

METUCHEN PARKING AUTHORITY
JANUARY 28, 2014 MINUTES

PRESENT:

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

REORGANIZATION:

Mr. DeFoe proposed a slate of officers to be voted upon which included: Mr. Roseman as Chairman; Mr. DeFoe as Vice-chairman; Mr. Campisi as Secretary and Mr. Massey as Treasurer. This slate was moved by Mr. Dyas, seconded by Mr. Massey and approved unanimously.

Reorganization Resolutions 2014-1 through 2014-15 were moved by Mr. Dyas, seconded by Mr. Massey and approved unanimously.

GUESTS:

Tom Brown of Nelson / Nygaard was present to discuss the parking plan. Nexus was represented by Mr. Mike Ciesielka and Mr. Hector Hernandez.

Mr. Roseman discussed his analysis of public and private parking available to restaurants in Metuchen. 200 spaces are available to support these businesses. Enforcement could be improved. Because Main Street is empty in the morning, the evening parkers are likely restaurant patrons. Mr. Brown said these observations coincide with his findings. Mr. Roseman noted that Railroad North spaces are available for evening parkers.

Mike Ciesielka said that enforcement is key for any parking program. He would need to analyze Metuchen's parking to determine feasible time limits and suggested some period of free parking in the deck. At Glassboro they give 2 hours of free parking. The Metuchen Deck will be fully gated. Whatever is most acceptable to Metuchen is his goal. Commuter data will be evaluated to define limits. Mike said every downtown is looking for a shared model with commuter daytime parking turning into evening parking for downtown businesses.

Mr. Brown discussed capacity, demand management and best practices. He said the focus groups emphasized a lack of street parking at lunch hour. Proper pricing of space is important to providing adequate spaces at lunch or dinner. On street management is the place to begin planning. Almost all downtowns begin pricing too early, suggesting shifting hours of enforcement to begin later and to continue into the evening later. Proper asset pricing is recommended with an increase in rates to make the experience of coming to Metuchen as appealing as possible. Enforcement would be needed in the evening until 8:00 PM weekdays

and 10:00 PM on Friday and Saturday. Employees parking evenings on street take up customer spaces and could be encouraged to park off street with proper pricing.

Mr. Dyas cautioned commissioners on having an enforcement officer giving tickets during dinner hour. Having to feed the meter during dinner is undesirable. Mr. Graziano suggested pay by cell would enable diners to feed their meter without going outside.

Mr. Brown observed that revenue is secondary to ease of access and growth of downtown businesses. He discouraged focus upon revenue as a primary concern. Making the downtown more functional is the reason to raise rates. Mr. Roseman said that informing visitors of alternative parking locations with flyers to find free parking at the deck. Mr. Dyas noted the \$5.00 nightly charge in Red Bank is appealing for the convenience it provides. Mr. Roseman's review of street parking showed weak signage but sufficient parking space.

Mr. DeFoe asked Mike if hourly or daily rates would be used in the deck. Mike uses a variable rate structure. First 3 or 4 hour rate then 16 and 24 hour rates were given as examples. Mr. Roseman said the deck will provide controlled short term parking while also maintaining sufficient parking for commuters to support train frequency. This supports home resale values.

Mr. Brown found under utilization of residential streets could be improved. Providing residents with a deck permit may be a good solution. Pearl and Center could be used to develop an on street permit for town workers or in the deck as space allows. The New Street lot signage could show meter parking availability rather than the present permit signs. Mr. Brown noted train parking, Borough revenue and business parking for downtown as the mission of the Authority as identified by Mr. DeFoe. The Authority partnership with downtown businesses is essential to be viewed as helping their concerns. Boulder, Colorado encouraged town workers to use mass transit to free up parking. The goal is to have so many people coming to Metuchen that you can't afford to offer free parking. Davenport, Iowa was cited for charging for street parking which was extremely under-utilized. Mr. Brown invited input for items that may not have been addressed.

Mr. Ciesielka said that he had to know the Authority and the Borough's policies and plans in order to regulate parking in the deck. Mr. Campisi thought that business owners would be consoled that the new deck will not decrease parking for their customers. Interim parking during deck erection and apartment construction was discussed. Inventory, stacking, and resident / non-resident mix were items to consider in providing a plan by June, 2014. Valet parking was discussed which might allow 153 additional cars in the drive areas. Mike puts space numbers in the lanes with an attendant handing tickets. A phone number on the ticket is called on their return trip to make their car available. They would move the car to be available and pick up their key at an enclosure. The logistics of valet was questioned by Mr. Campisi. Mr. DeFoe noted 2nd phase would have zero spaces at Pearl. Construction workers would be parking off site. Deck construction will likely take 11 months with time reduction enabled by drive through drop off of precast sections. Mr. Massey confirmed from Mike that for new apartment residents that parking would be unbundled from their rent. Mike anticipated having fast gates on the deck and ease of exit with 150 commuters arriving with each train. Diversified payment strategies are helpful. Instruction by attendants and use of technology to provide information would be essential. Mike

noted NJ Transit's use of ticket technology "My Ticket" allows purchasing tickets online with under 3 hours to verify with a conductor. At Hamilton, Mike sells 2,000 dailies. Payment methods supporting goals of the Authority could be chosen. Metropark and Edison are full mid-week. Mike expects satisfying more people with a shared model.

MINUTES:

The minutes, of the December 17, 2013 meeting, including closed session as amended, were moved for approval by Mr. DeFoe, seconded by Mr. Dyas and approved unanimously.

BILLS:

Mr. Massey moved the Bill List for payment which was seconded by Mr. DeFoe and approved unanimously.

CORRESPONDENCE:

Correspondence items will be discussed at February meeting.

FINANCIAL REPORT:

Mr. Roseman asked the Director to discuss 2013 budget issues with Mr. Critelli.

December Income: \$102,991.68; Year to date Income: \$1,290,727.20.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

It was noted that in-house enforcement was not worth the effort given the new information from the municipal court. The Borough presently keeps most of the violation revenue.

OLD BUSINESS:

None.

NEW BUSINESS:

REPORT OF COUNCIL LIASION

DJOURNMENT:

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

Respectfully submitted,