

PARKING AUTHORITY MINUTES

FEBRUARY 25, 2004

ATTENDANCE: Urban Mulvehill, Chairman (arrived at 7:00 p.m.); Luis Garcia; Stephen Bentkover (arrived at 6:40 p.m.); Burt Shatz; Troy Jellerette, Acting Chairman.

STAFF: Harold Alvord, Director Public Works; Kathryn Hebert, Administrative Services Officer; Edmund Schmidt, Assistant to the Mayor.

OTHERS: Frank Del Monaco and John Perotta, LAZ Parking.

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Jellerette called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m. and announced that Chairman Mulvehill would be delayed.

ACCEPT THE MINUTES

**** MR. JELLERETTE MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 11, 2004 AS PRESENTED.**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

SOUTH NORWALK RAILROAD STATION

Status Report on Operational Changes

Mr. Del Monaco said that during the recent inclement weather, Metro North didn't run their usual 17 trains between the hours of 5:00 and 7:00 p.m. The cars are old, and because their electrical components are outside rather than inside, the cold caused them to malfunction. As a result, Metro North took some of them out and cut back service. As a result, the station parked more vehicles. He said that he contemplated closing the station between 5:00 and 8:00 p.m. so that the entrance could be used as an exit. This was ultimately not necessary because Metro North put some of the cars back in service and has resumed their regular schedule. Mr. Del Monaco said that LAZ would monitor the situation closely, and as next year's winter season approaches will put measures in place to avoid a repeat performance when Metro North alters their schedule. He said that funds have been approved to purchase equipment that will allow the lanes to reverse, for additional lighting, signage and manpower. Another option to quicken the process of exiting would be to put additional staff on who would collect the fees. Mr. Jellerette suggested that people could park on the eastbound side for quicker exit, as well. He asked if LAZ would maintain a cleaning schedule for the garage, especially since there seemed to be an excessive amount of pigeon droppings. Mr. Del Monaco said that a type of

pigeon-deterrent material was being considered, and once warmer weather arrived the garage would be power washed. He added that the facility had not been maintained properly for some time and said that the situation would be watched closely, and LAZ would continue doing what they started. Mr. Garcia asked if man-hours would increase. Mr. Del Monaco said that they would, starting at approximately 6:30 a.m. each morning.

Mr. Bentkover arrived at the meeting at 6:40 p.m.

On June 1, 2006 Mr. Del Monaco said that the increase in fees would go into effect and an option to pay on an annual basis would be available. Mr. Bentkover said that a complaint letter was received about the 17% increase in parking fees. The individual said that paying annually would be difficult. Mr. Bentkover suggested that the Parking Authority allow payments quarterly or by electronic fund transfers. Mr. Shatz asked if daily parking rates would increase; Mr. Del Monaco said that it was a budget recommendation. He said that new equipment would be installed by May 1st, and the commuter would be asked to fill out an on-line application. The information would be uploaded into a database and a card would be issued. Ms. Hebert said that it is the intent of the Authority to offer payment options that are as convenient as possible.

Final Audit Report by DLC Consulting

Ms. Hebert said that in December the Parking Authority authorized \$7,500 for an official parking audit at the SONO train station and at the temporary Maritime parking lot. A final report from DLC Consulting highlighted the following problematic areas: lack of supervision, poor record keeping, irregular man-hour shifts which resulted in overtime pay which cost the City more, abandoned debit card balances, required audits not performed, a substantial portion of supply inventory missing, and an overcharge on each check processed. Ms. Hebert said that a management response was prepared and the last month's payment to Central Parking (approximately \$70,000) has been withheld. She said that it is difficult to determine exactly how much money Central Parking owes the City, but their final payment would continue to be withheld until the issues have been resolved. It may be necessary to involve Corporation Counsel for legal guidance or if Central Parking becomes uncooperative.

Chairman Mulvehill joined the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

Ms. Hebert said the audit was the first one the City ever performed. Mr. Garcia said that he was pleased to have LAZ on board and hoped that the same issues as with Central Parking would not occur. Ms. Hebert said that she was pleased to have the audit complete. Mr. Bentkover said that the cost of the audit should be billed back to Central Parking; Mr. Garcia agreed. Mr. Jellerette said that he was hopeful that audits would be performed more frequently and agreed with the others about having LAZ on board. He said that he was displeased with the reports provided by Central Parking, and internally it was important to watch LAZ going forward to be sure they are fulfilling their contract. Ms. Hebert said that the Finance Department normally has the responsibility to oversee all city audits. Chairman Mulvehill asked that this item be put on next month's agenda.

Mr. Shatz said that Central Parking should be asked to provide answers and missing information. Their failure to comply would allow the Authority to use its own documentation for negotiation purposes. Ms. Hebert said that the Corporation Counsel's office would be consulted for their opinion.

MARITIME GARAGE

Approve Architectural/Design for Fit-Out of Parking Field Office Area at Maritime Garage

Mr. Del Monaco said that he did not bring the architectural plans with him. The budget that was prepared by Bob Cavello of the Westview Group was higher than expected; the original projection was thought to be about \$65,000. \$10,500 has already been approved. Mr. Bentkover said he thought \$34,000 over budget was quite high and asked if the architect should have known about the costs earlier. Mr. Del Monaco agreed, but added that a more accurate would not be available until the bids were received; Ms. Hebert said they should be received soon.

Specifically regarding the Yankee Doodle garage fit-out, Mr. Del Monaco said that the Norwalk Parking Authority does not have a 'residence' and it is easier to manage when all functions are performed at the same location. The space would be used for multiple purposes, and a code would be required for entry. Money would be kept secure during the day, and no money would be kept overnight. Ms. Hebert said that the finance director wanted the funding to be capitalized and come out of the operating budget. Mr. Del Monaco said that drawings are complete and the project can go out for bid. No cap would be put on the bids. Chairman Mulvehill said that the City wants all of its projects to be bid under a GMP, and suggested that Mr. Del Monaco make this known without putting a cap amount in the bid requests. He said that Mr. Cavello would oversee the project. Mr. Garcia said that \$76.85 per sq.ft. was reasonable.

Mr. Alvord said that it is the City's position that bid selection is based on best value for the City, not on lowest bid received as in the past. He said that four to six bids can be expected, with varying price ranges.

**** CHAIRMAN MULVEHILL MOVED TO APPROVE THE ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN FOR BIDS ON A MAXIMUM PRICE BASIS FOR THE MARITIME GARAGE FIELD OFFICE FIT-OUT.**

**** MR. GARCIA SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Status Report on Project Completion

Mr. Del Monaco said that punch list items are continuing, and some of the items cannot be completed until the warmer weather arrives. He said that there was a recent incident of vandalism, and a C/O would not be issued until the situation was repaired. Work

continues on the ticket area and the blue light system. The equipment still needs to be bid out. Millwork is proceeding.

Mr. Del Monaco said that the garage performed well during the President's Day holiday; it was short 20 vehicles to achieve maximum capacity. There were 1,273 vehicles parked between the hours of 1:00 – 2:00 p.m. and most remained approximately four hours. 80% were parked for two to three hours. A ticket is received upon entrance; payment by credit card is made when exiting. Mr. Del Monaco said that there were about 30 people standing in line in the lobby which caused a 40-minute delay getting back to the garage. To alleviate this in the future, Mr. Del Monaco said by the summer, signage would be improved. He was hopeful that the Aquarium would be cooperative with the efforts that LAZ was putting forth to facilitate quicker payment.

Chairman Mulvehill commented that there was no pedestrian walkway. Mr. Jellerette asked how many people volunteered. Mr. Bentkover asked how many non-Maritime parkers were in the garage that weren't supposed to be. Mr. Jellerette asked if answers to these questions could be provided at the next meeting, and that the items be placed on the agenda. Mr. Del Monaco said that there were 32,000 visitors between February 14th and February 17th. Generally speaking, most cars that use the lot carry 4.5 passengers. Mr. Del Monaco said that it may become necessary to require that larger vehicles park in a particular area of the lot.

Mr. Schmidt joined the meeting at 7:35 p.m.

Chairman Mulvehill asked if people could prepay for their parking in the garage. Mr. Del Monaco responded that they would not be able to do this as parking fees are based on the amount of actual time parked. When asked how much revenue is generated by credit card payments, Mr. Del Monaco responded that it was approximately 2%. He said that additional staff would be put on during heavy usage days.

Mr. Schmidt said that LAZ should consider developing a performance standard, or service level, similar to that used by traffic engineers who monitor traffic flow at intersections. He said that at particular times it may be necessary to reallocate staff at the South Norwalk train station and the Maritime Garage. Chairman Mulvehill asked how much usage there was during evening hours. He said that the cost of damage to the plantings and vandalism to the garage was about \$2,500.

DISCUSSION - ACS Status Report / Transition of Data and Startup Date

Mr. Del Monaco said that the process of data transfer continues, as does the design of parking enforcement recommendations. It is hopeful that data transfer will be complete by May 1, 2004.

DISCUSSION – Proposal for Parking System Security Report

Mr. Del Monaco introduced Mr. Perotta, who was hired in response to the City's RFP for a security contractor. He said that this was the first step toward initiating services at reduced costs to the City.

Mr. Perotta summarized the proposed security plan. A survey was performed of all properties throughout the City that would require security services. This would help determine the number of personnel needed and how they would be distributed. He said that the South Norwalk station would be the hub of activity and be staffed 24 hours a day, seven days each week. A "roving" patrol officer would be available continuously to cover all lots. Heavy concentration of personnel would be placed at the East Norwalk rail station during the early morning hours. There would be all the time coverage at the Norwalk train station, with extra personnel during 5:00 – 9:00 a.m. and again from 5:00 – 9:00 p.m. Mr. Perotta said that security personnel would provide coverage about 470 hours a week, as opposed to 700 hours from the previous security system. Mr. Schmidt said that the Parking Authority would authorize security personnel to write parking tickets. Mr. Perotta said that personnel would be uniformed so that they would be highly visible and identifiable. A 4-wheel drive vehicle, leased by LAZ, would have a flashing yellow light to make it highly visible. The cost of this vehicle was included in the \$359,000 cost of the project. Mr. Schmidt said that the money would be part of the capital budget. Mr. Del Monaco said that some custodial personnel would come under the direction of the security service. Each would have a Nextel cell phone.

Mr. Bentkover commented that the camera in the Yankee Doodle garage does not pick up enough activity. Mr. Perotta said that equipment more efficient than a camera would be considered. Mr. Schmidt said that cameras that pan 360 degrees would become models for other garages. These would be capital budget items. He spoke about the MAN (Metro Area Network) that is being developed in the City.

Mr. Perotta reiterated that security personnel would be responsible to the citizens of Norwalk. Background checks would be completed before a hire was made; each guard would receive a minimum of eight hours training, and Mr. Perotta said that a training schedule was being developed. Chairman Mulvehill asked if the guards would be trained in CPR; Mr. Perotta responded that this was not in the plans at the moment.

Mr. Schmidt said that the proposed security plan would save the City approximately \$200,000 a year. Mr. Del Monaco said that the current security system would continue until they are given 30-day notice of termination, possibly as soon as April 1st.

Chairman Mulvehill said that it was the sense of the meeting that the proposed security plan was a good first step.

DISCUSSION – Review of Existing Handicapped Parking Spaces

Ms. Hebert said that there are no handicapped parking spaces on any of the streets in Norwalk; handicapped persons are required to park in lots which are ADA compliant.

This often means they are much farther away from their destination than if handicapped parking spaces were available on streets. Chairman Mulvehill asked if any existing parking spaces could be converted for handicapped use. Ms. Hebert said that she didn't think so because the space would need to be 15' wide and be compliant with the sidewalk ordinance. This would require engineering and evaluation. Mr. Schmidt suggested asking Norwalk's ADA compliance officer what the particular requirements are. Mr. Bentkover said that the Parking Authority needed to respond to the citizen who sent the complaint letter.

DISCUSSION – Proposed Wayfinding Signage and Budget

Mr. Del Monaco said that this item would be deferred to the next meeting.

DISCUSSION – Temporary Parking Website

Mr. Del Monaco said that the temporary website – www.Norwalkpark.com -- would be linked to the one currently established for the City of Norwalk. Mr. Bentkover said that this would be the perfect opportunity to create an identity for the Norwalk Parking Authority. Mr. Schmidt suggested the Authority discuss this with the I.T. department. Mr. Bentkover said that eventually the website should appear on all signage throughout the City.

ACTION ON ANY ITEM DISCUSSED HEREIN

There was no specific action required on any agenda items discussed.

While not an agenda item, Mr. Schmidt spoke about the February 24th memorandum from Mr. Del Monaco about those persons who would be granted free access privileges at the South Norwalk rail station garage. He said that the revised list prepared by LAZ should be adopted and made part of the official procedures manual of the Parking Authority, as it was their responsibility who received free access. Chairman Mulvehill said that there should be a mechanism to allow entrance to the garage; Ms. Hebert said that there should be a way to tie the list back to the audit. Mr. Del Monaco said that in a few weeks, passes issued formerly would not operate in the existing equipment.

**** MR. BENTKOVER MOVED THAT ONLY THOSE PERSONS DESIGNATED ON THE FEBRUARY 24, 2004 MEMORANDUM FROM MR. DEL MONACO BE GRANTED FREE ACCESS TO THE SOUTH NORWALK RAIL STATION AND THE MARITIME GARAGE.**

**** MR. SHATZ SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

NEXT MEETING

Chairman Mulvehill said that the next meeting date would be Wednesday, March 24th at 7:30 p.m. in the DPW Conference Room.

Chairman Mulvehill adjourned the meeting at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol A. Wiggins for
Telesco Secretarial Services

