

CITY OF ST. AUGUSTINE, FLORIDA

Parking and Traffic Committee
March 25, 2010

The Parking and Traffic Committee met in formal session at 8:51 A.M., Thursday, March 25, 2010 in The Alcazar Conference Room, City Hall. The meeting was called to order by Chairman, Len Weeks and the following were present:

1. Roll Call

Len Weeks, Chairperson
Gerry Dixon
Phil Moan
Jeannette Berk

Absent:

Richard Pinto, Historic St. Augustine Area Council Representative
Susan Burk, Vice Chairperson
Ken Russom, Flagler College Representative

City Staff:

Ron Brown, City Attorney
Darlene Kirkland, Recording Secretary

2. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the February 24, 2010 Parking and Traffic Committee Meeting were approved as presented.

Reports

3.A. Ron Brown, City Attorney, Presentation relating to horse and carriage routes

Ron Brown, City Attorney, stated that there had been issues regarding the carriages use of public streets and the effect on traffic and pedestrian safety. He reported that an Ordinance could possibly be presented to the Commission in May. He explained that there had been previous litigation against the City regarding a claim of unfair franchising, and the ruling in favor of the City was that a government monopoly was allowable; however, it had to be regulated. He advised that there would be a Commission workshop held to determine those regulations. He stated that an initial review had been conducted to identify issues and concerns regarding horse and

carriages. He noted the topics for discussion as follows:

- General direction of travel
- Carriages interfering with the flow of traffic
- Passenger loading/discharging
- Established carriage routes
- Charters – advanced permission to veer off route
- Multiple route consideration
- Routes to and from Stables
- Daytime/Nighttime operations
- Siestas – rest for horses
- Rush hour traffic

Mr. Brown pointed out that there was a location designed specifically for carriages at the Visitors Information Center, but it was not being utilized. He stated that the carriages being located on the bay front were a traffic safety concern, because of the carriages needing to cross traffic lanes; therefore, one of the goals was to propose safer routes.

Ms. Berk noted that there were certain carriage tours that would take passengers along a private tour instead of the standard tour.

Mr. Brown suggested that a policy could be created requiring advanced permission to veer off route for charter tours.

Mr. Dixon stated that there had been previous discussions regarding the relocation of the carriages along Orange Street.

Mr. Brown stated that the property along Orange Street was federal property; however, a proposal could be made to use the property. He stated that there had been a suggestion to move the carriages to the south bound side of Avenida Menendez; however, there were concerns regarding pedestrians crossing the lanes of traffic.

Mr. Weeks felt that the carriage drivers preferred to be located along the north bound side of Avenida Menendez because of higher pedestrian traffic and better exposure.

Mr. Moan felt that when considering established routes, the carriages should not be permitted to travel along one-way streets, and he noted the most problematic streets as follows:

- Aviles Street
- Charlotte Street
- Marine Street

Ms. Berk pointed out that some of the one-way streets contained significant historic sites.

Mr. Dixon stated that the proposed sea wall design along Marine Street contained a horse and carriage lane.

Mr. Brown stated that the proposed alternative carriage routes should avoid the two lane section of King Street. He questioned whether there were areas that

could be considered for passenger pick-up and drop-off.

Ms. Berk felt that the VIC was the most optimal space for carriages for public and traffic safety.

Mr. Dixon suggested that a workshop could be held in order to receive input from the carriage company owners and drivers.

Mr. Brown explained that there were two stables located within the City limits, and consideration could be given to establish set travel routes to and from the stables. He stated that requiring mandatory rest breaks for the horses would also be a policy consideration; however, there was concern regarding the carriages being required to be off the street during peak business periods.

Mr. Weeks suggested checking into Orlando's carriage policy, which only has carriage tours during the evening hours.

Mr. Brown advised that there would be a workshop held by the commission for review. He stated that there would be consideration to develop a franchise system in which the City would be directly involved with ticket sales and regulation.

Mr. Pinto stated that the City would always be crowded; therefore, he felt that during peak travel times, carriages should be prohibited from being on congested roadways. He felt that the City had a duty to resolve the issues to avoid traffic issues. He noted that passengers were not aware of the routes when they hire a carriage; therefore, changing the routes should not be an issue.

Ms. Berk requested data regarding the location of carriage accidents, and she felt that the focus should be safety.

Mr. Pinto pointed out that when the entry corridor at Ponce de Leon Boulevard and King Street was completed, the traffic would increase.

Mr. Moan felt that the lights on the carriages should be more visible during evening hours.

Mr. Brown replied that there was little regulation provided by the state regarding required lighting on carriages.

Mr. Pinto questioned the number of carriages that were in use on an average day and the number of issued permits. He felt that the City should provide control of the number of carriages that were allowed out at one time.

Mr. Brown replied that currently there were 46 issued permits. He stated that there were approximately 23 to 24 carriages in use on average, and that the proposed ordinance consideration would allow a maximum of 25 permits.

Mr. Weeks requested maps of the current routes for further review. He suggested that the types of carriages should be included in the proposed carriage ordinance, and that the multi-horse carriage should be prohibited.

3.B. Mark Litzinger, City Comptroller, Report relating to parking vouchers

Mr. Brown stated that the pre-paid daily validation rate for the parking garage was \$3.75, which was the same rate for Park-Now card users. He explained that the vouchers were available in books of 25. He stated that additionally, there were two hour pre-paid vouchers available for \$1.00 each, and could be purchased in books of 25. He reported that approximately 500 pre-paid daily vouchers had been sold over a two year period; however, none of the two hour vouchers had been sold. He stated that the vouchers had not been marketed.

Mr. Weeks stated that the goal was for merchants to be able to provide vouchers to their customers. He felt that the vouchers program would be positive for repeat

customers; however, merchants could not issue them to new or one time customers.

Ms. Berk stated that a parking validation program would allow merchants to provide the funding for parking; thereby, relieving the cost for their customers. She felt that the Chamber of Commerce should develop a parking validation program for the local businesses.

Mr. Weeks stated that the Chamber of Commerce was aware of the issue; however, creating a pre-paid validation program was difficult. He felt that if a program could be created, local residents would be encouraged to patronize downtown businesses.

Mr. Brown stated that a review would have to be conducted regarding costs to implement a pre-paid parking validation program.

Mr. Pinto referred to a letter received by a resident.¹ He stated that the concern was that the three hour parking limitation for meters was insufficient. He noted that a Park-Now card had been sent to the complainant; however, he felt that the reply did not address the concern, because the complaint was not regarding the cost of parking. He felt that the metered parking time limits did not provide sufficient time, because the average visitor would not be aware of the parking time limits for the meters and parking lots.

Mr. Weeks pointed out that all parking lots provided four hour parking, and the public should be made aware. He stated that the on-street meters were geared towards short term parking and faster visitor turn-over.

Ms. Berk felt that the meter time limits should not have been extended to three hours, because the short time limit could encourage visitors to use the extended hour parking. She added that she was working

¹ Attached to original minutes

with the City and the Council On Aging to provide low cost shuttle service.

4. Other Business

5. Discussion Topics for Subsequent Meeting

Review of current horse and carriage routes.

6. Next scheduled meeting – April 22, 2010

So acknowledged.

7. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:03 a.m.²

² Transcribed by Darlene Kirkland