

MONTCLAIR PARKING AUTHORITY

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING

September 23, 2009

Chairperson Matthews called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m. and read the Open Public Meetings Notice. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Present: Commissioner Church, Commissioner Jacobs, Commissioner Powell, Commissioner Silverman, Commissioner Typaldos, Chair Matthews, Executive Director Teubner, and Attorney Bakari Lee

Absent: Commissioner Storms

The minutes of both the July 22nd and September 4th meetings were adopted on a motion by Commissioner Powell, seconded by Commissioner Jacobs and unanimously approved by all present.

Executive Director's Report

Parking Updates

Executive Director John Teubner reported on the repairs to the Grove Street Lot; infra-red repairs and seal coating methods were used at a minimal cost with a very favorable result. Unfortunately this method is not a good option for the work that needs to be done on the Upper Montclair Lot because there is insufficient sub-base to heat up and use to repair the lot. In addition, bad drainage further complicated by a significant root system requires a complete repair involving removal of root system and all the meters and trees with milling and paving at a cost of approximately \$200,000. Because this lot is vital to the area two options have been devised in scheduling the repairs - one repair option is to divide the project into two phases allowing partial use of the lot during the repair of the other half. A second option would be to close the lot for two or three weeks and completely repair the whole lot at one time. It was decided that both options should be bid to determine if one method is significantly more economical. The businesses in the area are anxious to have the lot repaired but do not want the holiday season negatively impacted and would probably favor the partial closing option. The board was polled and it was decided to proceed with the solicitation of bids for this project.

The next lots scheduled for rehabilitation are the Fairfield and Bellevue/Lorraine lots. The work will be scheduled for 2010.

Permit Renewals

During his report on the status of permit renewals the Executive Director reminded everyone that all permits can now be renewed on-line which is working well and viewed as an excellent customer service. However, there is an associated fee to allow use of credit cards. Mr. Teubner will let the Commissioners know soon what the cost is. We will also explore using different merchant services for government agencies which could reduce the cost.

Overnight Parking

The proposed Township ordinance allowing overnight parking on many Township streets was not approved at the September 22nd Town Council meeting. Council liaison to the MPA, Mayor Fried, gave a brief report on the public hearing which resulted in the ordinance not being adopted. Councilor Lewis, the Township's liaison to the Parking Advisory Committee said that a further discussion will take place at the next PAC meeting at which time the issue will be revisited and the ordinance retooled. The issue is not completely off the drawing board but needs to be tweaked, some of the streets included are not good candidates for overnight parking and residents complained that they had not received the flyers notifying them of the hearing. Those attending the meeting were predominantly homeowners; renters were not well represented at the meeting but have been very vocal since the ordinance was defeated.

Mayor Fried also reported on a meeting he had attended with County Executive DiVincenzo, representatives of Congressman Pascrell and NJT representatives concerning the beginning of weekend train service. Limited weekend service will begin in November only from the Bay Street station, running every two hours; the train will not be a one seat ride to Penn Station NYC but will go to Hoboken where travelers can transfer to the PATH or passengers have another option to get off at the Broad Street station to continue to NYC. At this point no public announcement has been made but the Township Council will determine a public relations plan. After discussion the Commissioners agreed that offering free parking on weekends at the station for the rest of the year would be a good public relations move.

Holiday Parking

A thorough discussion followed regarding whether or not a period of free parking from December 14th to the 27th should be offered as has traditionally been the case in recent years. The loss of revenue to the Authority is typically \$50,000. Parking revenues are down this year and the loss would be slightly less, however MEDC no longer operates and would therefore not be undertaking a portion of the expense. The BID is adamant that they cannot survive without holiday parking and the other business associations also favor a period of free holiday parking although they agree that abuses do occur, i.e. employees and commuters taking advantage of the free parking, etc. The policy is regarded as important to good-will but always comes down to successful enforcement, without which the program is not beneficial to encouraging holiday shopping. Suggestions were made to solicit contributions from the various shopping districts to offset the cost of bags and stickers; using the stickers as a form of advertising, displaying names as sponsors, etc. The Commissioners discussed the perception of holiday parking as a good-will gesture to the businesses and shoppers and the good feelings this would elicit toward the MPA versus the reality which is that this is a magnanimous gesture which the Authority can ill afford during this time of serious financial crisis. Ultimately it is an ILA issue and the MPA would like the Township Council to come out and actively support the program fully acknowledging the loss of revenue and how that will affect the ILA payment.

Several options were debated including asking the Township to underwrite holiday parking, the MPA assuming the cost of holiday parking with acknowledgement from the Township that the ILA will be affected or simply having the MPA continue to operate the traditional holiday parking program. After discussion it was determined that the MPA would request a resolution from the Township Council in support of the 2009 MPA holiday parking moratorium recognizing the financial impact of such a program. The Authority will assume responsibility for the program but ask for acknowledgment from the Township that the positive PR is good for everyone and to recognize that it will affect the ILA payment. MPA will also ask the business districts for donations. It was agreed that the MPA would appear at a Council meeting to explain the benefits and costs to the Council if requested.

Parenthetically, Commissioner Typaldos suggested that speakers be scheduled to address the various business associations throughout the year to educate them on parking management and what the MPA is hoping to accomplish. This would go a long way to improving understanding. We need to educate and partner with the businesses.

An earlier conversation continued regarding the advisability of offering free parking at the Bay Street station to encourage ridership on the weekend trains. After discussing the option of either determining demand first and then making a decision of whether to offer free parking or offering free parking for an introductory period such as one month or two the Commissioners agreed to vote.

A proposal was made to offer free parking at the Bay Street Station on Saturday and Sunday until the end of the year at which time we will review the situation. This proposal was unanimously approved by the Commissioners.

Mr. Teubner announced that the New Jersey Parking convention will take place November 18, 19 and 20 in Atlantic City and asked if anyone in the MPA was interested in attending. He said its often valuable and an opportunity to see new technologies, etc. It coincides with the League of Municipalities Convention as well.

Parking Enforcement

MPA assumption of Parking Enforcement begins on October 1st. Mr. Teubner reported that the MPA took on the Township's entire enforcement staff plus an additional officer. The supervisor, Rita Catalano, had been on staff since September 16th familiarizing herself with the Authority's operations, etc. There is still one full time and part time PEO position open and one part time maintenance position open. Mr. Teubner is going to wait until we see how it goes and shift some schedules around to see if we can avoid additional hires. Uniforms and badges are being ordered and everything is progressing nicely; the only negative being that despite reaching out to the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) we are not sure when we can begin using the handhelds. Initially the routes/beats will be rotated, mixing things around to see what works best. The ultimate goal of enforcement is to create more available parking and reward the legal parker.

Initially Mr. Teubner will supervise until an informed assessment can be made down the line.

Chairman Matthews commended Director Teubner on his handling of the enforcement staff assumption.

PAC report

Commissioner Silverman reported that the majority of the recent meeting was taken up with the issue of overnight parking; Label Street parking issues and the addition of two handicapped spaces on Glenridge Avenue near the post office. Question arose regarding restrictions that can be placed on a handicapped space. As had been earlier reported, the overnight parking ordinance had not been adopted but the Label Street and Glenridge Avenue parking changes had been adopted at the Council meeting of September 22, 2009.

The proposed metered parking on Maple Street - short term and long term - was tabled at the September 22nd Council meeting until further input can be obtained. The question was raised as to how to best handle streets being impacted by commuters. Discussion also included Church Street parking on Sundays around churches. Police do not track or enforce, its complaint driven. It was agreed that consistency needs to be the hallmark of whatever policy is agreed upon.

Chair Report

Chairman Matthews discussed finances and the ILA. A sub-committee of the MPA will go to the Council to discuss the ILA. The Mayor said by the time the MPA is ready to begin discussions a Council representative to this subcommittee will be named.

Action Items

The bill list was presented by Mr. Teubner and after a brief discussion of the purchase of a netbook, a motion to adopt the bill list was made by Commissioner Church, and seconded by Commissioner Jacobs. The resolution of the Montclair Parking Authority authorizing payment of bills was adopted by unanimous voice vote.

Chair Matthews commended PEO Supervisor Catalano on her efforts to get up to speed on the new enforcement endeavor.

At 9:35 p.m. on a motion made by Commissioner Jacobs, seconded by Commissioner Typaldos, the meeting was adjourned.

Submitted by Annette Speach

Next Meeting: October 28, 2009