

## **PARKING ADVISORY PANEL MEETING**

The PARKING ADVISORY PANEL (PAP) met on Tuesday, November 17, 2020, at 3:30 p.m. as a virtual Zoom meeting.

The meeting was opened by the Acting Chair Kirby Hutto. The following members were present: Jake Mooney, Jamelle Bouie, Danny Yoder, Joan Fenton, Michael Cusano, and Mike Rodi. City staff in attendance included Chris Engel and Jason Ness. Rick Siebert joined about 10 minutes late.

Mr. Hutto began the meeting by proposing the acceptance of the draft minutes from the last meeting. They were unanimously approved.

### **The Proposed 7<sup>th</sup> Street Garage**

The first topic on the agenda was an update on the new 7<sup>th</sup> St Garage. Mr. Siebert began with a brief description of the process previously briefed at the last meeting. He indicated there had been a discussion of the project at the last City Council CIP meeting. He then asked Mr. Mooney to bring up some questions he had sent by email since the last meeting. Mr. Mooney noted he was surprised at the Council's suggestion that the current zoning on the site could be easily changed if Council so desired. Mr. Engel then gave an overview of the Council CIP discussion touching in particular on the option of adding on to the garage after it was completed to add a residential component. He talked about the Council review of this option and its challenges as raised by staff based on budget, timing, zoning, reduction in the efficiency of the garage due to added substructure, cost of any future residential construction and disruption to the operation of the garage at the time of that construction. He indicated these issues were explored by the Council in discussion but ultimately there seemed to be little interest in changing the direction of the current plan. As result, he said the staff planning team for this project is continuing their efforts as previously described. Ms. Fenton added that based on her experience Council has the power to change the zoning on any parcel in the City based on their power to approve the current zoning code itself and they have done so for specific projects in the past. Mr. Engel expanded on the Council discussion and pointed out that the major impediments are cost and timing, in light of the City/County MOA, rather than the area zoning.

### **Parking Enforcement**

Mr. Siebert provided a summary of why parking enforcement is necessary (to ensure respect for timed space restrictions and thus force space turnover) and the perception that CPD parking enforcement is limited and unreliable based on all the public safety issues facing the Police on a daily basis. Mr. Yoder said he had read the draft RFP for contract enforcement services and had two questions. What is the advantage of outsourcing this service versus using city staff? Secondly, what are the impediments to reintroducing a parking meter program? Mr. Siebert responded to the first question and outlined the flexibility of hiring, training, supervising and terminating contract employees versus city employees. He also noted that based on these advantages almost all larger cities across the country used contract parking enforcement services. Ms. Fenton then provided a brief history of the parking meter pilot highlighting the timing of the rollout coincident with the murder of Heather Heyer and the ensuing economic turndown in the area of the Downtown Mall. She indicated that we are now in the midst of a similar downturn and she would not support the re-introduction of the meters. She then returned to the current parking enforcement by Police CSOs and the hope that contract enforcement officers could act more as downtown ambassadors

instead of simply enforcement officers. Mr. Hutto then returned to the issue of a complete lack of consistency in the current Police enforcement. Mr. Hutto suggested that he had heard that the enforcement contract would be self-funding. Mr. Siebert indicated that this was true in his personal experience and in talking to other municipalities across the country. This then kicked off a free flowing discussion involving Mr. Hutto, Mr. Yoder, Ms. Fenton and Mr. Rodi on the advantages of consistent and reliable enforcement of the parking restrictions downtown and the history and purpose of the parking meter pilot. Mr. Engel summed up the conversation describing the purpose of both parking enforcement and parking meters as forcing parking space turnover and thus more available on-street parking. Mr. Hutto then asked what currently was the greatest impediment to moving forward with the RFP? Mr. Engel replied with a brief history of the leadership turnover in the city and its impact on the issue. The discussion then branched out to West Main St as well as the downtown area. Mr. Yoder asked if the idea of a new public parking garage on West Main was tied to contract parking enforcement. Mr. Engel clarified that they are two different issues and are linked only by the need for more available parking in each area. Mr. Hutto then asked what the purpose of this discussion should be. Again, there was a larger discussion of the turbulence in city leadership and some discussion of the details of contract management for a parking enforcement contract. Ms. Fenton made a motion to move this issue forward. A motion was unanimously approved and Mr. Engel agreed to take steps within the executive to try to move forward on issuing an RFP.

#### Parking Action Plan

Mr. Siebert provided a short history of the development of the plan and actions taken over the last 5 years to implement it. He said this agenda item was added to get input on what needs to be added to a new 5 year plan for the city. Mr. Engel made it clear that this meeting was planned to plant the seed for a larger discussion during the next meeting. Mr. Hutto suggested it would be helpful if there were some documentation of reduced parking supply as a result of redevelopment. Mr. Siebert agreed to provide a white paper on the issue. There ensued a broader discussion of mobility and parking supply and the place of the proposed 7<sup>th</sup> St Garage within this dynamic.

Mr. Hutto then opened the floor for public comment. There was no comment. Mr. Hutto than asked if anyone had any new topics or business. None was offered.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:43 PM.

A complete audio and video copy of the meeting is at:  
<https://boxcast.tv/channel/arevwckqrofmm9t57myy>.