

City Council Work Session

5:30 PM following Special Session
Council Chambers
January 6, 2014

ATTENDANCE:

Mayor/Council (please check) Hanel, Yakawich, Cromley, Cimmino, Pitman, McFadden, Bird, Swanson, McCall, Brown, Crouch.

ADJOURN TIME: 9:20

Agenda

TOPIC #1	Parking
PRESENTER	Bruce McCandless and Don Olsen
NOTES/OUTCOME	

NOTE: The recorder was not turned on during the Parking presentation and no notes were taken during that time. Attached are the slides from the presentation.

Recording started here:

- McCall: Said she was very much in favor of doing a strategic plan for the current parking problem. It would be shortsighted to create a commission or a group prior to the planning. They had resources. Good idea to have some private buy-in, as well. She asked if the City could contract with an existing entity like the Downtown Partnership or if a 501C3 could be created to run the Parking Division. Mr. Olson said the Partnership may not always exist, so needed to be careful. Not sure about the 501C3 possibility. CM McCall said there were other options out there even if they could not have a commission as defined by state law.
- Bird: Parking was an enterprise fund and asked why the Airport and Public Works had been successful enterprise funds while parking had “missed the mark.”
- Bruce McCandless: Said he did not think Parking had been a failure. Employees had worked hard at it with the resources given to them. They have lacked a long range vision on what they wanted the system to be. Should have paid more attention to the operational side.
- Bird: Saw it as an infrastructure-focused system problem and not a staffing problem.
- Swanson: Define the parameters of the project – geographic, parking meter pricing, parking garages.
- Don Olsen: The geographic boundaries talked about earlier were the existing Central Business District (CBD), medical corridor, and the block between the CBD and the medical corridor.

- Pitman: Had heard comments for six years about the lack of leadership in the Parking Division. It needs a supervisor with a vision for the future. Without it, all will fail and they will be back to where they are now. Need someone with knowledge and vision. Someone who will come back to the Council and ask for the needed resources. He said he would say 'no' to the strategic action and 'yes' to getting someone qualified to do the job.
- McFadden: Received comment about after hours parking in parking garages and confusion of where someone can park due to lack of posted hours and signage. Suggested waiting to see how the Empire Garage changed the parking situation downtown before making other plans. After the last parking study there were a lot of disappointed people because nothing was gained. Need to be careful to not pay too much and get too little.
- Brown: Agrees with Pitman but not even sure City will always run parking. Would hate to hire a parking supervisor and then have to let that person go. Parking has always been an issue for a long time so nothing new. Supports doing a strategic plan before hiring a supervisor so they know where they are going. Hopes plan will give some idea how it will be managed from the top down. Confirmed with Mr. Olsen that cost of strategic plan would come out of parking fund and not General Fund.
- Yakawich: Asked for vision of the future if they went with strategic plan.
- Mr. Olsen: Public perception of parking downtown and making it so everyone would want to come downtown. Organize garages and educate the public on downtown parking.
- McCall: Disagrees with Pitman. Very important to have strategic plan to get their act together. Maybe additional help for the time being. Need stakeholder involvement and an organized, progressive plan.
- Bird: Not sold a commission is the way to go. No reason why Parking as an enterprise fund cannot be as successful as the Airport and Public Works. Problem has been the infrastructure. Need a Director of Parking, not a supervisor. Need a strategic plan because Billings will not stop growing. Need to hire someone during strategic plan process. Need to be willing to pay for it.
- McCall: What if they went through the strategic planning process and the ultimate consensus would be to contract with a private entity to run Parking but a Parking Director had already been hired?
- Bird: Have no business contracting Parking out. It's a City function. Need to take responsibility for it. Contracting with public service would be the easy way out.
- Mr. Olsen: Agrees and disagrees. Cedar Rapids contracted with a group invested in downtown.

Public Comment:

- **Greg Krueger:** Supports a strategic plan. Supports a Department Director, but thinks that a plan should come first. Parking has never been on par as an enterprise fund. Director instead of a Supervisor is key. Proposed partnering with Parking and doing both an addendum to the Downtown Framework Plan and Parking Strategic Plan. Lisa Harmon also very supportive of strategic plan.
- Yakawich: How do we get businesses to partner with city on a plan?
- **Greg Krueger:** There should be a monetary investment. If DBP, DBA, and BID were asked he thought they would get involved.
- McFadden: Start planning before or after seeing effects of Empire Garage?

- Greg Krueger: Thinks they can predict impact of garage thanks to previous parking study. Waiting on the plan would be a big mistake.
- Leticia Moore: PAB member for 6 years. Was not initially in favor of plan; however, after talking with consultant convinced that consultant can help through the process of developing a plan. Guidance would be very beneficial.
- Cromley: Who would consultant work with?
- Leticia Moore: Would work with board members and other downtown stakeholders.
- Brown: Far enough along to prepare a plan?
- Leticia Moore: Yes, the plan will help develop a hierarchy for a more efficient governance and management plan. Don't think it's fair to hire someone without a job description. Much more in favor doing it concurrently or after strategic plan is in place.
- Bruce Simon: Former Parking Board member who resigned out of frustration. Parking procedures developed in the 1950s and some have never been updated and don't make sense. Parking is two separate pieces – on-street parking and parking garage parking. On-street parking is where people park to do business downtown. Garages serve people who work downtown. Two things created the financial crisis – (1) long term taking money out of parking and putting it in the General Fund; and (2) Park 2 expansion financed out of the parking enterprise funds. City has been managing parking for money. Need to manage parking to serve the people of Billings. What is the goal in having a strategic plan – to better manage money or better serve the people? What is Council's vision with a strategic plan and what should it accomplish?
- Cromley: What is Mr. Simon's recommendation?
- Bruce Simon: Council needs to state what it wants to accomplish with the study – management plan on how to set parking rates or a plan to make parking favorable for a friendly downtown atmosphere. Serve people not make money. Park 3 most desirable location for parking but city employees crowd out the public parkers. Need a different plan where city employees park.
- Brown: Why can't they serve public and make money?
- Bruce Simon: Can have both. Not a financial problem as much as a perception problem. Favors no meters downtown and 2-hour parking zones.
- Joni Harman: PAB member who owns downtown businesses and lives downtown. Supports strategic plan and maybe concurrent hiring of a parking supervisor.
- Ms. Volek: Does the Parking Advisory Board (PAB) support hiring a supervisor now?
- Mr. Olsen: Have not discussed, but would certainly support a temporary or part-time position.
- Ms. Volek: Asked PAB to discuss and recommend whether to hire a supervisor. Airport hires a private parking company. Her concern would be how to handle on a short-term basis.
- Pitman: Council needs to decide whether to have City run parking or privatize it.
- Mayor Hanel: Staff needs management and a plan to identify most efficient and effective way to conduct the system. Needs supervision. Money is a part of it.
- Cimmino: Should have parking director, not supervisor. Supports plan so everyone is on the same page. Doesn't understand why the consultant would cost \$80,000.
- Ms. Volek: Offers were as high as \$80,000. Dr. Sipe was committed to coming and working. Customer service is important but system has to support itself. Would never recommend selling assets.

- Mr. Olsen: Would not rule out privatization.
- McCall: Would be short-sighted to not do strategic plan. Billings is growing, and they could be sorry down the road.
- Brown: Asked about partial privatization.
- Mr. Olsen: Something that could be looked at very seriously. Makes sense.
- Bird: Not looking for a study. There is a difference between a study and a strategic plan. How much is the City willing to pay?
- McFadden: Council needs to come up with goals and objectives first and provide them to the consultant who will create a strategic plan using the goals and objectives.
- Ms. Volek: Mr. McCandless is prepared to work on an RFP and could bring back to Council at the work session of February 3 for review. Asked what the PAB would like to see in terms of management; both short-term and after strategic plan was in-hand.
- Cimmino: How long will it take to prepare the strategic plan?
- Ms. Volek: Three to six months.
- Cimmino: Empire Garage would be done by then.
- Mr. McCandless: Empire Garage has owners' association who will decide how to manage the garage. City has power to veto.
- Cimmino: Favors a one-year contract for a Parking Director.

TOPIC #2	Priority Based Budgeting/Strategic Planning/Public Safety
PRESENTER	Tina Volek
NOTES/OUTCOME	

- Ms. Volek: Proposed scheduling pre-budget work session for January 22. Acceptable to Council.

Public Comment: None

TOPIC #3	Council Discussion
PRESENTER	
NOTES/OUTCOME	

- Mayor Hanel: Need to schedule an event for outgoing and incoming councilmembers.
- Ms. Volek: Have discussed with individuals. Need to follow-up and get dates.
- McCall: Another city administrator review is due. Will work with Wynnette and Tina to set date.
- Mayor Hanel: Referenced snow removal. There is a problem with plowing snow onto sidewalks and expecting people to clear it. Observed city crew removing ice from sidewalk today. Broadwater is a particular problem.
- Ms. Volek: She will ask Mr. Mumford to attend next work session to discuss. Crew assembly has also been a problem.
- McFadden: Will be extensive work done on Calhoun this summer, but it is rapidly deteriorating this winter. Needs to be maintained until it is rebuilt.
- Yakawich: Need to talk about public safety funding.

- Ms. Volek: Will be talking about public safety levy on January 22. SD 2 will have two elections in the next five years but they are willing to work with us on timing of elections.
- Bird: Agrees they need to talk about snow removal. Mr. Mumford was not excited about plowing to the middle of the roadway. That's the way Bozeman does it. We can do better. Troubled about number of businesses that don't remove snow from sidewalks. It's unacceptable. Have police volunteers enforce the sidewalk snow removal rule. Sacagawea Park has a new restroom and it's lovely. Thanks to PRPL. Asked if staff could research the status of the Pickle Barrel.
- Ms. Volek: Pickle Barrel building design was too expensive and is being redesigned.
- Bird: Where is IHN or it's successor at with remodeling the Galles Building.
- Ms. Volek: The second and final bid did not require redevelopment within a set time period. They are in the process of raising funds.
- Bird: Referenced the new apartments at 17th and Ave. B and concern the residents across the alley have about trash removal. She recalls discussion with the neighbors about garbage removal concerns, not enough room in the alley, and they did not want to go to street garbage removal. They were told garbage removal would stay in the alley. She would like the audio recording of the Council meeting discussion to clarify what was said.
- Ms. Volek: Remembers discussion about and complaints from the neighbors about the use of the 300-gallon barrels in the apartments. The garbage area has been enclosed as planned. The 300-gallon barrels in alleys are used by more than two to three households. It is an issue.
- Cimmino: Would like to be provided with a street map that shows state route maintenance of city streets. The one sent to them earlier was too small of a scale and didn't have the names of the streets. She also mentioned streetlights were out on Grand Avenue near Grains of Montana and Broadwater Avenue and asked who maintained them.
- Cromley: Is it legal for the state to push snow onto sidewalks? 27th street is impassable by foot.
- Attorney Brooks: Said he would look into it.

TOPIC #4	Public Comment on Items not on the Agenda
PRESENTER	
NOTES/OUTCOME	

There were no comments.

Additional Information:

None.

Downtown Parking

Billings City Council

January 6, 2014

Background

- City of Billings role in downtown parking
 - 1970 created Parking Commission (off-street parking)
 - 1983 dissolved Parking Commission
 - Park 1 and 2 built with tax increment and operated by City
 - Park1 - 2 yr mgmt contract with Diamond Parking (1976-1978)
- Recent activities (2010-2012)
 - Enterprise Fund
 - General Fund transfer
 - Park 2 expansion debt
 - Empire Garage land purchase
 - Balanced budget in FY 2013 and FY 2014
 - Park 4 sale, debt refunding, layoffs, rate increase, TIF transfer, ~~GF transfer~~
- Embezzlement
- Recent governance discussions
 - City operation; lease; mgmt. contract; Parking Commission
 - Parking Commission and Charter amendment
 - Parking Advisory Board work - 2 regular and 2 special meetings since Nov 5

Recommendation

- Problem Identification
 - Slow responses to changing business needs
 - Downtown stakeholders want more responsibility for parking
- Recommendation
 - Long-range, strategic parking plan
 - \$60,000 - \$80,000
 - FY 14 budget amendment or FY 15 budget request
 - City Council commitment
 - 1 or 2 Council members on steering committee

Successful Parking Systems and Mgmt. Structures

- Cedar Rapids, IA
- Duluth, MN
- Missoula, MT

Final Notes

- Will City Council support a downtown parking strategic plan?
 - Budget \$ in FY 14 or FY 15 for planning assistance
 - 1 or 2 Council members on steering committee
- Downtown professionals recommendation - plan
- Parking staff supports long-range strategic plan and interim action
 - Full-time supervisor
 - Customer interaction improvements
 - Equipment and technology upgrades

QUESTIONS?