

**METUCHEN PARKING AUTHORITY**  
**NOVEMBER 17, 2014 MINUTES**

**PRESENT:**

Commissioners: Leonard Roseman, John DeFoe, Anthony Campisi, Sean Massey and Rick Dyas  
Borough Council Liaison: Jay Muldoon  
Chamber Liaison:  
Legal Counsel: James Graziano  
Executive Director: Thomas Crownover

The meeting commenced with a motion by Mr. Dyas to suspend the regular order of business to allow guests to address the commissioners. The motion was seconded by Mr. Massey and approved unanimously.

Mr. Roseman invited Mr. Eric Berger to discuss his concerns which had been laid out in his Email to the Authority on November 10<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Berger said he came to this meeting to urge on his views expressed in his Email. Mr. Roseman noted that the Parking Management Plan had been adopted by the Authority and presented to the Mayor and Council. Mr. Berger complained that the plan was micro rather than macro. He was concerned that Main Street was at a competitive disadvantage with Whole Foods where there would be free parking. Mr. Berger urged a free parking plan for Main Street with turnover enforced with a two hour limit. Mr. Berger thought that a dollar an hour meter rate would not cause people to respond in the desired manner. Paid parking, for Mr. Berger was a significant drag on demand for the services and goods available on Main Street. He further anticipated that commuters would abuse Main Street. Mr. Dyas observed that shop owners were parking in front of their own stores.

Mr. Massey stated that Nelson / Nygaard was brought in because of the high cost of free parking. Downtown parking close to Transit should not be free. He continued that it was like offering free pizza – demand would be impossible to satisfy. Adoption of the Management Plan was a proactive decision to make parking available.

Mr. Berger countered that Main Street merchants depended on auto parking for non-residents who chose not to walk or take public transportation. Comparing the relative advantage of a pizza shop or dry cleaner next to Whole Foods to those on Main Street, free parking, Mr. Berger stated, would pull demand away from Main Street. Mr. Roseman noted the free 10 minute grace period to which Mr. Berger complained had not been communicated to him in a timely fashion. Chairman Roseman sought Chamber of Commerce support of Authority efforts on parking availability. The importance of enforcement was emphasized.

Chamber of Commerce liaison, Mr. Richard Topping, looked for guidance on enforcement and signage. Mr. Roseman discussed valet parking and how it would impact restaurant demand. Subsidizing the valet fee by restaurants was possible. Parking in Manhattan for \$30 or in New Brunswick for \$5 was mentioned. The business community needs to make customers feel welcome and valet parking was one way to accomplish that. Comparisons with New Brunswick

and Princeton were made. Good value and good food will prompt restaurant demand. Mr. Roseman noted that the deck to be built will be available for Main Street customers. Mr. Massey said that you want to be sure that there is always parking available in Metuchen. Mr. DeFoe commented that the feeling of available parking can be found by having a space always available on each block. Achieving this with appropriate parking fees was central to the plan.

Mr. Roseman noted that Mr. Muldoon was working on a Downtown Manager concept to promote business development. He asked for cooperation and support from the business community to implement the plan. Mr. Roseman referred to a \$15 million increase in purchasing power from new residents in Pearl development. Pay by Cell was discussed. The initial rollout will involve long term meters and later on, Main Street meters. Mr. DeFoe noted convenience will cause people to accept the 45 cent transaction fee.

Mr. Nelson Li, managing the Farmers' Market, asked about the details of the interim parking plan. Mr. Roseman advised that the details were being worked out. The Authority will likely use space on Pearl Street at least for a time. The deck build out will take a year, perhaps less. Mr. Li voiced his concern for the market when it relocates to the Senior Building lot. The Chairman responded to a question of Mr. Berger's advising that the plan called for New Street to be dedicated to short term parking.

Improved signage and a parking map were noted as important priorities with pricing alternatives to be considered afterward. Mr. Roseman pointed out that free parking on Penn Avenue was one example of how change could benefit Main Street.

Mr. Dyas moved to return to the regular order of business, was seconded by Mr. Massey and approved unanimously.

#### **MINUTES:**

Mr. Dyas moved the minutes of the October 21st meeting, was seconded by Mr. Massey and approved unanimously.

#### **BILLS:**

Mr. Massey moved the bill list for approval, received a second from Mr. Dyas and was approved unanimously.

#### **FINANCIAL REPORTS (Subject to Audit):**

Mr. Crownover noted approximately \$103,000 in monthly revenue as a healthy figure keeping the Authority on its budget track.

**OCTOBER INCOME: \$103,803.34; YEAR TO DATE INCOME: \$1,030,697.43**

## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**

Mr. Crownover said that Pay By Cell had been slowed by complex contract terms and ParkMobile's retreat from 35 cents per transaction to 45 cents. The Director stated his opposition to Municipal funds subsidizing a for profit vendor like ParkMobile. Although New Brunswick does that and has a 35 cents transaction fee for its customers.

Our equipment status includes a new hoist and dump body on the mason dump truck that carries our salt spreader. A new pickup truck has been ordered and should be on line in February.

Beautification discussions led Mr. Crownover to suggest enhancing the appearance of meter housings and poles. This would complement the Victorian light fixtures. At about \$100 per unit the cost of powder coating and bases and sleeves could improve 50 meters on Main Street for \$5,000. Mr. Dyas and Mr. Massey spoke in favor of dressing up the street but felt this was not appropriate at this time. Mr. Graziano suggested a grant, service group or business help with such an effort. Mr. Muldoon asked about striping on Main Street. It was suggested that DPW had that responsibility.

Mr. DeFoe raised concern about sufficient funds on hand to pay commitments for Inn Place and other obligations and still pay the Borough Contribution of \$550,000 remaining for 2014. The financial reports do not indicate future obligations. Mr. Roseman said that Inn Place was to be paid for with funds coming in from the County. Mr. Dyas asked if we should be looking at 25% retained earnings and should not be stretching the finances of the Authority to pay the contribution. Mr. Roseman expressed his expectation that 2014 finances of the Authority will work out smoothly through the end of the year. If the money isn't there the bill will not be paid.

## **OLD BUSINESS:**

Mr. Massey discussed his spreadsheet organizing the Parking Management Plan Implementation log to track progress. April would give 3 months to handle signage, way finding and branding. Mr. Muldoon will lead this effort.

Mr. Defoe said that the parking map should show short term parking rather than encourage commuter parking.

Mr. Roseman is to meet with Mr. Ciesielka of Nexus in the coming week and will be working on the interim parking plan. He discussed a mail out to be sent with the 12/20/14 permits. Separate communications to residents and non-residents were discussed. Mr. Graziano cautioned about communicating as discussed without researching the issue. Developing a priority list for offering interim parking will be done. Mr. Massey emphasized the need for a firm plan from Nexus. Emails are available and on file with Mike Ciesielka who is able to send mass mailings.

Mr. Roseman discussed communication content with suggestions by Mr. Massey and Mr. DeFoe. Mr. Muldoon stated the absolute requirement of an interim plan before communicating with patrons. Mr. Massey argued that the responsibility for developing the plan was on Nexus. Mr. Roseman offered that it was a shared responsibility.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Staff hours were discussed. It was concluded that Mr. Crownover will expand his work schedule from 20 to 30 hours weekly for a 60 day period. The many extraordinary projects being undertaken by the Authority require this additional time and effort.

A bid form for snow removal was discussed. No snow – no charge. Public notice of this bid will be made. This contract is for the 2015 period from January 1 to April 15<sup>th</sup>. A motion to approve the bid with its specifications was made by Mr. Dyas, seconded by Mr. Massey and approved unanimously.

**REPORT OF COUNCIL LIASION**

Mr. Muldoon stated the need for Main Street enforcement to support interim parking. Mr. Roseman suggested that a police employee enforce rather than Authority employees but Mr. Muldoon felt that would not work.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Adjournment was moved by Mr. Dyas, seconded by Mr. Massey and approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Thomas Crownover