

PARKING AUTHORITY MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING JUNE 28, 2006

ATTENDANCE: Urban Mulvehill, Chairman; Stephen Bentkover, John Federici, Burton Shatz
STAFF: Kathryn Hebert, DPW Administrative Services Manager; Hal Alvord, DPW Director; John Perrotta, LAZ

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Mulvehill called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m.

APPROVALS/AUTHORIZATIONS

Approve the Minutes from the Parking Authority meeting held on Wednesday, May 24, 2006

Corrections

Page 6; top of page, motion correction should read; **THE MOTION WAS WITHDRAWN

Page 6; under item 7, the 2nd sentence should read; He stated that there were concerns being expressed...

** MR. MULVEHILL MOVED TO ACCEPT AS CORRECTED

** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

DISCUSSION

Monthly Financial Report

Ms. Hebert said they had a projected year end net cash shortfall of \$319,250, noting that the common council approved the funds in lieu of the Parking account for \$200k. They found monies in the security services account in the amount of \$84k, so they made up the projected shortfall for this year and there will be a clean slate in the fall of 2006. Mr. Alvord added that the Parking Authority was covered and they won't end the year in a deficit position.

Mr. Bentkover asked about a LAZ administered item outlined on the ledger under the meter revenue, in regard to the amount taken in; he thought the number reflected a huge

discrepancy. Mr. Alvord said it involved two things, such as free parking on the street after 6:00 p.m.

Mr. Bentkover asked about the Ct. Limo lease at the South Norwalk Railroad Station. Mr. Alvord said there was a \$24,720 annual lease amount and it was used about one-third of the year. He explained they had a realtor working to find tenants for the South Norwalk train station and the Maritime garage space.

There was some further discussion regarding parking in the station, noting that the demand has increased overall..

Mr. Bentkover asked about the DPW administration operating expenses and he questioned the payroll expenses. Ms. Hebert explained that under general maintenance, some expenses were charged to the 'other dpw expense' account by the comptroller. Mr. Alvord explained that he met with a church contact and discussed a variety of parking arrangements, but they never came to fruition. So they took the position that without an agreement, they weren't going to take money from the Parking Authority to pay for the use of the lot. But the state is now paying the entire \$20k and the Parking Authority continues to maintain the lot.

Mr. Bentkover indicated an item under revenues and a concern about the Yankee Doodle Garage, pointing out they were \$108k under projection of budget. He said the numbers didn't make sense. Ms. Hebert said they didn't start charging until spring of this year. Mr. Bentkover thought the equipment was in during the winter. Ms. Hebert agreed, but she said they didn't start charging until spring because they had to wait to install and reprogram the equipment when they converted from pay and display to pay by space as well as complete the painting of the parking stalls. She further noted that all the budget numbers were off somewhat because they assumed that they would be collecting revenue starting July 1, 2005.

Mr. Mulvehill said he would like to review the prior numbers. Ms. Hebert went to get the file to verify numbers. Ms. Hebert returned and explained that the projected amount was \$24k for next year in Yankee Doodle Garage. Mr. Bentkover questioned that they were spending \$250k to only take in \$24k in revenue, noting this wasn't fiscal prudence.

Ms. Hebert pulled the file to check last month's numbers. She said the budget was approved last year and they assumed they would bring in \$91k per month of transient revenues starting July 1, 2005. But as mentioned no revenue was collected until the spring 2006.

Mr. Bentkover recalled a discussion about having business owners buy tokens. Ms. Hebert said that would cost approximately \$6,000 to implement including reprogramming the existing revenue control equipment. She noted that in May 2005, they sold (8) permits and in May 2006 they sold significantly more at (254) at Yankee Doodle Garage. She further noted this could be a combination of monthly and annual permits.

Mr. Bentkover said with that in mind, it was a huge revenue hit for a facility that was expected to do better. Ms. Hebert said they expected to do that in April though. Mr. Mulvehill thought Mr. Bentkover made a valid point, but he thought there may be a hidden hit on the removal of the meters that resulted in the loss of revenues.

Mr. Alvord stated that when they removed the cost of on street parking, people would then look for free space on the street. He said it was also a matter of attracting people to the area, noting that currently there wasn't a great pull of people to the area and that may explained the loss of revenues.

Mr. Alvord commented that they anticipated when Maritime Yard was done; they would see usage of the Maritime Garage skyrocket, due to the new venues going in the area.

Monthly Operation Report

Mr. Perrotta stated that there was a correction on page 6 of the report, noting that the permit sales read March and should read May.

Mr. Perrotta said there were two issues and complaints of vehicles parking in Webster Lot, but that situation isn't happening anymore due to the summonses that were issued.

Mr. Mulvehill addressed the parking in the overflow lot at the South Norwalk Railroad Station. He said that he would like to see a more user friendly, customer service type of ticket to be handed out. John Perrotta said that this could easily be programmed into the parking enforcement officer's hand held ticket writing computers. Mr. Perrotta said the wording will be changed.

Mr. Mulvehill also commented that the officer wasn't thorough about giving out the tickets, that most of the tickets were given out during the morning rush hour and that enforcement wasn't present after 10 a.m. when many people park at the overflow lot.

Mr. Mulvehill said there weren't any one-way signs leading to the traffic flow and people tend to go against the one-way traffic that could cause a hazard. He clarified he was talking about the area on the east bound side when you go through the gate. Ms. Hebert made a note to issue a work order. She said she would contact the Traffic Department.

Mr. Mulvehill also noted that on Henry Street, there were signs, but there was nothing in the gap between the two aisles. Ms. Hebert also noted this.

Mr. Perrotta pointed out that on page 2 of the report, Webster Lot demand was significantly up and getting busier each week.

Capital Projects

a. Webster Parking Lot Phase II Reconfiguration Project

Mr. Alvord updated that Darien Asphalt submitted a bid of \$169k. Mr. Mulvehill said the deal was done and signed. Ms. Hebert said the SoNo Association would have work going on during the day and only two curbs would be done at a time. They will meet next week to firm up the schedule.

Mr. Mulvehill stated it was suggested that the SoNo Association attend a meeting, but they decided that Mr. Federici would meet with them first. Ms. Hebert said they met with them yesterday and there was a positive outcome. She noted that Jackie Lightfield was the liaison at the meeting. Mr. Alvord added that all the issues were addressed and there were some good ideas tossed around, but he explained to them that they needed to build the items into the budget first. Overall, they found ways to communicate that would better things in Webster Lot.

Mr. Shatz asked if there was funding for police coverage at the intersection yet. Ms. Hebert said yes and they had a firm commitment. She continued to say that the annual cost for the extra duty police officers is estimated at \$16,000. Although it was originally decided to start this service at the beginning of July, they spoke with the Mayor to begin in June since it is worth it. The Parking Authority will front the funds until approximately September when it is expected that the City of Norwalk will receive a \$500,000 grant from the state to help defray the debt service costs by the Maritime Aquarium. Since the Maritime Aquarium receives about \$50,000 of free parking at the Maritime Garage, to be added to their debt service, the grant parameters allows the city/parking authority to use these funds to cover this service.

b. Yankee Doodle Garage Improvement Project

Mr. Alvord said the bids came back and they had one bidder that was Merritt Contractors. However, the bid was \$211k on a job estimated to cost \$150k; so they met with the contractor and negotiated to remove the painting line item for \$56,000 and concentrate on completing the structural repairs. He asked if they would be amenable to take that line item out of the bid and do everything else less the painting and stairwells that would save them \$50k+. He further noted that the contract would receive a refund fee of \$6,000 for the flag man expense from the ENRR Station building project.

Mr. Alvord went on and said they would do a separate contract for the painting at a better price. Mr. Bentkover suggested hiring summer youth to do the painting. Mr. Alvord said by the time the contract was done, the summer program would be completed.

**** MR. BENTKOVER MOVED TO AUTHORIZE TO INCREASE THE CONTRACT AMOUNT OF CAPITAL DOLLARS FROM \$150,000.00 TO \$155,500.00, BUT NOT TO EXCEED \$160,000.00**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

Other Business

a. Webster Parking Lot Traffic Control - this item was discussed under item 5a. above.

b. Residential Parking on Street Permits

Mr. Alvord said they did the site visits and talked to the condominium association or homeowners. And they looked at each property and examined the off-street parking. There is more than enough off street parking in the area. So they recommended the only residential parking permit program will for protective parking around the areas of East Norwalk Railroad Station.

**** MR. MULVENILL MOVED THAT THEY WILL OPERATE IN THE SONO AREA WITHOUT ANY ON STREET RESIDENTIAL PARKING PERMIT PROGRAM**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

c. Parking Authority member vacancy

Mr. Mulvehill commented that Anwar Shahjazihan made a good contribution to the committee. He noted that the Mayor will have to address the matter of a replacement.

d. Parking Authority summer meeting schedule

Ms. Hebert suggested that they cancel the August meeting, noting that they could take a vote to authorize that. Mr. Bentkover thought that if there was no immediate business during August, then it would be okay to cancel. Mr. Federici said holding the meeting in August was okay with him. Mr. Shatz said he might be away.

Mr. Alvord noted that the Public Works Committee cancelled the July meeting. He updated that for Parking Authority business, they had all the authorizations they required, so there would only be the matters of the financial and operating reports to meet on. Mr. Mulvehill agreed to cancel the August meeting.

OTHER

Action on any item discussed herein – see above.

Ms. Hebert stated that she required approval for an air conditioner condenser that was needed at the South Norwalk Railroad Station because the old one stopped operating. She said it would be \$8,000.00 to replace and there was money in the capital budget line item to pay for it.

**** MR. MULVEHILL MOVED TO AUTHORIZE \$8,000.00 FROM THE CAPITAL BUDGET LINE ITEM FOR THE REPLACEMENT OF AN AIR CONDITIONER CONDENSER AT THE SOUTH NORWALK RAILROAD STATION**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

Mr. Alvord spoke about temporarily storing vehicles in the transfer fleet, noting that (12) of the (22) vehicles were in. They will temporarily park the vehicles replaced with new ones and then they will hold an auction. But there has been a new request by the Norwalk Police Department regarding cars seized for various reasons that are required to be stored in a secure location. They are starting to get flack from Devon's Place and Stepping Stones Museum about the vehicles not being stored properly. So they the Police Department asked if they could be parking in the Yankee Doodle Lot because of the complaints. But there is a concern that the city needs to focus on finding and fund a long term/permanent solution to this, so his main concern was that if Yankee Doodle Parking Lot becomes a temporary solution, it will inevitably become a permanent situation and they want to avoid that. Mr. Mulvehill suggested they put in screened fencing where they park the vehicles now, noting the fencing will shield the vehicles from the public. He stressed however, that the vehicles shouldn't be parked at the Yankee Doodle Lot.

Mr. Alvord thought it would be an eyesore with the vehicles parked there, pointing out it could affect the new development in the area.

There were further suggestions of using the old police station to park the vehicles and fencing it in.

Mr. Alvord said there were other areas available in the city that were discussed with the Mayor that should meet the need and solve the problem. He explained that they have to pay to take cars away and last year they did a formal bidding process. And although they are all junk cars, when the bids came in, they spent \$5,000.00 in labor and earned only \$500.00 in revenue. They now have (40+) vehicles and they will accept bids, but the person has to haul the vehicle away, weight it and report back with the amount and then they will be given a check.

Mr. Bentkover said at the recent Human Services Council dinner, he had a conversation with Mr. Shulman regarding a passenger shuttle. Mr. Alvord said he told Mr. Shulman that they were willing to provide a shuttle to the Parking Authority, but there wasn't one currently available. And he also let him know that it couldn't be done for free. Mr. Bentkover asked if he was willing to operate the shuttle in conjunction with the Parking Authority. Mr. Mulvehill said it would be an expense though.

Mr. Mulvehill said they should continue to talk to Mr. Shulman regarding grants. Mr. Alvord agreed noting how resourceful Mr. Shulman was in obtaining grants. It was noted this matter would be addressed at a later date.

Next Parking Authority meeting
Wednesday, July 26, 2006/7:30 p.m., Public Works Conference Room

ADJOURNED

** MR. BENTKOVER MOVED TO ADJOURN
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

The meeting was adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Graham
Telesco Secretarial Services

