turned into a passion of mine, little did I know that 'PARKING' would become so significant and important and the most highly recognized industry in the world; an industry that employs millions of people all over the world (has a value of over \$200B). I am so proud of everything WE have accomplished, US, the TEAM for the past 18 years. The Parking Industry itself has also evolved, but the Norwalk Parking Authority has been a visionary leader and change agent in this regard. We have all been a significant part of that evolution. You (NPA members), staff TALENT, LAZ Parking and others have been part of the one of the best lead, managed, successful organizations in the City of Norwalk, all over the Northeast and in the USA. The Norwalk Parking Authority is highly regarded, admired and commended for creating, building and sustaining a Municipal Parking Organization that has evolved into a significant, meaningful and critical component of city government, transportation, mobility and economic and community

development. I am so proud and honored to have been there from the beginning and to see this organization grow so well and become a critical component of city government and the City of Norwalk. The Norwalk Parking Authority will continue to contribute in so many ways and succeed and sustain for a long time. You will continue, you will do it and you will do it together.

When I drive/walk around Norwalk, I am glowing at all the initiatives that WE were part of, created, lead and helped bring to fruition, are still going strong and have helped Norwalk in so many ways. All with the help and assistance from the amazing teams of Talent and support from so many. After 33 years, there are so many people I would like to thank and recognize but we would be here forever.

Now I bid you farewell but never goodbye!
With great respect, admiration, and happiness.

ADJOURNMENT

**** MR. RAINS MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:30PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dilene Byrd