

Parking Meeting



MINUTES

November 18, 2020

Noon

Attendees:

Conference call: Councilman Neil, Dave Hugg, Steve Ottinger, Tom Smith, Robert Hurlock, John Tinsley, Chris Raubaucher, Hassan, Diana Welch, Emily

On Site At Cendel: Cpl. Piazza, Sam Chick, Chris Hankins, Norm Ortiz, Cody Canassas and partner, Jed Hatfield, Todd Stonesifer, Tina Bradbury, Diane Laird

Meeting opened: 12:05

Parking permits are in for the 2021 year in-hand. Tina will reach out to those that purchased last year. Posting will then be made for remaining. Hang tag for vehicle. \$240 per year. Entitled to park in several lots. Metered lots are an alternative. Permit does not qualify for street parking. Start in December.

Parking process to date: Five responses to RFI, follow up discussions, ultimately committee recommended vendor Colonial Parking, Inc. to the Board. Requested from Dover City Council and received permission to include City real estate, then requested City of Dover changes to code to enforce parking and place equipment on the city roads. Green light now to seek a comprehensive parking solution.

Jed Hatfield, President of Colonial Parking Inc. presented Downtown Dover Parking Program overview. Available by power point after today's meeting. Bullet points in MOU spell out details of process to develop the solution to manage parking, within handout (attached) provided today.

Key points for today's discussion:

- Name the program and develop a tagline
 - Dover Parking Solutions
 - Park Dover
 - Just Park Dover
 - Park Smart Dover or Park Smart (very short, brief, quick) *Colonial will check if used elsewhere.*
 - Park and Explore, possibly part of tagline

- Stakeholders in working group to include representatives of:
 - Residents
 - Property owners

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- Merchants
 - City council and mayor
 - City staff (planner)
 - State of DE Facilities Manager (Don Girardi)
 - State of DE DelDOT
 - DDP staff
 - Colonial Parking
- Outcome of working group meetings will be provided at monthly Parking Committee meetings, which will generally take place on third Wed. of the month at noon.
 - Public meetings at key points to invite public in broader opportunity for input.
 - Three public meetings were recommended by this committee. Third would be the solution, with last opportunity to fine tune.
 - Be prepared for people's comments regarding payment. Competitive fees, friendly system.
 - Parking inventory (on-street, off-street, identifying correct inventory) to establish exactly where parking will be included. Some possibilities:

Councilman Neil indicated that the city expended funds for parking study previously, which has resulted in the current development of a comprehensive plan. Transparency is essential. Participation is invited and encouraged from all.

See handout: "Why proceeding with the Downtown Dover Parking Program...is a good idea"

- What we have now is not working.
- Investors and business owners consistently note parking as a reason why they do not want to invest in Dover now.

Map in downtown Dover, outline in red is footprint of downtown Dover development district, and downtown Dover (I.e., Park Smart Dover) parking program. Inventory has been established on this map.

Key elements:

- Boundaries: State/American Ave. is end of the district. Good place to end?
- Other notations on plan as to potential paid parking, red is projected to be more current, blue/black as potentially a later time.
- Streetscape work may alter number of parking spaces.
- Take Lockerman to Queen, nothing on New, Queen.
- Meters on Governors, S. Bradford, State, Kings Hwy.
- Colonial could work with private property owners use of their lots and make available to the public. (The old Wells Fargo lot is now a private parking lot, with security. Possible opportunity, as an example.)

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- There has been discussion about Loockerman Street as a one-way street. Comments: Engineer has studied overlay as one-way, with angled spots, maybe gain five spots. Conversations with city and DelDOT suggest a very long process.
- Focus of off-street would be Loockerman Way, Minor Street, S. Bradford, other?
- Looking broader, Loockerman Street, the transit center, the state complex could be included possibly at a later time, adding to parking inventory and management.
- Halpern has indicated interest in parking.

There will be a need for more parking over time, and the parking problem will need to be

- Parking fees
 - Comment made that downtown Dover is not like Annapolis.
 - There is a group of peer cities to gauge parking fees for Dover.
 - Previous consideration was given to pricing. See peer cities chart for similar sized towns. Lancaster, Media, west Chester, Harrisburg, Trenton, and others are included, parking study identified within previous parking range from \$1 per hour on street to \$2 in Annapolis, and garage/surface parking prices was also comp'd.
 - Recommendations
 - \$.25 for 15-minutes and \$1 per hour
 - Off street Transient: \$1 half hour and \$5 per day max., or monthly \$30 a Month (I.e., \$1 a day)
 - People would use an online system with CPI to purchase monthly parking.
 - Hours of operation still need to be determined.
 - Can merchants validate for customers?
 - Towing on private lots will likely increase – by private owners, not as a result of DDP.
 - CDPD can provide escorts for employees and customers.
 - Rates on the meters can be adjusted at will.
- Support was expressed by longtime merchant, Tom Smith.
- Not a one-size fits-all, rates can be adjusted at will.
- Parking perception, crime perception both problems. These are problems of today, and this is the start of the development of the solution. Parking lot will need to be safer.
- Concern expressed that customers will not park in the S. Governors Ave. lot due to concerns for safety.

Public comments:

Sam Chick – No problem with making changes to parking lots. On-street paid parking is a resounding “no.” Provided list of merchants and their responses to the paid on-street parking.

Councilman Neil: New lighting, new community policing and an erudite police chief are in place.

Todd Stonesifer: DDP exists for the success of the merchants and for strong economic development.

Crime and parking are two strongest reasons that people do not want to come downtown or invest in downtown. A third issue is for those that consider investing in downtown, which is gap in financial investment and end return.

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Everyone is invited to be part of the solution. The DDP exists, and Todd expressed his personal desire, that the goal is to see merchants be successful. The solution is better enforcement. With limited resources, enforcement is much more efficient with a smart system.

This will be an ongoing conversation.

Diana doesn't disagree with Sam and doesn't disagree with Todd. Perception of crime is biggest problem. Public safety is biggest concern.

Todd, as previous president of D3, indicated that during off hours brew fests, people will walk a mile. First two hours (or portion of time) on meters could be free. Todd asked the group to tell this committee what can make merchants more successful.

Cpl. Piazza cited areas that Habitat for Humanity is building new residents that will help move the 80% of tenant-occupied properties to far more owner-occupied homes. Pride/ownership = decrease in crime.

Smart lighting can be controlled electronically (dimmed, brighter, etc.) and is LED (brighter and more efficient.)

Enforcement must be increased on the street. Parking study found that there is sufficient parking, but it is lack of understanding. Jed indicated that space available but the reality of 20% excess (noted in study) is in the S. Governor's Ave. lot. In addition, the study did not offer recommendations. The parking study did not look at the future, but only the present. Additional shops will create parking need. Addressing safety concerns S. Governors Ave. lot will help the inventory.

There is opportunity to design this comprehensive parking solution. Hiring Colonial Parking Inc. is the selected vendor to provide professional facilitation of a parking management solution. This includes permits, meters, [electric charging stations], etc.,

Vision must be carried out, along with individual decisions, to consider long-term sustainability of downtown Dover.

Todd challenges merchants to answer the question: "What can we do to be successful in developing a workable solution [and one that yields merchant success]?" Come together next month with ideas.

Meeting adjourned: 1:45

DJL