

**ASHLAND DOWNTOWN PARKING MANAGEMENT & CIRCULATION AD HOC ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES
October 1, 2014**

CALL TO ORDER The meeting was called to order at 3:30 p.m. in Pioneer Hall, 73 Winburn Way
Regular members present: Pam Hammond, Michael Dawkins, Rich Kaplan, Dave Young, John Williams (left at 5:10), Emile Amarotico, Lisa Beam (left at 5:05), Marie Donovan (arrived at 3:45), and Liz Murphy
Regular members absent: Cynthia Rider, Craig Anderson, Joe Collonge, John Fields
Ex officio (non-voting) members present: Sandra Slattery, Bill Molnar, Rich Rosenthal (left at 5:00), Katharine Flanagan, Mike Faught, and Lee Tuneberg
Ex officio (non-voting) members absent: Mike Gardiner, and Dennis Slattery
City of Ashland Staff members present: Tami De Mille-Campos, Kristy Blackman, Maria Harris (left at 5:05) and Dave Kanner (arrived at 4:00)
Non members present: Don Anway (Neuman Hotel Group), Linda Fait (Diamond Parking), and Bob Hackett (OSF)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes of September 3, 2014

Approved by unanimous consent.

PUBLIC FORUM

Tony Bloom, 445 N. Laurel St.

He has lived in Ashland for 34 years. He rides his bike around town in the spring, summer & fall (not winter). It is very convenient because he has a post office box downtown so he often bikes downtown without having to find a place to park. He goes to Varsity theater, Shakespear and a lot of other places on his bike. But he is unable and unwilling to ride on Main Street downtown with 3 lanes of traffic and no dedicated bike lanes. It's not safe for bike riders. He would like to see the committee strongly consider establishing a bike lane downtown. It may mean giving up a traffic lane but the time to do that is here. The Hwy 99 corridor plan that ODOT has come out with, they are envisioning a bike lane all the way from Garfield to the North end of Ashland & we already have a bike lane that comes up from the north end of Ashland almost to downtown as well as on the south end of town but there is no connectivity of the two. He would like to be able to ride through downtown without having to go around side streets.

Deb Cleland, 501 Pompadour

She has been the manager of Waterstone Spa for the past 8 years. She stated finding adequate parking for guests has always been a source of frustration. It's frustrating for them because they are in the business of providing a relaxing experience to the visitors of Ashland and even though they tell their guests to be sure & allow extra time to find parking, they often arrive to the spa late for their appointments. Often times they are upset because they had so much trouble finding a place to park. They have people that book ½ day and day long retreats at the spa and they have the need for long term parking which there is very little of in the downtown area. It is their opinion that they would be serving visitors of Ashland much better if they had additional parking in the downtown area, particularly 4 hours or longer.

Don Anway, General Manager of Neuman Hotel Group

He attended the last meeting and had some concerns about the original plan that was presented. Parking structures were not even really presented and someone at the last meeting had mentioned that this needs to be brought back up. Neuman Hotel Group purchased 2 new properties within the last year and a half and both of them are on the outskirts of Ashland. One of the things he heard going into this was people don't stay there because it's on the outskirts. He said he can tell you that is false. They haven't had any problem with people staying at these hotels. The issue is where they park when they come into Ashland. He said most recently Nike was in town and they wanted to stay downtown but all of the hotels were full so they fortunately put them up a Lithia Springs and in order for them to put them up there the requirement was for them to supply downtown parking. In order for them to accommodate this they had to sacrifice parking at Ashland Springs. He agrees that we need to educate, we need directional signage but that doesn't solve the supply issue. This is an ongoing issue that they hear from catering companies. They even lose weddings due to having to worry about where to park on a Saturday. He agrees they need to escalate parking.

He feels the real problem is just being ignored if they think they can ignore having parking garages built.

Williams asked Anway if it is his sense that guests staying on the outskirts of town would utilize a trolley or a shuttle bus. Anway answered he would love to say that is going to fix the problem but guests like the flexibility of having their own transportation. The average age of our visitor population is 65 plus. It's not people that don't mind waiting for 30 minutes to get to the other side of town. He said another thing to keep in mind is that Ashland Hills is just starting. They just opened 14 new rooms 2 weeks ago, they're opening another 18 rooms next week and by next Spring another 50 rooms. They have been shocked by the occupancy. They added 12 new rooms at Lithia Springs and they were at 90% occupancy there. They went from 50 to 75% occupancy at Ashland Hills in September, with the new rooms. He stated there is demand for tourism, which that's what the next 5 years shows, but if we don't get this fixed this won't be a top tourist destination.

Vince Allen, 126 S. Pioneer

He has concerns about the intersection at Pioneer/Hargadine/Fork, especially considering the theater being there. Chair Young informed him that this was actually a matter for the Transportation Commission and invited him to share his concerns with that commission.

PROGRESS REPORT

OSF Patrol Survey

- OSF patrons do not have a problem finding places to park
- Respondents prioritize parking convenience over cost
- Wayfinding and informational resources need improvement
- Bicycle infrastructure improvements will have little effect on current OSF patrons

Slattery stated she read all of the patron comments and there were a number of people who indicated they thought a parking structure was important and needed. She said as we know with surveys, sometimes it depends on how the questions are asked and there wasn't a question that asked if they thought more parking was needed so she felt like there could have been different answers had that question been asked. Souza said she thinks at that point they were more concerned with seeing how their patterns were less concerned with adding to the supply.

Anway spoke up and Chair Young responded that they needed to move on.

Evening Monitoring Session

- More of a distribution problem than a supply problem
- Employees park in the Railroad District during the day
- Downtown core fully occupied through afternoon and evening
- Loading zones not frequently used

Slattery mentioned she disagrees with the statement that Ashland has more of a distribution problem than a supply problem. She questioned if it is a supply problem if you are just relocating cars to other parts of town. Souza said their interpretation is that 85% occupancy level is ideal. Slattery stated that maybe she is the only one observing this. Chair Young said the committee has already vetted this issue and then directed the consultants towards the "low hanging fruit" in phase 1 and then evaluating the success, moving onto phase 2 if necessary. Given that, he doesn't feel it's necessary to re-litigate that during this meeting because of the limited time. Slattery asked if everyone agrees with that, shouldn't there still be a statement that would say at some point parking supply should be looked at? Parker answered that is in phase 3 of the plan. Part of this ends up being a matter of what's the extent of the service do you want to provide, how far should people have to walk etc. Their observation is when you look at the downtown study area that it is a distribution problem, there is capacity but based on behavior patterns people park as close to their destination as possible. The direction they've been getting from the committee is, focus on solutions that may not even require policy changes before you make huge investments in more structure parking. He added he doesn't think the committee has ever said any of this is off the table. The direction they seem to be leaning towards is a phased approach.

Kaplan stated he thinks the committee agrees the supply strategy is in phase 3 but he doesn't know that it prevents the possibility of studying supply under phase 2. The actual building of the infrastructure he thinks definitely belongs in phase 3 due to the high cost of doing so. Faught said one of the things he thought about is even if increasing

supply is included in phase 3 the group still may want to discuss potential locations as those may not be available in the future. He doesn't think this goes away, phase 3 could still be out there but the group could still strategize about this which is the request he is hearing from some people.

BICYCLE LANE

- The Scope of Work originally stated "evaluate alternatives generated during the TSP"
- The TSP prioritizes improvements, and this project cannot legally supersede that document
- A major focus of the project was to distill perceptions of current facilities and opinions of improvements
- First survey asked about perceptions of walking and biking in downtown
- Second survey asked about various bicycle improvements including bikeshare, additional bike parking, incentive programs, bike facilities on E. Main
- CPW took that data and incorporated it into the plan
- Neither residents nor visitors said pedestrian safety was a major issue
- Recommending:
 - Increase in bicycle parking, an increase in bicycle wayfinding signs, and developing a bicycle map with routes and amenities
 - Working with RVTD to encourage employees to walk/bike/take transit
 - Bicycle facility on E. Main Street

CPW would like to hear if the committee would like to continue to have a discussion regarding bicycle facilities on East Main. If so, then they would propose that the committee spend the November or December meeting talking about the configuration of that and what they would like to have included in this plan. Williams said he would like to at least have a discussion about it. Dawkins said he definitely feels they need to have that discussion because as was pointed out there are very few that are comfortable riding their bicycle through downtown. He added there are sharrows in Medford, along Central and he doesn't see anyone riding along there. Chair Young asked CPW if they are looking for more than that or if that is sufficient. Parker answered he thinks this is sufficient. Hammond added she would like to know ahead of time what the changes mean to parking (i.e. how many spots will be lost etc.) because she doesn't want that to happen. She also would like to know how it would affect deliveries. Dawkins stated we've often looked at the physical makings of one but he thinks there may be other ways of looking at biking downtown without changing what is there. He thinks that would be part of the discussion. Chair Young pointed out that when the maps were distributed to the committee in April of this year those were intended to plant the seed and get everyone thinking about the possibilities. Parker said they would like to format a productive and efficient discussion regarding this. He would like to talk to Dawkins about some of his ideas that aren't included in the original Transportation System Plan (TSP) & maybe try to incorporate those ideas. Anyone with ideas may feel free to email those to Tami De Mille-Campos.

PARKING AND CIRCULATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

Zone/Permit system

- Evidence based strategy
 - Feedback from committee is no discussion of satellite lots/metered parking at this point
 - A zone/permit system is the most aggressive strategy before implementing metered parking and in CPW's eyes addresses many project concerns
 - Visitors say 4 hours is the amount of time they need to visit downtown
 - 4 hour parking was busiest in evening monitoring
- Balances the needs of visitors, residents and employees:
 - Visitors can park from 2 PM on without moving vehicle when visiting Ashland
 - Doesn't prohibit residents from using street space near their home
 - Acknowledges current employee behavior of parking in RR District and subsequently works to control it

Parker stated they are asking the committee to look at this as one part of the plan. He thinks the details of the plan should be somewhat flexible & it may mean that adjustments need to be made shortly after they're implemented. He mentioned that in respect to enforcement of time limited spaces they did have a conversation with Fait (Diamond Parking) and Tuneberg. They talked about some of the administrative issues related to some of the proposals. Fait said as far as the area around the co-op that is out of their area of enforcement. Donovan wonders if the parking that we already have downtown (structure, open lots etc.) can be used for paid employee only parking. She thinks that might help to free up some of the parking along the side streets. She feels one of the issues is that employees go

around the loop trying to find parking and when the structure and lots are full they are parking on the side streets. She asked what if there were designated employee parking areas. She also mentioned that she is worried that pushing the employees into the residential areas undoes the work that planning has done during the development stages.

Williams asked if there was one set spot, for instance the Lithia/Pioneer parking lot, if that would be central enough (from say the Library and Bards Inn) that employees would use it. Donovan answered they do that currently. Parker said when we think about this the issue is how to manage employee parking without creating a mess. He doesn't think you want to be punitive necessarily because it isn't in line with the guiding principles which states to provide access to everybody, including employees. Kaplan asked for a more detailed map that shows current parking spaces versus proposed.

Hammond pointed out she doesn't think they're capable of determining the details of the permit system. Young added that the number of cars isn't going to drastically change with this. They are just trying to identify the high turnover areas which are important for the downtown businesses. Hammond asked if the increased revenue from the parking fines can be put aside for future infrastructure improvements she would like to see this put towards solving the problem. Faught replied part of what they are doing is seeing where they are going conceptually & then staff would see how to make that work. They would need to make changes to Diamond Parking's contract which would have a cost associated with it and then they would take a look at revenue versus expenses.

Kaplan stated he has concerns regarding what staff's role is vis-à-vis committee. Faught answered he does not want to go to Council without having gone over those things first. Young responded that conceptually that's enough for the TSP. The difference is when it comes to implementation time that is when the process begins for the specific details. He sees this as a two prong process. He doesn't think they need to work out all of the details in order for Council to approve this being folded into the TSP. Parker explained there is a balance between those things and he agrees with both sides. He said for their part he doesn't think their scope includes getting into all of the details but Hammond does bring up some really good questions. He answered that what they're proposing in terms of fines and fees isn't intended to generate enough money to go into a fund that will pay for parking structures. The purpose is to strategically manage parking. He also added that it's a big undertaking and that's part of the reason they think the City ought to be thinking about these other approaches before investing millions of dollars into structured parking.

Fait mentioned that in other cities in the residential areas (such as between Lithia Way and A Street, then Fifth down to Oak) you have one side of the street strictly for residential permits and the other side would be the timed parking or downtown employee parking permits. The same thing could be done on Hargadine and S. Pioneer /Fork. It gives the residents their own side of the street to park on. Hammond stated she thinks they need to know how many residents there are, how many use on street parking etc.

Flanagan responded to an earlier comment. She wanted to remind the committee that we could see an influx in supply due to the convention center re-opening in June of 2015. Anway added that we aren't even thinking about our existing structure. He asked the committee to think about the Armory. The Armory is handicapped because there is no parking. The Oregon Psychiatric Association just held its annual fall conference at the Armory. They are so excited about Ashland Hills because they have been holding their conference at the Armory for the past 6 years and there is no parking. He added the idea that moving cars a few streets over is going to fix it is ludicrous. He doesn't think the plan fixes where we are at as a community. Faught remarked he appreciates that feedback and that is really what the committee is about. He is interested in hearing what the rest of the committee has to say about that. He said he saw a lot of heads shaking like they agree. Hammond and Donovan both voiced their agreement with Anway's concerns. Dawkins said it is very obvious that we need more parking but the question is who is going to pay for it. He added when Anway was talking about the Armory it made him think about possible partnerships such as the Church parking lot near the Armory. Young said Anway's points are well taken. He stated things are changing on the planet; demographically people are getting healthier/more active, multi-modal transportation is higher and people are less inclined to own more than 1 vehicle. The committee is looking at a 20 year plan and it doesn't say they won't look at expanding parking structures. He said he is a little surprised that they are in the position of defending what was already agreed to in terms of looking at the non costly solutions to better utilize parking. Donovan said she wants to be clear that she wasn't recommending a parking structure. She was thinking more in terms of looking for

areas that could accommodate parking right now; such as public-private partnerships. Anway added that the details of how things are going to be executed, is where things are falling apart.

Williams commented on the zone/permit system. He appreciates CPW trying to come up with a good solution but he is hesitant on whether it would achieve much of an impact as proposed. One of the big issues he sees is where do we have the employees park. They could park in a different area that is still convenient enough that they'll use it. If that issue can be addressed then that frees up a lot of parking but he wonders if there are enough examples from other cities that have done this to show that it would address that problem. Parker answered yes. He backed up a little and said he feels they are getting a bit of mixed messages from the committee & he went onto say that he is invested in this to the extent that he wants to see the City get to a resolution. He's hoping the committee doesn't get lost in the details. He said there has been some really compelling comments along the lines of not having the map right. If they can get further direction on this then they can come back with data on the number of current and proposed spaces for each category. He feels they have proposed something that needs some refinement but has the potential to address this at least in part. Hackett replied he commends that. He stated this isn't just moving people around but it is moving people around based on intelligence and by constituency. He added to Young's point this is the first phase, this is what can be done with what's currently on the ground. The map is responding to data that the committee has received about what is preferred by visitors, what is needed by residents and what are some of the behavioral patterns that employee's exhibit. He added that this seems to take into account, to a large degree, what we heard back from patrons and businesses. Williams asked how much it would cost to implement a system like this (signage, labor etc.). Faught stated he doesn't want to speculate. Once he has the details then he can come up with the numbers. Williams said it really helps him to look at ideas by comparing costs.

Amarotico said he was thinking about Donovan's idea and has a different twist on it. Instead of making those parking structures pay, if employees could get a free employee parking pass to park in a specific area then that would get them off the streets and make street parking more accessible for the downtown businesses. Donovan said she was thinking more along the lines of the open parking lots that would be on the edges of downtown. Parker added that any land used for parking is land that's not used for other stuff that is really more attractive than parking and real estate is at a premium downtown. He also reiterated what Faught said earlier about it being a good idea to look at potential locations for future parking structures because once the private sector comes in and builds then it becomes economically infeasible to do anything.

Parking Fines

- Proposed management strategy
 - Increase all parking fines to \$22
 - Maintain punitive increases for repeat offenders
 - Move towards developing an online interface for paying parking tickets

Tuneberg said they looked around at other agencies our size and the average parking fine is about twenty five dollars. Parker pointed out they removed the fifty percent discount option after talking to Tuneberg and Fait. It would be impossible to implement efficiently unless there were some type of online payment system. So they decided to take that off the table and start with something simplistic. He added that it has been seven years since the fine was last increased.

Kaplan asked if there is a precedent for letting people know in advance what the parking fines are. He doesn't think it is a deterrent unless you know what the fine is. Parker replied those things change frequently so you might look at a stickered system of some sort because it would be too costly to replace the signage every time the fines change. Fait added there are a lot of cities that do post their fines on their website.

Kanner stated he and Tuneberg have been discussing the Cities low parking fine recently and would ask the committee to make and vote on a motion to recommend that the Council immediately address parking fines, rather than waiting for the parking management plan come to the Council. Due to having lost several members of the committee towards the end of the meeting and since this wasn't on the agenda the committee decided to add this to November's agenda. Young stated this could even go to the Transportation Commission. Faught added he would recommend that this committee vote on it first before doing that. The problem with involving the Transportation Commission is that they don't have all of this background data that the downtown committee has. CPW recommends

that they raise the fines independent of the plan. They agree the fine is too low.

Kaplan asked if it's possible to get information regarding what percentage of cars logged are issued citations. He added that might be useful for tracking progress after the fine is increased. Tuneberg said part of the problem they have is that the benefit of Diamond Parking is they gather a lot of information but when you're asking for information that is specific to something that they weren't collecting for then it's hard to provide numbers on it. There are also areas that they don't patrol at all so you'll have this hole on the residential side because they don't patrol those areas. If the committee wants them to patrol those areas then we'll need to generate revenue to cover the cost so the committee will need to decide on that. Parker responded that the guiding principles don't necessarily include revenue generation. Now, that would affect the budget but that's something they'll have to flush out.

MONITORING METRICS

Monitoring and Maintenance

- Survey
- Parking Utilization Monitoring
- Website Monitoring
- Permit Monitoring
- Parking Violation Monitoring

Survey

- Downtown residents, employees, visitors, business owners
- First conducted after first full summer season and as needed
- Evaluate changes in parking perception and behaviors
- Similar to Parking Perceptions Survey (administered in January)

Parking Utilization Monitoring

- Sample occupancy patterns
- Minimum of 3/year for first 5 years
- Variety of days/times
 - Peak and off-peak
 - Weekday and weekend
 - Daytime
 - Evening
- Goal: < 85% occupancy, high turnover

Other Monitoring

- Website
 - Number of hits; fluctuations of website access
- Permit
 - Number of permits sold to employees and residents;
- Parking Violations
 - Number of violations given; delinquent or unpaid violations

Parker mentioned he would recommend Faught and Molnar consider getting an intern to do more data points on it which would be helpful.

Next meeting is set for November 5th, 2014.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 5:30 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Tami De Mille-Campos, Administrative Assistant