

WINCHESTER PARKING AUTHORITY
August 27, 2020

MEMBERS PRESENT: Dick Helm, Howard Manheimer & William Armstrong

MEMBERS ABSENT: Mike Miller

OTHERS PRESENT: Corey MacKnight & Teresa Couch

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Helm called the meeting to order at 7:31 am at which time it was determined that a quorum was present.

II. REVIEW OF JULY 2020 AND AUGUST 6, 2020 MEETING MINUTES

The minutes from July 2020 and August 6, 2020 meetings were submitted by Chairman Helm and, without objection, were unanimously approved.

III. PARKING DIVISION MANAGER'S REPORT

MacKnight informed the Authority that Braddock Autopark had been experiencing internet connectivity issues with Comcast. Comcast is the provider of internet services connected to the paystations and on call phone communication boxes at all of the garages. WPA staff performed maintenance to address the issue and for the moment the situation had been resolved. WPA did have to replace the modem at Braddock Autopark due to continual phone line issues. MacKnight noted that he is in communication with Comcast to discuss an internet service upgrade that will be necessary for the upcoming automated equipment upgrade and additional camera installations to function properly. At this time, Comcast had given an estimate for an additional cost of approximately \$330 for increased internet speeds.

MacKnight informed the Authority that one of the WPA maintenance staff will be on FMLA leave for several weeks due to a scheduled knee operation. MacKnight noted that a newly hired Maintenance Tech employee from the City Facilities Maintenance department will be trained by WPA for its on call rotation schedule to assist with the staffing shortage.

IV. REVENUE / BUDGET REPORT FOR JULY 2020

The grand revenue total for July 2020 was \$114,095, a decrease of \$36,019 or -24% in comparison to July 2019. Total hourly revenue for July 2020 was \$19,384, a decrease of \$13,799 or -42% in comparison to July 2019. Rent revenue for July 2020 was \$72,430, a decrease of \$4,876 or -6% in comparison to July 2019. Total meters, fines and Parkmobile revenues for July 2020 was \$22,240, a decrease of \$16,968 or -43% in comparison to July 2019. Miscellaneous revenue for July 2020 was \$41 due to meter bag fees collected. There was no Validation Coupon Revenue to report for July 2020. Total hourly parking tickets for July 2020 was 9,723 displaying an increase of 1,538 tickets in comparison to the previous month. At the

end of July 2020, there were 1,099 spaces or 78% total utilization of spaces being rented at all four parking garages with a total of 313 spaces available for rent. Garage breakdown of available spaces for rent were as follows: Loudoun Autopark equaled 122 spaces, Braddock Autopark equaled 38 spaces, Court Square Autopark equaled 76 spaces and GW Autopark equaled 77 spaces. At the end of July 2020 the total revenue for FY 2021 was \$114,095, a decrease to -24% in comparison to the previous fiscal year. The total number of Parkmobile transactions for July 2020 was 2,831, an increase of 608 transactions from the previous month.

Helm noted that July was a bleak month for revenue losses with decreased revenues reflected in the meter and hourly categories. Helm asked if adjustments have be made to the WPA overall management operations to reflect the trend in revenue losses. MacKnight replied yes and added that the City would be resuming normal operations very soon. MacKnight noted that WPA is hopeful it will experience an increase in revenues once reopening occurs. Manheimer noted that Court Square Autopark revenues have seemed to remain steady during the pandemic. MacKnight noted that Court Square Autopark revenue stability could be attributed to the Winchester/Frederick County Joint Judicial Center having remained open during the pandemic disruption. Manheimer questioned how the pending reopening of the Creamery Building would impact WPA revenues. MacKnight noted that WPA should experience hourly revenue increases when the Creamery Building reopens due to the building housing the City Treasurer's Office, attorney offices, etc. Helm noted that capacity in the garages have remained overall consistent. MacKnight stated that overall operations have remained basically consistent and that WPA has not experienced any unusual increased expenditure activity.

Manheimer asked when it would be appropriate for the Authority to evaluate and discuss the potential need for construction of an additional parking garage. Helm replied that WPA would need to evaluate the necessity for an additional parking garage once rental capacity reached at least 80%. MacKnight noted that the automatic equipment upgrade would have the technology to provide maximum and efficient space availability management for both rental and transient parking inside of the garages. Helm added that the new equipment will better serve WPA with accurate observations of parking consumption. Manheimer questioned if it was conceivable for a monthly rental customer to be denied parking if a garage would happen to be filled to capacity at any given time upon entry. MacKnight stated that the equipment would possess the ability to monitor space usage for rental and transient customers. MacKnight explained that rental customers would be assured to have a space reserved in the garages at all times should their particular garage experience a potential full to capacity situation. MacKnight added that lot full signage engagement and temporary garage closure implementation would be applied to transient parking only. Helm noted that with the equipment upgrade, WPA would have real time analysis of garage occupancy numbers.

V. OLD BUSINESS

1. Automated Equipment Replacement

MacKnight informed the Authority that the contract with Designa has been completed, signed and returned to WPA. WPA is working with Designa to establish

a definitive starting date for equipment installation. All vendors have been cooperative with flexible scheduling of the project. WPA has also informed the vendors that installation would likely begin after the holiday season around the beginning of January 2021. WPA has decided that Loudoun Autopark will be the first garage to receive the equipment upgrade. The automated equipment has been ordered and equipment delivery to Designa should occur around mid – November of 2020. WPA is working with Designa on the administrative and software program development. WPA will be receiving windshield tags for monthly parking contracts in advance to distribute prior to equipment implementation. The concrete and electrical work for the project has been tentatively scheduled. WPA is working with the City Treasurer's Office to obtain a new credit card terminal ID from BB&T Bank in order to eliminate conflicts between the old system and the new equipment technology.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

1. No Loitering Signs Discussion

MacKnight informed the Authority that the closure of C-CAP has resulted in the development of a homeless problem in the area surrounding Court Square Autopark. MacKnight explained that the homeless began to occupy the area surrounding the Creamery Building and the Judicial Center lawn after C-CAP closed its facility. In an effort to combat the issue, the Creamery Building and the Judicial Center posted no trespassing signage that would permit Police Department enforcement. Unfortunately after signage posting at the mentioned locations, the homeless began to occupy Court Square Autopark and its landscaped area. The result has been an increase of garbage, defecation, etc. inside the garage and surrounding area. MacKnight explained that WPA does not have the option of placing no trespassing signage at Court Square Autopark because the garage is open to the public however; no loitering signage can be installed as an effort to provide a deterrent and encourage the homeless to relocate elsewhere.

Manheimer noted that the homeless population did not live at C-CAP when it was in operation. MacKnight noted that C-CAP did not allow for the homeless to live at its facility. MacKnight stated that the City of Winchester recognizes the sensitivity and compassion needed when addressing and assisting the homeless population in the downtown area however; it fears the issue will expand to other locations such as the pedestrian mall. MacKnight added that on a positive note, no one has been injured or harmed due to this issue. Helm asked where WPA would install the no loitering signage and noted that careful placement is necessary so as not to convey an unwelcoming effect to the public. MacKnight stated that the signage must be placed in a visible area, possibly at the ends and the middle of the garage. MacKnight noted that the homeless are currently occupying the north and east side of the garage. Helm stated to MacKnight to do what was necessary to address and resolve the homeless issue at Court Square Autopark.

2. Meter Enforcement Hours Discussion

Manheimer informed the Authority that he has received feedback from the public requesting that the meter enforcement hours be returned back to 5 pm. Manheimer noted that it is believed returning to the 9 am to 5 pm meter enforcement hours

would encourage the public to patronize the local downtown businesses. Manheimer added that the meter enforcement hour's extension to 6 pm was implemented in order for WPA to obtain additional revenue. MacKnight noted that per review of previous meeting minutes, it was inferred the 6 pm extended enforcement hours were implemented and the meter rate was increased to \$0.75 per hour in an effort to generate more revenue due to lower revenues being reported and the addition of the GW Autopark associate bonds. Helm stated that WPA did not increase the meter enforcement hours to 6 pm solely for the reasons previously mentioned. Helm informed the Authority that the extended enforcement hours occurred due to suggestions made by the downtown merchants to do so. Helm added the merchants were concerned with vehicles monopolizing metered spaces after enforcement hours ended and wanted to ensure availability of street parking to the public into the early evening hours via enforcement.

MacKnight stated that only one meter enforcement officer works until 6 pm at a time and safety issues for the enforcement officers are a concern during the fall and winter months when it becomes nightfall earlier in the evening. Armstrong questioned who the Authority would be changing the meter enforcement hours for, the merchants or the consumers. MacKnight noted that it is perceived by the public that businesses close after 5 pm and therefore patrons should not have to pay for metered parking beyond that time period. Armstrong noted that there doesn't seem to be a current meter revenue issue and expressed his agreement with returning the meter enforcement hours to 5 pm. Helm noted that MacKnight has done well with the fiscal management of WPA however; operational expenditures should be reduced. Helm added that the efficiency of the metered parking spaces would be best served with retaining the 9 am to 6 pm meter enforcement hours. Helm noted that if you reduce the hours to 5 pm, residential parking would impede upon available parking for customers that are visiting the downtown restaurants and bar establishments. Manheimer stated that he did not believe ending meter enforcement hours at 5 pm would present major problems with street parking. Armstrong stated that the Authority should take into consideration the safety of the meter enforcement officers when it becomes dusk at an earlier time.

Helm stated that the Authority would need to take into consideration that operational changes can be determined by the Authority and WPA however; meter enforcement hours must be presented to and changed by City Council. MacKnight noted that the 6 pm meter enforcement hour ordinance went into effect in July of 2013. Helm reiterated that this ordinance was done by the request of the downtown merchants and the previous WPA Director presented it to City Council at that time. Manheimer asked if the City of Winchester had a merchants association in place. Helm replied that the City does have somewhat of a merchants association however it operates under a different name. MacKnight suggested that WPA discuss this situation with OTAC and obtain merchant feedback to which Manheimer agreed that this would be the appropriate measure to take concerning the matter. Helm agreed and noted that WPA should share any feedback received from citizens with the merchants. MacKnight noted that WPA could administratively change the meter enforcement hours on a seasonal basis. Armstrong stated that making seasonal changes to meter enforcement could become problematic due to the potential for public confusion. MacKnight suggested that WPA could leave the enforcement hours as they currently stand and administratively make changes internally as needed.

MacKnight asked the Authority if this discussion should be tabled until WPA can meet with the downtown merchants to which Helm replied yes.

3. Citizen Request Discussion

MacKnight informed the Authority of a request submitted by a Shenandoah University student asking permission for use of the roof level of Court Square Autopark for the making of a music video. The request stated that only 10 persons would be involved in making the video and they would only need the roof level for a few hours. MacKnight stated that he explained the current WPA policy concerning use of the parking garages however; the student still wanted to submit a formal request. Manheimer stated that if the request is approved, this would set a precedent for others in the future. Helm stated he understood the precedent concerns however, this request has specificity with number of persons involved unlike other event requests where attendance is not controllable. Armstrong asked if any liability issues for WPA would be involved. MacKnight stated WPA does have insurance and stipulations would be put into place such as staying off the roof ledges, etc. Helm asked if Shenandoah University was directly involved in this project and if so, noted the university does have insurance coverage. MacKnight stated that the music video project is something the students are doing of their own volition. Armstrong stated there should not be any issues with the request if there is no liability issues for WPA. Armstrong asked if WPA would be responsible for blocking off spaces, etc. to which MacKnight replied no.

Helm stated that WPA can curtail dangerous activities, events, and fireworks displays inside of the garages however; WPA cannot monitor individuals entering the garages who commit activities on their own accord. MacKnight stated that other minor events have taken place in the garages without WPA knowledge or permission and cited that most recently a birthday party was held afterhours and WPA staff had to administer a clean up the following business day. MacKnight added that he had the idea of putting up a type of gate to block off access to the roof levels of the garages after business hours and on the weekends however, this was too problematic to accomplish. MacKnight noted that WPA does have signage in place to protect from liability issues and the Police Department is doing what they can to assist with patrol of the garages. MacKnight is hopeful that in the future, WPA can provide on call staff with camera visuals of the garages in order to assist with monitoring afterhours. Helm stated that MacKnight be charged with making the decision whether or not to approve this request.

VII. OTHER ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

MacKnight asked the Authority for its advisement on fee rates for the windshield tags that will be used for monthly parking access with the automated equipment upgrade. MacKnight noted that currently, WPA charges a deposit fee of \$10 for monthly parking access cards and a \$20 replacement card fee should the original card issued be lost or damaged by the customer and a new card is requested. MacKnight stated that the windshield tags to be issued with the new equipment are non reusable once it is removed from the windshield. Monthly rental customers will also have the ability to purchase additional tags for multiple vehicles and noted that the equipment will be operated on the anti-passback feature to prevent abuses.

MackKnight recommended that a flat fee of \$10 be imposed to the monthly rental customers for the windshield tags and replacements and to eliminate the deposit fee. Helm asked what the costs are for WPA to purchase the windshield tags. MackKnight replied the tags cost \$8 each and in addition, rental customers would have access to a QR code that can be used for scanning to gain entry into and exiting of garages. MackKnight noted that the rental contracts can be drafted and updated to reflect the changes in the garage access fees. Helm requested that MackKnight draft an updated lease agreement to present to the Authority for review and vote at the next scheduled meeting.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:16 am. The next meeting of the Winchester Parking Authority is scheduled for Thursday September 24, 2020 at 7:30 a.m. in the Conference Room at the Winchester Parking Authority Main Office located in the George Washington Autopark.

Respectfully submitted,
Teresa Couch
Office Assistant

Minutes Approved: _____