

**Town of Mansfield Parking Steering Committee for Storrs Center
Thursday, April 13, 2010
Mansfield Downtown Partnership Office
1244 Storrs Road (behind People's United Bank in Storrs Commons)**

5:30 PM

Minutes

Members Present: Karla Fox (Chair), Martha Funderburk, Meredith Lindsey, Ralph Pemberton, Michael Taylor

Ex-Officio Members Present: Lon Hultgren, Carrie Krasnow, Macon Toledano, Cynthia van Zelm

1. Call to Order

Chair Karla Fox called the meeting to order at 5:35 pm.

2. Approval of Minutes of March 2, 2010

Martha Funderburk made a motion to approve the minutes of March 2, 2010. Ralph Pemberton seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

3. Remarks from the Chair

Ms. Fox asked that the Power Point presentations from the Parking Steering Committee meetings be placed on the Town website. Cynthia van Zelm said she would follow-up (*done*).

Ms. Fox also recommended future meeting starts of 5 pm.

4. Review of Parking Management and Parking Systems

A Power Point presentation was shown and hard copies were passed out to Committee members. Carrie Krasnow gave an overview of parking management options. She said that generally parking falls under several department jurisdictions. She recommended that there be a point person who is focused on revenues and customer service. Ms. Krasnow said that regardless of ownership of the parking, she recommends that facilities be operated as a single system with efficient management.

Ms. Fox asked if there had been any discussion of which Town department might take on the management role. Lon Hultgren said he thought it would make sense to be part of the Committee's discussion.

Ms. Fox expressed her concern about making sure that there was coordination of the various parking venues since some of the surface parking is proposed to be privately owned while the garage and on-street parking will be publicly owned. She warned against competing strategies, particularly related to rates.

Ms. Krasnow reviewed various oversight options. She said that parking authorities are common in Connecticut. They are established separately from the municipality. Decisions are made by a board that is appointed by the municipality. An example is in Norwalk where they have a four person parking authority that contracts for all labor.

Another option is a municipal department/enterprise fund. An example would be West Hartford which has its own parking section through its Public Works Department. Ms. Krasnow said options in Mansfield could be through an existing department or the Mansfield Downtown Partnership. She said there are efficiencies to management being done through a municipal entity.

Ms. Krasnow said there are various management options including self-operation, third party operation-subcontract, and third party operation-lease. She said with a third-party operation-subcontract model, the municipality oversees parking and maintains control. She said with a lease model, there can be lower risk but the municipality can lose control particularly in the area of rates, cleanliness. Ms. Krasnow said she would not necessarily recommend a lease model.

Mike Taylor asked Ms. Funderburk how UConn manages its parking. Ms. Funderburk said they subcontract the management. She said that if there was no debt left on one of the garages, they would be in the black. She said she could provide further information on revenues and expenses at the next meeting.

Ms. Fox and Ms. Funderburk said that UConn pays for enforcement of parking through its police force. Ms. Fox said it is important to pull together all the revenue and expense elements to get a full picture.

Mr. Hultgren asked whether the Mansfield Downtown Partnership could serve as a parking authority by managing a contract with a private entity on behalf of the town. Can this be done in Connecticut? Mr. Hultgren thought some research needed to be done on this issue. Ms. Krasnow said she can look into this possibility.

Meredith Lindsey asked about the advantages of leasing. Ms. Krasnow said that an entity may want to lease if they want to be very hands-off when it comes to parking. Again, the risk goes back to the private operator; there is no guaranteed revenue. She said this often works best on surface lots where there is less of a concern about customer service.

Ms. Krasnow reviewed site management options and the pros and cons. She said a sub-contract brings in expertise and staff. If someone is sick, the contractor can tap into a pool of core staff. The staffing is generally less expensive than if someone is a municipal employee. The municipality still controls the parking and needs to address customer service. If a municipality self-operates, there is much

more involvement by municipal staff. With a management contract, there is a municipal parking manager but it is a much smaller operation. Ms. Krasnow said that a manager could deputize enforcement. Ms. Funderburk said there may be a model in Hartford where this occurs. She said some cities have enforcement report to the police vs. a parking manager.

Mr. Taylor said he was attracted to the values of a lease in terms of potential cash flow predictability. He thought a lease could be drawn up that would address customer service requirements.

Mr. Hultgren said since the garage is being funded by the State of Connecticut, it needs to be determined if the State would even allow a lease. Ms. van Zelm will follow-up. Macon Toledano said with the state grant there is no debt to pay so this increases the chances for revenue enhancement.

Ms. Fox said a management agreement and knowledge of the number of spaces being used can be as predictable as a lease. Mr. Taylor acknowledged this if revenue and expenses can be predicted as well.

Mr. Pemberton said an option is to start with a lease and ascertain the yearly revenues. A decision could then be made to decide whether to manage it on a municipal level. Ms. Krasnow said that operators typically want a long-term lease of 5 to 20 years.

Ms. Fox said she is concerned about the bifurcation of ownership with the developer and the Town as she feels there is not total commonality. Macon Toledano said that all types of parking will include both residents and visitors. The difference will be in who gets the revenues. Ms. Fox asked what if the development team says all Phase 1 apartment dwellers need to park in the surface lot? Mr. Toledano said some of these issues are being discussed by the town administration and Leyland. Mr. Toledano said there will be enough apartments that residential spaces will be needed throughout the parking system. He said the pricing structure will need to be determined.

Mr. Taylor asked if residential spaces will be “nested?” He reiterated his support for the developer guaranteeing a certain number of spaces. Mr. Toledano said that spaces will be rented by residents, not owned. He said the rent will go to the Town. He said he had passed along Mr. Taylor’s recommendation to the Leyland team.

Mr. Taylor said it will be important to coordinate enforcement efforts with his lot and Mr. Haidous’ lot. Can the same enforcement be used for private parking as public parking?

Ms. Krasnow gave an overview of operations configuration. She said with equipment, enforcement can tell if people are not parking in the correct space. She said that if less is charged for on-street parking, people will circulate looking for a space. This causes congestion. She recommends that on-street parking be more expensive as it is premium parking. Enforcement here is key.

Ms. Krasnow discussed time limits vs. meters. She said that people generally find meters to be “unfriendly.” They are not very costly to build. It can be difficult to enforce time limits i.e., chalking of tires. The largest problem is that lack of enforcement for time limits can cause congestion. She said that time limits can allow for more long-term parking for employees when enforcement is lax.

Ms. Fox asked if employees can get a sticker so they have to park in off-site spots. Ms. Krasnow said this is possible but difficult to make sure employees park in designated spots. It can be a maintenance issue.

Mr. Taylor said he has clauses in his leases that indicated specific areas where employees have to park. He agrees that on-street spaces should be made more expensive as they are more valuable. Time limits would be difficult. Ms. Krasnow said the enforcement of time limits can be even more “unfriendly” than meters.

With respect to meters, Ms. Krasnow said that multi-space meters cost a little more up front but less are needed. She noted that West Hartford has a Parcsmart card that can be bought with an account set up.

Ms. Krasnow said there are several methods of payment with multi-space meters. There is a good revenue upside. There is somewhat of a learning curve with multi-space meters.

Mr. Hultgren asked if these spaces can be reserved ahead of time. Ms. Krasnow will look into this question. There are mechanisms that can notify people where spaces are available.

Ms. Fox asked if people will want to pay in a grab and go situation. Mr. Toledano said the term can be made shorter to allow for these instances. Mr. Taylor thought a few 15 minutes spots would be useful; most people do not abuse this. Ms. Krasnow said there are 15 minute meters where you pay less i.e., 25 cents. Mr. Taylor, Ms. Fox, and Ms. Lindsey expressed concern about whether people will walk 500 feet from a parking space if they are short-term customers.

Mr. Toledano noted that Storrs Center is not a suburban model and the goal is to get people to walk. He noted that with full build-out, there could be 1,000 people living at Storrs Center and 20,000 students that would be able to walk to the new amenities.

With respect to off-street parking, Ms. Krasnow said one of the new approaches is “pay on foot” which has low labor costs. It may allow there to be no central cashier. The actual cashier would be more for people’s comfort level. Another option is “pay by space” where spaces are metered.

Ms. Krasnow said that permit parkers typically park in the lease convenient spaces. If gates are put in, they can be difficult to remove.

Ms. Krasnow went over the costs of off-street parking options (pay on foot, pay on exit, and pay by space). With pay by space, there can be one to two meters per

floor. With pay on foot, the labor is less expensive. With pay on exit, a cashier is in attendance but may not be needed at slower times.

Ms. Fox mentioned a fourth option which UConn has which is to give people permits for all year with a key card. A user pays once a year. The analogy is that this could be used for residents. The above options can accommodate this scenario.

Ms. Krasnow said that store validations can be difficult in terms of monitoring whether they are given to actual users.

Mr. Pemberton said it will be difficult to monitor the users in the high school lot as well.

5. Topics for next meeting

Ms. Krasnow said topics planned for the next meeting will include an update on expenses, revenues and management of adjacent lots.

6. Review of next meeting date

The next meeting is scheduled for May 19 at 5 pm (*since changed*).

7. Public Comment

David Freudmann, 22 Eastwood Road, expressed concerns about the Town losing money on parking. He thought the lease option was the least worst option.

There was some discussion of understanding the obligations for people who will live at Storrs Center with respect to their parking space(s).

8. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 7:20 pm.

Minutes taken by Cynthia van Zelm.