

PARKING ADVISORY PANEL MEETING

The PARKING ADVISORY PANEL (PAP) met on Tuesday, February 21, 2023, at 3:30 p.m. in City Space. It was the first in-person meeting since the declaration of the health emergency for covid.

The meeting was opened by the Chair, Joan Fenton. The meeting was opened with Danny Yoder, Jamelle Bouie, Mike Rodi, Michael Cusano, Kirby Hutto and Jake Mooney in attendance. City staff in attendance were Sgt Lee Gibson (CPD), Cpl Hoy (CPD), George Sandridge, Rick Siebert and Chris Engel.

The Panel approved the draft minutes from their last meeting on September 20, 2022, without any changes, by a unanimous vote.

Fenton asked Siebert to begin a parking enforcement discussion. He began with reference to the parking enforcement report for January 2023, previously distributed by email to the panel members. He clarified that the data for “parking pilot,” on the graph, referred to only parking tickets issued in the 150 parking spaces immediately surrounding the Downtown Mall that had been part of the original parking meter pilot area. He went on to explain that there had been issues with the accuracy of the Parkmobile paid parking data on the city’s parking enforcement app. This app is used by the CPD to identify parked cars that had not paid. As a result of glitches in the Parkmobile/Flowbird integration the CPD had to suspend enforcement of the W 2nd St Lot for much of December. The issue was currently resolved by the action of Parkmobile to suspend taking payments for this location and the city’s removal of all Parkmobile payment signage. He indicated the Flowbird pay stations were still fully operational and thus CPD had reinstated enforcement of the Lot in January as evidenced by the enforcement data. Siebert was asked what efforts were being made to resolve the “glitch” and when Parkmobile service could be restored. Siebert said he had seen emails that the issue was being worked by Parkmobile and Flowbird but that the parties had been aware of the issue for months and had not yet reached a resolution. He reminded the Panel that Parkmobile and Flowbird were separate private companies and that getting them to share proprietary IT data was problematic. He was asked if the city had explored terminating Parkmobile and substituting another mobile payment vendor. He indicated that there were a number of major mobile payment vendors and changing vendors was an option although any vendor would need to successfully integrate their paid parking database with Flowbird.

Sgt. Snow backed up the sequence of events described by Siebert. He emphasized the need to ensure people were not ticketed in error and CPD’s frustration over the issue. She went on to talk about the CPD parking enforcement staffing and that the ticket report that had been distributed only covered a limited area of the city. The CPD is, of course responsible for parking enforcement over the entire city including residential parking enforcement. Members of the Panel expressed their understanding of the need to enforce parking throughout the city but emphasized how important it was to businesses on the Mall that the 2 hour parking restrictions be obeyed. The Panel expressed their appreciation that Sgt. Snow and Cpl Hoy had taken their time to attend the meeting.

The meeting then moved to the agenda item 4. George Sandridge used a power point presentation to describe the curb side pick-up parking spaces created because of the health

emergency. His presentation included the results of a survey of businesses in the vicinity of the parking spaces. The businesses were overwhelmingly supportive of retaining the spaces. Mike Rodi brought up an issue of the specific language used on the space signs. He suggested that it may deter people from using the spaces to walk in to pick up food rather than have an order delivered to a parked car. He noted that with the end of the health emergency few restaurants had to staff top continue curbside delivery. There was a discussion of the language of the signage with a number of the members of the Panel and how confusing it might be to the general public. Janelle Bouie spoke specifically about the simplicity and visibility of the current signage. Ultimately the Panel did not recommend any changes to the current spaces.

Fenton asked Siebert to discuss the garage utilization graphs for January that had been distributed. Siebert said there had been little change in garage utilization over the past six months and Water St in particular was still only about half full.

Fenton then asked Siebert to provide an update of the garage repairs. Siebert indicated the Water St Garage repairs were in progress with one phase still to be completed. He said this last phase should not take more than a few weeks to complete and should be done by the end of March. He did say that this last phase would be the most disruptive to traffic in the garage because it involved shoring that would take spaces out of service on all 5 floors of the garage simultaneously but that the garage would still be able to accommodate all current customers based on the current utilization. Siebert went on to indicate the Market St Garage repairs would begin in the next few weeks and should be completed not later than the end of August. He said the repairs will be extensive and cost about \$400,000. He said all current customers will be able to be accommodated during the project because individual repair areas will be limited. The one exception will be the installation of a waterproof membrane on the entire roof. He said that this will be the most disruptive project but that all current customers will still be able to be accommodated given that the roof is current seldom used. Kirby Hutto said that the pavilion calendar was still being set but that he expected to have some events with very large crowds and asked that the pavilion schedule to taken into account during the repairs. Siebert assured him that John Copeland the Reef Parking General Manager would coordinate all the repairs with Hutto and pavilion events.

Fenton asked for public comment, but no members of the public were in attendance. She also asked for new business, but none was offered.

Before adjourning, it was decided that the next meeting would be on April 18th.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:25 PM.