

## **AUTOMOBILE PARKING COMMISSION MINUTES**

**January 8th, 2009**

**Call to Order:** Chairperson Haynes called the meeting to order at 8:00 am.

### **Attendance:**

**Members Present:** Lisa Haynes (Chairperson), Commissioner Lumpkins, Monica Sekulich, David Leonard, John Tully, Gerald Schildroth and Dwayne Moore.

**Members Absent:** None.

**City Staff Present:** Pam Ritsema

**Visitors Present:** Jim Harger (Grand Rapids Press), Kevin Wisselink (ITP), Mike Ellis (Ellis Parking), Dave Czurak (Grand Rapids Business Journal), Jason Hutton (Fox 17), Smita Kalokhe (Fox 17), Christine Helms Maletic (East Fulton Business Area), and Akeram Suleiman (Creston High School Student)

Chairperson Haynes added agenda item Ib. to the agenda

### **I. Review and Approval of December 11, 2008 Minutes:**

**Mr. Schildroth moved for the approval of the Minutes of December 11, 2008 and Chairman Lumpkins supported. Motion passed unanimously.**

### **Ib. Update-Monroe place parking lot purchase:**

Director Ritsema reported that Greg Gilmore exercised his right to purchase the property at Monroe Place for \$1.9 million. The development agreement calls for completion within three years with an additional investment of \$5 million.

### **II. Reappointment of Two Parking Commissioners:**

Director Ritsema reported that Chairperson Haynes and David Leonard were both reappointed to three year terms on the parking commission. David Kammeraad chose not to accept an additional appointment. Mayor Heartwell is asking for Mike Ellis to be reappointed to the Parking Commission.

### **III. Review 60 Minutes Free Parking Program:**

Director Ritsema reported the 60 minutes free parking or \$2-off event parking was made available on the City's website and also from local merchants. Slightly fewer coupons were redeemed this year compared to 2007, but they generated more revenue for the City.

In 2007 the coupons generated \$3,000 of additional revenue. In 2008, the coupons generated a revenue of \$3,700. Monroe Center was the most frequently used ramp for the coupon program in 2008. In 2007 the Ottawa/Fulton ramp had been the most popular. About 19% of the coupons used had no additional charge associated with it; that number is consistent from year to year.

Mr. Leonard asked if the coupons were available for use on December 31<sup>st</sup>. Were the coupons usable for the New Years celebration?

Director Ritsema agreed that they were able to be used on New Year's Eve and she also reported a 50% increase in parking ramp usage on New Years from 2007 to 2008. Several of the ramps were able to reuse their spaces three times on that day; once for 9-5 business hours, once for the Griffins' game, and finally for the New Years Eve celebration. Ferris State University sponsored three Dash busses to be used for transport on New Years Eve as well.

Mr. Moore added that the YMCA parking lot was open for free parking on New Years Eve and was half full as well.

Chairperson Haynes asked if the busses were sponsored.

Director Ritsema stated that Citadel Broadcasting, local restaurants, and Ferris State University sponsored the dash busses.

#### **IV. North Monroe Surface Parking Lot- 801 Ionia:**

Director Ritsema reported that the City and Irish Twins will most likely not hit the agreed upon deadlines and those deadlines have been extended to February 28, 2009 by the City Commission.

#### **V. Action Item- East Fulton Business Association Parking Lot – 12-14 Diamond**

Director Ritsema reported that there are three scenarios for this parking lot. The City has purchased a vacant lot and demolished the home. Attachment "A" needed an easement from the neighbor to the east. The lot would consist of a one-way entrance off from Diamond with an exit to Lilac Court. The offer for the easement has not yet been accepted or declined. When the City Design Team evaluated the lot, Planning detailed the need for a 10ft landscape barrier. There would not be sufficient width for the landscape barrier, a drive aisle, and the original parking layout. Attachment "B" would include a 10ft landscape barrier, with an in and out off from Diamond and a single row of parking, either 8 or 9 spaces. There might also be room for a small turn around space in exchange for the ninth space. The estimate for the eight space parking lot is \$100,000. The City of Grand Rapids will ask the Neighborhood Association to contribute 10% of the cost of construction.

Christine Helms Maletic agreed that the Neighborhood Association is aware of their financial commitment.

Commissions Lumpkins **Moved to open Attachment “B” for further discussion.**

Mr. Leonard asked if \$100,000 is considered expensive for 8 spaces and if that is a sufficient amount of parking for the community.

Ms. Helm Maletic explained that the Neighborhood Association would like more spaces but have been working for a parking lot for 5 years. Even though 8 spaces are not ideal, it is something greatly needed in the area.

Director Ritsema added that the cost is higher than the typical per-space price. The average cost is about \$7,500 per space. The original design was for 12 spaces but due to the difficulties in securing easements and the addition of landscape barriers has limited the amount of space available to work with. There is always the possibility of converting the 8 space lot into the 12 space lot if the easement becomes available.

Mr. Schildroth asked how much the conversion might cost if it became available.

Director Ritsema estimated the cost at \$20,000.

Mr. Leonard asked if a variance from the Planning Department has been considered.

Ms. Helm Maletic agreed that a variance would be a good solution.

Director Ritsema suggested getting Planning Director approval if possible.

Ms. Sekulich explained that at the time the Parking Commission made the recommendation to purchase the property the intention was to build the 12 space lot detailed in Schedule “A”.

Ms. Helm Maletic explained that the adjoining owner changed their mind about allowing the easement once the plan for the lot was already in the works.

Mr. Leonard asked if there would be any revenue generated by the spaces to offset the initial cost as well as the upkeep of the lot.

Director Ritsema explained that there would be no revenue generated by the spaces since they would not be metered. The thought is to have the spaces as 2 hour spaces.

Ms. Sekulich asked if the City operates any other one way in/out parking lots.

Director Ritsema explained that there is one lot on Fulton that is one way in/out, it is a larger lot however. The hope is to use the landscape area for snow storage during the winter to allow the 8-9 spaces year round use.

Mr. Leonard asked if there is any way the Commission can go forward with Schedule “B” while still keeping a mind towards the ideal lot presented in Schedule “A”.

Director Ritsema agree that they could continue that way.

Mr. Tully asked about the cost of the spaces compared with other City lots. Is there a standard the City uses to determine cost efficiency?

Director Ritsema agreed that it is a higher cost per space than the normal City lot but the size of the lot dictates the elevated cost. Certain costs are fixed regardless of the size of the lot being built.

Mr. Leonard expressed his desire to amend the motion on the table to allow flexibility to Parking to explore options that would result in the maximum number of spaces possible.

Mr. Leonard **Moved to recommend going forward with the proposal with the understanding that the goal is to maximize the number of spaces to better meet the needs of the local businesses while also maximizing the use of City funds efficiently. Motion supported by Commissioner Lumpkins. Motion carries unanimously.**

#### **VI. Quarterly Parking Supply and Demand Report:**

Director Ritsema reported that parking cards are down 124 cards from last quarter; down 303 from 2007. There seems to be a trimming back from several local businesses, eliminating 1 card or 2 from their account to cut back on costs. VIP and SAMs are both up from last quarter.

Ms. Sekulich asked for an update on the parking area at Fulton and Division.

Director Ritsema responded that the Gallery on Fulton has 260 parking spaces.

Mr. Tully asked for an update on the VIP cards.

Director Ritsema reported there are 75.

#### **VII. Other Business:**

Mr. Tully asked about the parking area by People’s Bank building. There have been recent break-ins to some of the vehicles in the area.

Director Ritsema responded that there is security that patrols the area and there are unmonitored cameras that also record/monitor the area.

Commissioner Lumpkins asked if the City is supplying the Police with information when there are reported incidences.

Director Ritsema reported that the police are informed when there are issues.

Mr. Tully suggested installing a sign that alerts that there are cameras in operation.

Commissioner Lumpkins suggested arranging a meeting with the neighbors and an officer from the police department.

Director Ritsema offered to arrange a meeting.

**VIII. Public Comment:** Chairperson Haynes asked if there were any public comments.

There were no public comments.

**IX Adjournment:**

**Chairperson Haynes adjourned the meeting of the Parking Commission at 8:45 am.**