

PARKING AUTHORITY MINUTES

AUGUST 16, 2005

ATTENDANCE: Urban Mulvehill, Troy Jellerette, Stephen Bentkover, Burt Shatz ,
Anowar Sharzahan

STAFF: Kathryn Hebert, Administrative Services Manager

OTHERS: Frank Del Monaco; LAZ Parking, Edmund Schmidt; Assistant to the Mayor,
Mayor Alex Knopp

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Mulvehill called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

PUBLIC HEARING

Public Hearing on the proposed rate changes at the Maritime Garage (7:30 p.m.)

Mr. DelMonaco said this item was discussed at the last meeting for an adjustment to the Maritime Garage rates. Per the memo, the issue addressed the demands for rates after 3:00 p.m. and some patterns were developed that would be helpful to serve the Maritime Aquarium. But they're not helpful to other people using businesses in the area. So he suggested encouraging longer periods of stay. He thought there was still room to make the adjustment to the rates to encourage people to stay longer at the Aquarium or Maritime Garage.

Mr. Mulvehill said that in June, they had (496) cars that entered from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Mr. DelMonaco clarified that was the time of entry.

Mr. Mulvehill commented that the 8:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. entry seemed to have fallen off. Mr. Schmidt noted that usage in 2005 was significantly higher than last year.

Mr. Mulvehill wondered about trying to get people to stay longer. He asked if they focused on the afternoon crowd. Mr. DelMonaco said the rate was adjusted to target those after 5:00 p.m., again to encourage them to stay longer.

Mayor Knopp stated that he joined the meeting due to the proposed changes to encourage people to stay longer. He said the rate would be in line with the national rate structure. He further noted the point of making the area family friendly to park in a safe well-lit

facility. Overall, he felt the change in the rate would be consistent with attracting people to the area, where they can walk from the Aquarium to other surrounding sites to visit. So producing the lower rate was the best way to implement economic strategy.

Mayor Knopp left the meeting at 7:40 p.m.

Public comments

Mr. Robert Malozzi agreed they should encourage people to come to the restaurants in the area, especially since people make their living running a business there. He felt if they lowered the rate, they could send a good message to other cities to visit Norwalk. He expressed that out of town people he knows, have pointed out that SoNo was a very attractive place to visit, they likened to having a New Orleans feel.

Mr. Mark Wilson said he was a property owner that lived on Washington Street. He shared that years ago, he was the only one at the hearings when they started the Parking Authority. At the time, he thought prices would go up or down, noting there was an attitude of many that said they needed a parking garage, but now many businesses complain about the rates. He felt that since the businesses profit from their business, then they should be agreeable to paying the rates. His concern was that along the way, his taxes and other residents would be affected by them subsidizing the lower rates. He thought that if they lowered the rate at one place, another rate would go up somewhere else.

Mr. Malozzi responded to Mr. Wilson's comments and said that if they raise the rates more, less people would visit the area and the rates would ultimately go up anyway.

Hearing none, the public was closed.

APPROVAL/AUTHORIZATIONS

Approve the Minutes from the Parking Authority meeting held on Wednesday, July 27, 2005

Corrections:

Page 6; bottom of page, 1st paragraph under DISCUSSION should read, he said this lot still enjoys a level of demand, but there have not been as many people parking in the Maritime Garage as they would like. It is difficult trying to manage the continued Webster Lot demand.

Page 8; 1st paragraph under STAFF REPORT, the 2nd sentence should read, Mr. Hamilton said they sold it for \$7.250 million, but the proceeds of \$4 million was used to pay off the short term notes.

Page 9; under ADJOURNED should read, Mr. Bentkover moved to adjourn

**** MR. BENTKOVER MADE A MOTION TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES AS CORRECTED**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

Approve the proposed rate changes at the Maritime Garage

Mr. Bentkover said the purpose of the Parking Authority was to take the burden off property owners and property taxes. He didn't think by encouraging people to stay longer, that this would result in any negative impact. He felt the intent was not to penalize residents, but to ameliorate the situation. Overall, he thought it was a good idea to approve the rate change.

Mr. Mulvehill thought it would definitely encourage people to stay longer. He also thought it would end up as an overall prosperous thing for everyone in the long run.

Mr. Schmidt suggested that LAZ submit a report to indicate whether the rate modification has actually encouraged people to park longer. He thought the Parking Authority would make money by reducing rates and this would further reduce any burden on the taxpayers, because users would park longer.

**** MR. MULVEHILL MADE A MOTION TO ADOPT THE RATE CHANGE**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

DISCUSSION

LAZ PARKING OPERATION REPORT – Mr. DelMonaco updated

SoNo Area - he spoke about the SoNo Arts Festival, noting that it was well attended and the demand doubled at the garage. And with the increased staff, they were able to move traffic along as best they could, although it was higher than expected. Overall, they met the demands of the festival.

Mr. Mulvehill commented that he knew someone who parked at the Maritime Garage and he expressed that he was pleased by its appearance and service.

Mr. Schmidt commented that even though the gates go up, there are still delays getting out of the lot. He spoke about altering the wait periods that should be customized to the traffic demand, once the new signals were installed. Then the city will have the capacity to improve the traffic situation on a real time basis.

Mr. Mulvehill said he attended a meeting with the Fire Chief and he mentioned there was a delay in the gate lifting up. Mr. Del Monaco said he received a call about that and it was addressed.

Mr. Jellerette commented that for the for the queuing problem, the wait would never get down to zero and people needed to realize there will be a line. So even with improvements, it should be made clear, people will be asked to wait.

Mr. DelMonaco explained the graph in the packet indicating analysis of actual demands on Webster Lot. He noted they have experienced consistency and growth this summer, which points to it still being a popular destination. He said they planned to meet with the theatre to discuss any impacts, but he thought there were some simple solutions that could be discussed and developed.

Mr. Sharzahan said he observed signage was very clear in the lot. He asked if it would make sense to give out a notice as people exit, to indicate they could save more time if they parked at the Maritime Lot. Mr. DelMonaco said it was a good suggestion.

Mr. Shatz asked if they determined a pattern of demand. Mr. DelMonaco said 70% of the demand is before 6:00 p.m. and 70% of the revenue is collected after 6:00 p.m.

Upper Haviland Deck - Mr. Del Monaco said they were in the midst of converting to pay by space and they were waiting for parts from the manufacturer.

South Norwalk Railroad Station - they are continuing to monitor the lot and they are relocating the vending machines.

East Norwalk Lot - they received several calls from people complimenting them on the new building.

South Norwalk Railroad Station cont... - Mr. Del Monaco said the electronic parking program continues to do well and they sold out the lot.

Mr. Jellerette asked how long the waiting list was to get a space. Mr. DelMonaco said it was between a 12 and 18 month wait.

Mr. Sharzahan asked the number of people backlogged. Mr. DelMonaco said he wasn't sure. Mr. Sharzahan questioned why they should make people wait and he suggested leveraging public buses for transportation to the train station. There was some open discussion of where there might be other locations available with more capacity for parking.

Mr. Schmidt suggested a report be submitted next month updating on the excess capacity at the East Norwalk train station.

Wall Street area - Mr. DelMonaco said all the approved initiatives in the parking plan

were done. They created shorter term limits at the library and the pay by spaces units were completed in the Yankee Doodle Garage.

Parking Permits -

He explained that he used September 2004 as a comparative benchmark since, they started the evaluation of the Wall Street community, so he provided a comparison chart showing that (109) permits were sold in 2004 and (253) were sold as of June 2005, denoting a significant increase.

Parking Enforcement - they are still working with the police to get up and running. They scheduled training for next month and they will start using the hand held parking ticket devices. Evening and weekend enforcement began June 2005.

Maintenance - they concluded the second summer working with the youth program. This year they were assigned 10 youth employees as compared to 5 last fiscal year. They were pleased with the results overall and specifically they were very instrumental getting the South Norwalk train station cleaned.

Equipment - they were satisfied with the level of performance of the pay and display and the single space electronic parking meters.

Security - they were satisfied with the level of performance and they continue to work with the Norwalk Police Department.

STAFF REPORT – Ms. Hebert updated

Financial Report - the month of July showed strong revenues and less than expected expenses. She said transient revenue was \$10k over, this was attributed to the popularity of the SoNo entertainment area, but she expected it will increase with the Yankee Doodle conversion to pay by space.

As for parking enforcement, the constables were sworn in and they began the evening operation in June. It was an overall good month in July.

Mr. Shatz asked if there was any guess as to what their position would be by year end. Ms. Hebert said she would have a better idea at the first quarter.

Mr. Bentkover asked about the Oyster Festival impact on parking. Mr. DelMonaco said the demand wasn't as high due to the availability of the shuttle service.

Mr. Mulvehill spoke about the number of lots used for the festival. He noted they provided free rides to people, but there was a question if it would make sense to advertise that the Maritime Garage would be available for parking on a fee basis at a little less than other lots would charge. Mr. Bentkover disagreed with the idea due to the cost of

advertisements. He didn't feel they would break even by the time they get the revenues back.

Mr. Mulvehill didn't think it would cost a lot to advertise considering the number of additional parkers they might pick up from advertising.

Mr. Schmidt suggested that Ms. Hebert approach the Seaport Association to include a reference in their ad and handout to indicate where the least expensive parking would be. Ms Hebert said she would speak to the executive director of the Seaport Association.

Status – Capital Projects - Ms. Hebert updated

She said they were under construction at the Webster Lot and they started the Washington Street side. It will be completed in two weeks. Phase 3 will include the trash dumpsters and this will require property owner coordination. She said they received a confirmation from Crown Theatre to sponsor the landscaping at the entry way.

Mr. Shatz asked if there were specifications for the plantings. Ms. Hebert said it would be the same criteria as they did for the adopt-a-spot.

Ms. Hebert said the Yankee Doodle Garage would be addressed after phase II at the Webster Lot.

She noted that they sold all 31 spaces in the South Norwalk train station Eastbound triangular lot , but will be completing the repaving, curbing and crosswalk work in September.

She noted that due to Modern Median enforcing 31 of their parking spaces on the Eastbound side of the East Norwalk train station, they are directing commuters to the St. Thomas lot and discussed with Modern Media's Facility Manager a plan to swap parking spaces to allows private/public spaces to be grouped together so that it isn't so confusing as to where to park..

Next Parking Authority meeting:

Wednesday, September 28, 2005/7:30 p.m., Public Works Conference Room

ADJOURNED

**** MR. MULVEHILL MOVED TO ADJOURN**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Graham
Telesco Secretarial Services

