

CITY OF ST. AUGUSTINE, FLORIDA
Parking and Traffic Committee
October 26, 2006

The Parking and Traffic Committee met in formal session at 8:30 a.m., Thursday, October 26, 2006 in The Alcazar Conference Room at City Hall. The meeting was called to order by Chairman, Daniel Sullivan and the following were present:

1. Roll Call

Daniel Sullivan
Gerald Dixon
John Marples
Phillip Moan
Richard Pinto
Nancy Sikes-Kline
Len Weeks

Excused:

William Abare
Ken Bryan
Les Thomas
David Toner

City Staff:

John Regan, Chief Operations Officer
Timothy Burchfield, Chief Administrative Officer
Pam Halterman, Recording Secretary
Cathy Dupont, NCO Coordinator

Other Attendees:

George Gardner, Mayor
Ken Russom, Flagler College
Wayne Strickland, Florida National Guard
Greg Baker, Resident
Richard Opazda, Resident
Guy Quarter, Resident
Tom and Natalie Lucas, Residents

2. Approval of Minutes

MOTION

Mr. Marples moved to approve the minutes from the September 28, 2006 meeting. Mr. Moan seconded.

MOTION CARRIED BY UNANIMOUS VOICE VOTE

3. Update on the Historic Downtown Parking Facility (HDPF) construction

Mr. Regan offered an update regarding the VIC construction:

- › Projected substantial completion on all elements was November 16, 2006
- › The City planned to host the November Chamber of Commerce Mixer at the newly remodeled building

- › Concrete subcontractor had donated a brick patio, to be located between the VIC and the Huguenot Cemetery, to the City and the Colonial St. Augustine Preservation Foundation
- › Bricks were available to the public for purchase at \$100.00 each
- › Collected funds would go to the Colonial St. Augustine Preservation Foundation project #450 for the City's 450th birthday party
- › Funds would be used for the rehabilitation of monuments in the plaza

Mr. Regan advised that the bricks for the patio were selling quickly. He noted that if every brick was sold, it would total approximately \$350,000.00.

4. Review and comment on Flagler Model Land Tract Residential Parking Plan

Mr. Regan offered the following details to the committee:

- › The Avenida Menendez parking program had offered insight on how to implement the program in the Flagler Model Land Tract
- › Impacted residents had received a mailing from the City regarding the public outreach meeting that was held on October 24, 2006
- › Comment cards had been included in the mailing
- › Residents had suggested that the City was pushing the schedule too hard
- › The parking program plan would be presented to the City Commission in February 2007
- › Communication and residential support was critical to the process

- › Some residents were not in support of the parking plan

Mr. Regan advised that several issues had been raised during the public outreach meeting:

- › The proposal would increase the likelihood of parking in the neighborhood
- › The program would take public space (right-of-ways) and limit its use by the general public
- › Signage should be improved for the Historic Downtown Parking Facility (HDPF)
- › Flagler College did not currently support the proposed plan, and they had concerns about the metering system and decal program
- › St. Andrews Court residents had not received the City mailing
- › Color code curbs to limit sign pollution
- › Saragossa Street residents wanted parking restrictions seven days per week
- › The City should favor residential when evaluating mixed use streets
- › Allow time to review impacts from the new parking facility
- › Straw ballot showed four residents in favor, thirteen opposed and two undecided
- › Concerns were voiced about home-health care providers, maid service and other visitors not being able to find parking¹

Mr. Regan submitted a letter from a resident on Saragossa Street that offered their thoughts about the parking program. He stated that staff felt public parking should be increased in block segments. He said the City would

¹ Mr. Weeks arrived at 8:45 a.m.

continue to work with the neighborhood and provide any new information to the City Commission and the PAT Committee. He noted that Mayor Gardner and Chairman Dan Sullivan had attended the public outreach meeting.

In response to an inquiry, Mr. Regan affirmed that the proposed residential parking program for the Flagler Model Land Tract would not be complete until the beginning of 2007.

Mr. Pinto pointed out that the new parking facility was still under construction and remained confusing to visitors. He noted that once a program was implemented, it was hard to undo; therefore, he suggested delaying the proposed plan for a year while reviewing the effects of the new parking facility. He said he did not agree with public right-of-ways being utilized for private use.

Mr. Marples suggested that residents in the Abbott Tract, near San Marco Avenue, also wanted a residential parking program. He stated that some residents in the Abbott Tract felt they had rights to on-street parking in front of their homes; however, it was being used by tourists and commuters. He noted that residents paid hefty taxes and should not be required to pay an additional \$30.00 each year for on-street parking.

Mr. Pinto pointed out that on-street parking was designated for public use; moreover, residents did not have more rights to the space. He stated that the cost of enforcing a parking program far outweighed the \$30.00 annual fee.

Greg Baker, resident, offered the following comments:

- ◆ All of Markland Place was metered
- ◆ Meter rates would raise from \$.25 to \$1.50 an hour
- ◆ A proximity card would cost \$.50 per hour
- ◆ Markland Place was primarily used by residents
- ◆ Metered spaces on Markland Place cost \$4.00 each day compared to the \$30.00 annual fee at \$.12 per day for spaces located on Saragossa Street
- ◆ Increasing the meters rates would penalize residents
- ◆ No parking would exist for home-healthcare providers, maid service, etc
- ◆ Meter cost would be raised six times its current rate

In response to an inquiry, Mr. Regan stated that a survey had been completed on Saragossa Street that found mostly Flagler College students and commuters parking in public spaces.

Guy Quarter, resident, noted that unless one parked on Saragossa Street at 6:00 a.m. or 9:00 p.m., it was very difficult to find an open space.

Richard Opazda, resident, suggested that students could obtain a \$30.00 annual parking pass entitling them space on Saragossa Street which would not alleviate the problem.

Mr. Quarter stated that tourists parked on Saragossa Street on the weekends. He affirmed that student parking had decreased since the opening of the parking facility.

Mr. Regan noted that Markland Place was metered; however, Valencia Street was time restricted. He said it was possible to designate Valencia Street as public or residential parking.

Mayor Gardner pointed out that residents of the Flagler Model Land Tract were the first to express interest in a residential parking program. He noted that Flagler students had purchased 625 garage parking passes from the City which would reduce the amount of student parking in the Flagler Model Land Tract area.

Mr. Weeks stated that parking was allowed on Valencia Street only on Sunday mornings. He noted that Valencia Street had originally been used as a thoroughfare that connected the train station to a prominent hotel.

Ms. Sikes-Kline suggested that Flagler College staff was using public parking in the neighborhood. She noted that many students were happy using the new parking facility.

Mr. Quarter stated that he was not aware of college staff parking on the street. He pointed out that students were recognizable because of the backpacks and skateboards they carried.

Mr. Pinto said the annual parking pass concept would spread and grow in time.

Natalie Lucas, resident, stated that parking on both sides of Saragossa Street was troublesome. She suggested that the college should be satisfied with their current amount of parking.

Ken Russom, representative for Dr. Abare, stated that college students were young adults seeking an education, but people wanted to control young adults as if they were their children. However, he said college students had the same freedom of choice and decision making rights as all adults. He pointed out Dr. Abare was constantly working on the college's parking issue.

Mr. Russom stated that, in his opinion, the City was attempting to control access to the Oldest Occupied City in the Nation. However, he said it was a threat to attempt to over control access to the City. He noted that the City destination was advertised throughout the nation; therefore, difficult to maintain a balance.

In response to an inquiry, Mr. Russom stated that between 200 and 300 student vehicles were removed from on-street parking and placed at the new parking facility.

Mr. Opazda stated that twelve residents on Sevilla Street had not wanted a residential parking program. He said signage would increase and look atrocious. He suggested that the City would be placing covenants and restrictions on residents by implementing a parking program, and he questioned the legality of the program. He stated that the City was a small town being chipped away with big city restrictions. He voiced that the City was losing its small town charm.

Mr. Weeks stated that he had started in City politics because of the parking situation, and he had been on parking committees since the late 1980's. He noted that the City and citizens worked

hard in obtaining the new parking facility, and the college had handled parking in a positive way by purchasing over 600 passes for the garage. He recommended delaying the program until 2007. He emphasized the necessity for a balance between the rights of businesses, tourists and residents. He said the \$30.00 annual fee for residential privilege to be able to park in front of their home was a pittance. He commented that the City would make parking so expensive people would stop visiting the City and employees would not be able to afford to work downtown. He suggested that the City delay the residential parking program for one year. He stated that the core area of downtown needed more parking, and he added that most privately owned lots were currently charging a parking fee.

Ms. Sikes-Kline stated that the committee had focused on one issue; however, all elements of the Parking and Traffic Plan needed to be worked on, and she asked staff for information regarding the signage program.

Continuing with details of the Parking and Traffic Plan timeline, Mr. Regan offered the following information:

- The City would not receive grant funding for signage from the Florida Department of Transportation until July 2007
- Cantilever-armed signage over State highways, to direct visitors to the garage, would be installed after July 2007
- Pedestrian way-finding signage would be installed throughout the internal core of downtown; however,

development of signage would begin in early 2007

- Both ends of Saragossa Street were compressed due to available free parking close to the core of the City
- The residential parking program should only be implemented on streets with residential support
- The Avenida Menendez parking program had been a success to residents but a failure to the National Guard
- Staff planned to review the parking spaces on Avenida Menendez as to many had been allotted
- Staff had completed preliminary design and cost estimation to implement the new metering technology involving the "smart card" system

Mr. Sullivan suggested that a presentation to the committee regarding the new system.

Mr. Regan advised that staff would meet with the vendor the following week; however, construction would not begin until spring 2007.

Mr. Regan offered additional information regarding the timeline:

- The San Sebastian property parking garage would not occur for a long time
- The Customer Service building had changed the Lightner lot remodel plans
- The City had recently obtained a lease for parking on DeSoto Place
- All elements of the garage should be finished by December 2006
- An interim signage program would begin soon

Mr. Weeks questioned whether the price of signage would increase significantly prior to fund availability. He suggested that the City should implement a business validation system.

Mr. Regan explained that funds would be available around April 2007 representing a two month delay. He stated that the City had promoted Sharon Langford as Manager of the new parking facility. He noted that staff had found validation machines costing \$1,700.00 each that a business could purchase; however, staff would continue to review other options. He said it might be possible to rent the machine or find a more favorable validation system. He explained that an educational brochure would be published with information on how employees and businesses could utilize the parking facility. He noted that staff would not market the parking garage until after completion.

Mr. Moan stated that it was the committee's responsibility to help manage parking and traffic problems. He suggested that further delays on implementing programs would hurt the community.

Mr. Regan noted that parking fines had been raised based on a recently adopted ordinance.

MOTION

Mr. Pinto moved to adjourn. Mr. Weeks seconded.

MOTION CARRIED BY UNANIMOUS VOICE VOTE

5. Discussion topics for subsequent meeting

(none)

6. Next scheduled meeting – To be discussed

(not discussed)

7. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:06 a.m.²

² Transcribed by Pam Halterman, Recording Secretary