

**Town of Mansfield Parking Steering Committee for Storrs Center
Tuesday, January 11, 2011
Mansfield Downtown Partnership Office
1244 Storrs Road (behind People's United Bank in Storrs Commons)**

5:00 PM

Minutes

Members Present: Karla Fox (Chair), Paul Aho, Martha Funderburk, Manny Haidous, Matthew Hart, Meredith Lindsey, Michael Taylor

Ex-Officio Members Present: Lon Hultgren, Howard Kaufman (by telephone), Macon Toledano, and Cynthia van Zelm

1. Call to Order

Chair Karla Fox called the meeting to order at 5:05 pm.

2. Approval of Minutes of December 14, 2010

Martha Funderburk made a motion to approve the minutes of December 14, 2010. Meredith Lindsey seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

3. Remarks from the Chair

Karla Fox referenced the memo from Cynthia van Zelm and Lon Hultgren outlining key remaining issues for the Parking Steering Committee's consideration, and the referenced working draft of a cooperative agreement for parking enforcement in and around the future Storrs Center.

4. Continued Discussion of Issues for Storrs Center Parking including Enforcement and Storrs Center Surrounding Parking

Lon Hultgren reviewed the main points in the memo. Based on Committee input and discussions with the development team, the recommendation is to start with free, restricted parking in public and private lots in Storrs Center.

Mr. Hultgren said the input from the private property owners on the Committee was that it would be helpful to have supplemental enforcement to the enforcement that the property owners are already undertaking. One suggestion, based on the West Hartford model, would be for these private property owners to have a letter on file with the Town of Mansfield requesting this enforcement when called. The participating property owners would pay for this supplemental enforcement if fines would not cover all of the cost. Mr. Hultgren said a next step would be to obtain some estimated costs for this enforcement from a third party operator.

Mr. Hultgren said that ticketing and towing could be part of the supplemental enforcement system. The property owners would still have the ability to tow as they do now.

He noted that clear signage about parking rules will need to be in place.

Mr. Hultgren said due to the University of Connecticut and EO Smith High School's current enforcement, it may not be practical to include their lots in the enforcement system.

Meredith Lindsey asked why the Post Office and Courtyard Condo lots were not included. Mr. Hultgren said those lots may not be as much of a concern for Phases 1A and 1B since that part of the project is the furthest away from those lots. He thought those lots need to be looked at in a later phase.

Ms. Funderburk said the University will want to stay involved but its system is unique since no one else is allowed to ticket on the University lots except the University. Ms. Fox agreed that it would be difficult to include the University in a cooperative agreement.

Mr. Hultgren asked how the University handles enforcement after hours. Ms. Funderburk said that after 5 pm, lots are open parking. Mr. Hultgren queried as to whether that could be changed for lots near Storrs Center. Ms. Fox said the difficulty is that lots such as the Area 2 lot near the School of Fine Arts needs to be open for public events at the Nafe Katter Theater and the von der Mehden Recital Hall.

Matt Hart said the impact may be less if parking is free on the lots and on-street. There would be less incentive to park off the Storrs Center site. The garage and Dog Lane lot will be more populated by residents.

Mr. Taylor said he was pleased with the working draft of the cooperative agreement. He suggested that the agreement could be an initial step while everyone waits to see how the parking evolved on-street. How will the parking and financial needs for on-street parking evolve? Manny Haidous said a test case will be Storrs Road which will have the first on-street parkers. Mr. Hultgren said that a true test may not come until Phases 1A and 1B are operational.

Mr. Hultgren noted that a "parking tsar" will probably need to be brought on once the parking gets more involved with the multiple phases of the project.

Mr. Haidous asked if there would be any transitional parking lots. Macon Toledano said this may come into play with construction planning. The zoning regulations do allow for temporary lots during construction.

Mr. Toledano said there will be construction staging in the current Bishop lot area that will be leased by Storrs Center Alliance. Ms. Funderburk noted that this area will not be used for staging until the new lots for Bishop Center users is built. Ms.

Fox encouraged the Partnership and LeylandAlliance to update the neighbors. Ms. van Zelm said an initial meeting was held with the adjacent neighbors by the University with respect to the new lot, and future meetings will be held to update the neighbors.

Mr. Toledano said the team's phasing strategy is based on relocation in terms of when businesses are ready to move out of the University- owned commercial building. Once that building comes down the area can be used for temporary parking.

Mr. Haidous asked if the Town would adopt ordinances with respect to clearing out cars on the road if there is inclement weather.

Ms. van Zelm said the issue of the location of employee parking was still to be decided and she asked for feedback from the Committee. Mr. Haidous asked if a retailer wanted to pay for its employee's parking, could they? He expected that the location of employee parking spaces would be dictated on the number of employees.

Mr. Hultgren said his concern is that discounted employee parking should not be in the garage.

Mr. Taylor said employee parking should be designated for a specific area (s).

Mr. Hultgren suggested obtaining feedback from the retail consultant. Mr. Taylor said he assumed the Town's only interest would be that an employee not take valuable customer parking.

The Committee thought that a proposed \$30/month employee parking in the garage was not a good idea.

Howard Kaufman noted that it is difficult to track employees as West Hartford's Director of Public Works John Phillips noted at the last Committee meeting. If the rates are kept low enough at a location that may be further away, it may deter employees from parking at the choice spaces. He agreed with Mr. Hultgren that it would be good to get some feedback from the retail consultant on employee rates. The Town's parking consultant Walker Parking could help with the best location. Mr. Hart said that lots or the garage would be the better location for employee parking than on-street.

The Committee reviewed Appendix A in the draft cooperative agreement. Mr. Hultgren suggested that towing after a car has been parked for two hours in lots may be unrealistic. Mr. Taylor said a two hour limit would open up 90 percent of the spots. He suggested that if the parking is for two hours, there be an hour plus grace period before towing begins. Mr. Haidous said the largest issue is with the University student who parks and leaves for the day. Mr. Hultgren suggested that the new poacher may not be a student.

Mr. Haidous asked about the boundary of enforcement. Mr. Hultgren noted that a map would be developed but the proposed agreement would allow property owners to opt in or out. Mr. Hultgren said it was unclear if the Town and EO Smith would want additional enforcement in its lots. The high school may want additional enforcement at night. Mr. Haidous said he understood the concern of driving revenue away from the garage where parking is free.

Mr. Taylor said if there is a two hour limit of parking in the lots, it would need to be signed to indicate that it is for use of the services in Storrs Center. Mr. Hultgren will revise the language to reflect this suggestion.

Mr. Taylor, Mr. Haidous and Mr. Kaufman agreed that they would want interactive shopping between their lots.

The Committee reviewed draft Appendix B. Ms. Funderburk said that the University fines are \$25 to \$30. She, thus, thought the proposed \$10 fine was too low. Ms. Funderburk will provide the rates to Ms. van Zelm.

Mr. Taylor suggested if a private towing company, the property owner should also be paid a fee by the offender.

Ms. Lindsey asked who would be responsible for issuing citations. Mr. Hultgren said he thinks there is precedent for it being done outside of the police i.e., a third party operator. This is an issue that legal counsel needs to review.

Mr. Taylor reiterated that he would like the ability to ticket on his private lot if it is possible. He said he would be willing to sign a legally binding agreement that would hold the Town harmless if someone is ticketing incorrectly. He suggested that the cost of the ticket would not go to the private property owner but into the enforcement "pot."

Mr. Kaufman said he has no objection to private property owners ticketing if it is possible and Storrs Center Alliance may want that option as well.

Mr. Hart asked about how appeals to fines would be adjudicated? He noted that the Town has volunteer hearing agents.

Mr. Taylor said his concern is whether a third party operator would have the incentive to assist quickly with ticketing on a private lot.

Mr. Hultgren reiterated that a legal opinion is needed as to what is feasible for private property owners. He will revise the draft cooperative agreement with the comments from the Committee.

Mr. Hultgren will review the titles of the signatories to a cooperative agreement with the signatories.

Ms. Fox asked about whether it is appropriate for the University to be a signatory. Mr. Hultgren said the University may not want to be a signatory or would want enough exemptions.

Mr. Hart asked if enabling legislation is needed to allow for municipal powers to be given to people to ticket. Mr. Hultgren said the Town's attorney would need to be consulted.

With respect to draft Article L. Disputes in the draft cooperative agreement, Mr. Taylor thought that 10 days to resolve any dispute was too short. Mr. Hultgren agreed and Mr. Taylor suggested 30 days.

Mr. Hultgren asked for comments on how signatories could pull out of the agreement. Is 6 months notice appropriate? Mr. Hart advised looking at the timeframe in terms of the potential financial reliance on that signatory for the other partners. Mr. Hultgren queried as to whether payment into the enforcement pool could be on a pay as you go basis? Mr. Hart asked about paying on a quarterly basis?

With respect to draft Appendix C, Mr. Hultgren said that Walker Parking can help fill in the number of spaces for each lot which would determine the proportional vote if matters of business in the cooperative cannot be resolved by consensus.

Mr. Kaufman cautioned against the complexity of allowing too many entities to ticket. Mr. Hultgren suggested that supplemental enforcement through towing may not be needed if property owners can ticket. Mr. Kaufman said a third party operator can help with estimates on how much supplemental enforcement would cost.

With respect to next steps, Ms. Fox suggested that the legal feedback be ready by the next meeting. Ms. van Zelm and Mr. Hultgren said they will work with the Town attorney Dennis O'Brien.

Mr. Hart suggested additional review by a third-party operator when they are brought on board. Mr. Kaufman agreed that a third-party operator and Storrs Center Alliance's retail consultant can review the draft cooperative agreement once it is more formalized.

Ms. Fox suggested an update to the University Parking Committee in February.

7. Review of next meeting date

The Committee will meet on March 8.

Mr. Hultgren said he will make changes to the draft cooperative agreement and send it to the Committee before the next meeting.

Ms. van Zelm suggested that she and Mr. Hultgren put together a one page memo on the remaining key items to discuss for the next meeting.

8. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

9. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 6:30 pm.

Minutes taken by Cynthia van Zelm.