

Parking Meeting



MINUTES

January 20, 2021

11 a.m. via Zoom

DRAFT

Attendees:

Conference call: Councilman Neil, Todd Stonesifer, Dave Hugg, Steve Ottinger, Tom Smith, Chris Raubaucher, Diana Welch, Sam Chick, Codi Canasa, Roman Battaglia, Steve Ottinger, Jed Hatfield, Chris Hankins, Tina Bradbury, Diane Laird

Meeting opened: 11:00 a.m. (Special timing due to presidential inauguration at noon.)

Todd expressed that he and his wife are residents, business owners, downtown property owners, and he is a DDP volunteer because he believes in downtown and is committed to see it return to be a thriving, walkable, and safe downtown. Potential investors express three major concerns: safety, parking, building stock (condition).

EV committee has reported on at least four food/beverage establishments that are planning to open in near term (estimated 2021), west side of S. Governor's Ave. (old Simon's) and artisan market planned for Bayard Hotel apts. Building. Highlights that a finite number of parking spaces will not always serve the business owners, employees and customers that currently exist. If Loockerman Way Plaza develops downtown will lose spaces to that development.

Comments expressed at last meeting have been heard, and several volunteers, staff and committee members have followed up with merchants for further discussions and shared additional articles that address how other communities have addressed parking concerns. Some of the articles highlighted the "Parking Benefit District" (PBD) concept, in which parking revenues from meters can be used to address downtown needs such as streetscapes, facades, safety, and others. In Old Pasadena, property values increased, and sales increased. Clearly this is not the right time to implement a plan due to COVID challenges, but we should have a plan in place.

Jed Hatfield (President of Colonial Parking) indicated the furtherance of the conversation since the November meeting. Analogies and structure of the Old Pasadena, CA (and others) parking management/resources were considered. Revenue generated stays within the PBD, and DDP selected Colonial Parking to manage a solution, and at this time, is focused on the management of the public process to develop the solution. A thoughtful, intentional part of the process has been for the DDP to seek and receive authority to direct the funds appropriately. Alleyways ("ivy-lined alleyways") can become pedestrian-friendly connectors from one area to another. Downtown Dover can position itself to be a wonderful downtown hub of businesses, merchants, and an overall good, positive downtown.

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Possibly include a free parking period. On-street, free is challenging because it creates an enforcement challenge, however, Old Pasadena used several off-street parking assets for free parking and call it "Park & Walk – 90 Minutes FREE." These are a couple blocks in proximity to main thoroughfare and these could similarly be contemplated in the S. Bradford lot. This would address the enforcement concern and provide the opportunity for free parking.

Business and property owner Chris Raubaucher indicated that his daughter lives in Old Pasadena, where the historic business district has been fully turned around. The business district was "derelict" and is now host to a diverse business mix and influx of young people. Chris did not realize that the PBD was one of the catalysts to this revitalization.

Todd indicated that the other article also expressed that this can be an opportunity to craft a solution that works for all, taking into consideration a combination of best practices. Todd expresses his desire and the desire of the committee to see everyone succeed.

Diane commented that it is unusual for parking funds to go to other than City general funds (and then dispersed broadly throughout a city) and it is forward-thinking of the City that in Dover the funds could go directly to address downtown needs. In addition, PBD's are often used in residential neighborhoods (vs. commercial districts), again unusual and forward-thinking.

Sam expressed that he is fine with the concept of paid parking as long as parking is free for at least an hour. It takes many things to revitalize a city. For every example of an example of success, there is a counter-example to the concerns of parking meters. See Somerville:

<https://www.mycentraljersey.com/story/money/business/main-street/2016/12/14/somerville-merchants-say-new-parking-rules-hurt-business/95421370/>

Todd: Technology based enforcement is the key. New technology allows enforcement. Collecting revenue is necessary to support the parking infrastructure. Turnover is the key to enforcement and people finding spaces to park.

Diana would like to see comps of a city of similar size, and similar median income. She agrees with Sam. How much revenue can you raise if fewer people visit downtown? There are other ways to raise revenue. Bonds. Fundraising, Federal grants, etc. I have 35 employees. How do they pay for their parking? This feels very permanent. Concerns that we are comparing apples to oranges. Pittsburg is a huge city. Current Pasadena median income is 134,000 with a much larger population pool in the surrounding areas." Her businesses are more active at night. Can there be a free at night option?

Tom Smith has dealt with the parking authority, studies, and issues for more than twenty years. They'd discuss components and obstacles along the way, similar to the way that concerns are being expressed now. What is happening now is consideration of a thoughtful process to develop a truly workable plan. All the components of the plan need to be enmeshed with each other to be successful. He understands the concerns for employees having to pay. He understands that the enforcement of parking, understanding it is paid parking, and believes the committee should continue this process to a outcome and not let challenges become obstacles that will hinder or stop these important discussions.

Can free parking for an hour still be enforced at meters? Old Pasadena began at \$1.00/hr. 30 years ago, is now \$1.25/hour. Some outskirts are \$.75. One way to motivate underutilized parking areas is making them free or less expensive and walkable. With regard to on-street paid spacing, average stay would be

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1.5 hour and patrons cannot park more than two hours, decreasing the revenue potential disproportionately. This is challenging for repayment of infrastructure. A more effective way to address parking is to phase a plan: meter Lookerman initially, and offer side streets at free, two-hour parking limit. This would be more effective in the overall system. Most practical is to be able to use off-street as the free parking option. Most desirable should drive greatest value, those that are walking distance should be less costly or free.

Codi addressed the idea of utilizing the alleyways. Concern is safety of employees and patrons. Lighting potential would help. Lighting implementation is near-term. These are not lights mounted onto the buildings to project out, but rather the streetlight design widens the spread of light, giving more light. Lookerman will be the first to receive the new lighting. Regarding free parking: side streets vs. prime Lookerman is a good idea because it will move people. Codi believes people will pay \$1 for convenience. Recommends that we ensure there are options to paying the meter (cash, bills, credit cards, app technology, etc. – use ALL the technology) to make it convenient. Then the process will be “less abrupt” Codi believes that people are willing to pay to support their local business.

Jed Hatfield represents Colonial Parking Inc., a professional parking company and personnel.

We want to be certain that merchants are part of the solution. The committee understands that not all stakeholders, including merchants, are in agreement with paid parking/meters right now. Nevertheless, if we can do this together, proactively come up with a plan, have control of the revenues, we will be in a better position.

We must have some revenue to do this, and meters (and other paid parking) provides the revenue: 1) to pay back infrastructure; 2) cover management costs; and 3) reinvest funds. Vested partners might choose to remove trees, showcase the architecture with additional lighting, address safety, other. Do we want to come up with a plan together now? Or do we want someone else to do that in time and perhaps not have input in the outcome? It will happen at some point when the need is big enough. Let's be progressive and address this when we are not in a panic.

Codi expressed, “I absolutely think that the free at night is vital.” Daytime is pick up an item, lunch, shop, etc., more quick visits. “Thinking of the demographic that would be out that late, they are inevitably going to supersede that. In fact, we WANT that!! We want people to enjoy our beautiful downtown evenings.” Codi expressed that she would never want to see 24 hour paid parking, or even “stupid late into the day.”

Demand for parking is less at night, thus after a certain hour there is no need to charge for parking. Parking revenue projections have taken into consideration free parking at night or for a good portion of sunset to daylight.

Sam – paid parking at night is a non-starter. Free after 5 p.m. would be best for residents. Bradford St. lot could be more efficient by moving permits to S. Governors lot. Sam has a business where competitors offer free parking and that is a great concern for him. Can we offer one hour, or even thirty minutes free?

Jed contemplated original plan for paid parking to not go into the evening. Newark used to be day metered and in time, evolved to use meters in the evening, so it could evolve to that in time in Dover, when/as parking needs require more turnover.

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Todd indicated that old Brunch 'n Lunch and Signature Stitches are preparing for new businesses; Mr. Lee's building at 108 W. Loockerman is under contract; intersection of W. Governors/Loockerman an empanada shop is planned. West side of pharmacy building at 204 W. Loockerman is slated to be an artisan market with many vendors under one "umbrella." All are planning grocer and/or food/beverage sales. Simon's property owned by Mountain Consulting will be redeveloped in time, which represents nearly a third of the block on the north side. This all amounts to a lot of development, and most likely in 2021.

Todd assured that all comments have been and will continue to be considered. Compromises and solutions are sought. Todd expressed appreciation for positive and negative input to date and encouraged a continued, fruitful conversation toward an excellent, unified outcome.

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