

Parking Committee



MINUTES

March 17, 2021

Online Zoom Meeting at Noon

DRAFT

MEETING OPEN: 12:03 p.m.

ATTENDANCE: Todd Stonesifer, John Tinsley, Jed Hatfield, Dave Hugg, Tom Smith, Norman Ortiz, Councilman Neil, Tina Bradbury, Diane Laird, Cassie Semyon (WBOC), Steve Ottinger, Councilman Taylor, Judy Diogo, Dina Vendetti

STAFF: Tina Bradbury, Diane Laird

Meeting opened 12:02

Welcome and Introductions.

Agenda: Motion by Fred Neil, seconded by Chris Raubaucher; motion approved unanimously. **Meeting**

Minutes (February 2021 meeting): Motion by Fred Neil, seconded by Chris Raubaucher; motion approved unanimously.

Diane Offered brief overview of the parking solution development process to date: Since November 2020, parking solution has been discussed, following two years ago when city put out an RFP for a parking garage and it was found to be premature and costly. The city then asked the DDP to take on development of a comprehensive parking solution for downtown Dover.

We are working to address perception and reality for parking issues; we need to be ready for downtown Dover redevelopment. Development of solution is still underway; we want to ensure everyone is part of the process. We meet monthly to hear concerns, possibilities and ideas. Professional parking director of Old Pasadena, Steve Mulheim, presented to the committee at the last meeting and the concept of the Old Pasadena Parking Benefit District (PBD) is one that we believe we can model successfully in Dover. A PBD would allow revenue to go back into downtown revitalization. Paid and free parking approach and possibly amenities such as electric car charging stations, addressing safety, landscaping and tree removal, in addition to funds that must go to infrastructure and parking management. Survey is still live, and the analysis of the first "traunch" will be presented today by Jed. Final findings of survey to be presented in April. Seeking consensus from community, no plan has been settled on yet, we are still in information-gathering process.

Todd and committee have heard many bits of discussion, concern, and the committee has tried to address

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all these concerns. Survey has been conducted as a result of responding to concerns that were expressed, to ensure everyone had a chance to weigh in. Respondents are combination of those who live, work, play and reside in Dover. Presentation is based on initial 103 survey respondents. (Reference attached presentation.)

Presentation: Began with background “how we got here.” Survey will remain open until March 31, and presentation will be updated to include most recent responses. Survey was twenty questions, two of which were contact info. Broad constituency responded.

2. Who responded? 74% combined those that of shop, dine, spend special events.
3. How do people generally get too downtown? 78% driving alone or with others. No taxi’s/Ubbers.
4. How often park in downtown Dover. 64% at least a few times a week, have knowledge of parking downtown.
5. 57% found parking to be less convenient than other areas, but not bad for a downtown” or “inconvenient and difficult to find parking.”
6. How far walk to destination? 79 % willing to walk 1-2 blocks.
7. Most people park on Loockerman/side Streets; S. Governors is least used location.
8. How long do you generally stay? 69 % two hours or less, most 1-2 hours.
9. Safety concerns are the largest parking challenge 23%; inadequate signage and information a close second at 21%; third concern “not enough parking.” Not surprising, validates what was anticipated.
10. From business/property owner with regard to constituents: Safety and not enough parking were highest on the list.
11. Safety concerns: panhandling most often cited and people “cause me to be afraid” nearby; poor lighting was their most frequent concern.

Councilman Neil indicated that the change of the LED lighting is underway, and he anticipates it to be competed by end of March. Chris Raubaucher vouched for the lighting being changed out.

12. Business owners indicated same responses as Question 11.
13. If revenue were to be invested back into downtown, Safety/Police Patrol 29%. Lighting, parking, garage, and rejuvenation of downtown buildings were also commonly mentioned.
14. 58 % of respondents indicated that \$1 to \$1.50 per hour “would not affect their visits” (44%) and were “not sure” (14%) while 7% said it would prevent them from coming downtown. Parking revenue would help fund enforcement to ensure turnover and people can find a space when they want to park. Currently, some spaces are taken up for full day.
15. What would improve parking in downtown? First were “improved pedestrian pathways,” second response was “more off-street parking,” SMART technology” and an “off-street parking garage” were the third highest response.

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16. People want to be guaranteed to find a parking spot by most. Cost was second influencer. Ease of paying for parking was lowest rank. Off street parking garage was also a higher influencer.

17. Desire for better management: Overwhelming response of 59% believe that downtown Dover parking needs better management.

18. and 19. Were contact information.

20. open-ended final thoughts: Concerns about panhandlers, need for parking plan; split between new parking garage and NO parking garage, change feel of downtown by making it more pedestrian friendly.

Reinvesting parking revenue, as Old Pasadena has done, could help to address these concerns. This is unique in that most parking revenues go back into the city's general fund and do not directly go into downtown improvement or maintenance.

John Tinsley asked what would make downtown pedestrian friendly? Enhancing streetscape, benches, adding lighting, alley space that connect parking to Loockerman or other final destination. Committee members would help to determine where parking improvement district funds would be directed and how to make the best use of it. Minor Street Alley has potential for a beautiful walkway with gallery lighting, cobblestone, to connect parking areas to shopping and one street to the next. Removal of trees and addition of artwork are additional examples.

Additional questions discussed at previous parking meetings: Implementation of plan – a phased approach? One phase would be Loockerman from Queen to Legislative Ave. 116 spaces; Phase 2 could be adding S. Governors, S. Bradford, State Street and Kings Hwy, total 263 spaces. There does not appear to be a strong benefit to phase the approach. Development will create need to add parking and make it more efficient.

Todd opened the floor for comments, questions, concerns:

Judy provided input: The Chamber of Commerce dispersed the parking survey and Todd expressed much gratitude. Judy believes we are headed in the right direction and also wants to ensure, as the committee does, that people have opportunity to provide input. Todd is thrilled for the outcome of so many responses to date. Jed reminded that additional responses will be included in the final survey presentation in April. All input is still encouraged. Survey will remain open until March 31. After final survey presentation, we will hold public meetings, present to the press, and continue to seek input and do what the public wishes us to do, which is find a good solution to parking.

Deb Grinstead: What is the end game here, and do we have a date in mind to complete this process? Todd responded that this is a big deal, a big change over the last 30+ years. We wish to ensure transparency. Next step I to present a solution, which may necessitate further discussions and tweak, as necessary.

Colonial will go out for bid for the infrastructure. And we want to ensure that implementation is timed appropriately and not launch while COVID is still a concern. Hope COVID concerns are passed by fall, new businesses opening now through fall, possibly by early 2022 to launch the new solution. Jed is targeting implementation and launch fully fleshed out parking solution by first of 2022.

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Councilman Neil suggested that, because when people come to event and things fill up, it would be logical to launch the entire extent of parking at once, and not phase it in. We must consider growth and development of downtown in the near future.

Our priority is always successful merchants. Some strategies do not seem logical. DDP, the entire parking committee, and Colonial are fully invested that people feel safe, find convenient parking, etc., to ensure shoppers and successful small businesses.

Deb Grinstead noted flux in number of cadets. Some have been hired to full time police academy. Nuisance/safety concerns must continue to be addressed. Todd indicated that the cadet program is valuable, but that the cadets are young, qualified, and always seeking full time jobs, often as police officers.

Community policing is a high priority for the city, for the police department, and the DDP. Councilman Neil detailed the city council's decisions to support additional community policing, they have supported the second local police academy, police force is expanding. Councilman Taylor reinforced that community policing is absolutely a priority. New funds are coming in. Dave Hugg was recognized for ensuring that funds are available. Be optimistic, and keep in mind that it will take time.

Deb indicated that business has grown in the first year she is been in business downtown. She is frustrated to have to wait to hire, etc. Councilman Taylor, a retired Dover police officer, indicated that the police dept cannot require people to be off the street if they are not acting illegally.

Codi commented that over the past week, she saw very positive Facebook posts to reach out to potential new officers/cadets from the community on a community platform.

Next steps: Todd wrapped up by inviting everyone to the April 21 meeting to hear the final survey presentation and see a draft of the comprehensive parking plan.

Meeting adjournment: Chris Raubaucher moved; Councilman Neil seconded; unanimous approval to adjourn.

Adjournment 1:10 p.m.: Motion duly made and unanimously approved.

DJL

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