

Notes from Bar Harbor Parking Solutions Task Force

September 27, 2016

Present: Mary Booher, Eben Salvatore, Erin Early Ward, Liz Kase, John Kelly, Dick Cough, Matt Hochman, Sherry Rasmussen, Martha Searchfield, Jill Goldthwait, Ron Beard, Stan Harmon

Town Manager Knight was away.

Following introductions, members checked in with thoughts or reflections since the last meeting:

- Work by the Route 3 citizens advisory group and Maine DOT indicate that a pedestrian-cycle path will run from Duck Brook to West Street. As we consider paid parking along West Street, we should consider how we integrate safe bike lanes to accommodate bicyclists coming into town along Route 3.
- As we consider implementing paid parking via meters or kiosks in various sections of town, we recognize an additional step may be required to design and create adequate curbs and to clearly designate parking spaces. (as a task force, we don't have to "design" these improvements, only to point out in our report that town will need to undertake them prior to placement of meters or kiosks).
- If we end up recommending additional street coverage by metered/kiosk parking (beyond the coverage recommended by the consultants report) the town will have to budget for additional meters/kiosks and costs of maintenance, offset by projected income. (So far, suggestions have been made to increase the area designated for paid parking at the southern end of Main Street, the length of West Street and the length of Cottage Street... a suggestion at this meeting suggested the area around Fire Fly Lane as well. This increases the number of meters/kiosks considerably from the numbers in the consultant's report)
- A question: are there additional side streets in the area between Mt. Desert Street and West Street where one way traffic would provide for safer conditions for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists?
- Ms. Kase offered a view that employees, along with residents and visitors, must be accommodated in any overall parking program. A suggestion: could the town explore and designate additional areas for employee parking (Connor-Emerson Lot, temporary use of the land vacated by the public works garage, certain areas at the ball fields, etc.)
- Mr. Kelly confirmed that the parking areas at the Acadia Gateway Center, served by Island Explorer, are free and open to anyone wishing to use them, including employees.

- Mr. Cough cited recommendation from the 2002 study that any parking plan must balance the needs of residents, employees and visitors.

Consideration of paid parking in publicly owned lots

The consultant's report suggests meters or kiosks in the majority of publically owned parking lots. The group reviewed the maps for those lots (and private paid parking lots). The group suggested that both the Casino and Albert Meadow public lots have paid parking. Those residents who currently use the Casino lot might have permits to allow continued use. At Albert Meadow, there might be a combination of paid, permit and free "short term" parking.

Note was made that the town pier allows fishermen to park by permit and that would be continued under any overall plan for paid parking.

In discussing the relationship between paid parking and permit parking, the group recognized that any paid parking will have the effect of additional pressure on side and residential streets where there is no parking, as employees and visitors seek "parking at the lowest cost=free". The group envisioned three "zones" or designations within the downtown area of Bar Harbor:

- Paid parking on streets and in public parking lots
- Permit parking for both employees and residents in areas most immediate/adjacent to the commercial center of town
- Permit parking for residents (any resident of the town of Bar Harbor) in areas that are further away from the commercial center of town.

While there was recognition that all elements of an overall parking solution are interconnected (e.g. paid parking in the absence of a permit system would create further pressure on residential areas further and further from the town center), it may be strategic to consider phasing in elements of an overall plan over time, with an opportunity to learn and adapt as we go.

Further work on this "zone" concept and possible strategies to implement it will be taken up at the next meeting.

Consideration of a Parking Fund (similar to the Cruise Ship Fund)

Mr. Harmon had provided a "pro forma" budget for a parking fund, using numbers from the consultant's report and estimating others. The pro forma indicated that a parking fund balance (based on the number of paid parking spaces in the consultant's report and using the consultant's estimate of revenues during a season of May 15 to October 15) would grow by some \$500-600 thousand per year.

Recommendations for expenditure from the fund balance for improvements could come from a designated town committee, as is the case from expenditures from the

Cruise Ship Fund. Once established by town statute, authorization for expenditures from this fund would not be subject to town meeting approval, but these figures would show up in the General Fund balance for audit reporting, as is the case for the cruise ship fund.

One recommendation from Ms. Early-Ward was to allow the parking fund to grow in the first years of its existence, so that if the town should at some point consider building or partnering to build a parking garage, reserve funds would be available for that purpose, eliminating or reducing the amount of any bonding needed for construction.

The meeting adjourned at 5:20 pm.

Next meeting is October 11, 4-5:30 in Council Chambers, and will focus on further consideration of aspects of a residential and employee parking permit system that would serve to “protect” residential areas of the downtown from overflow likely if paid parking is instituted elsewhere.

We have also invited Police Chief Jim Willis to attend to discuss various aspects of enforcement should the town go ahead to institute paid and permit parking.

Notes prepared by Ron Beard, Task Force Facilitator

Reviewed by Sherry Rasmussen, Secretary

Parking Solutions Task Force Meeting topics and schedule (Autumn 2016)

- August 30 An overview of the consultant's report and recommendations, so that task force members understand the overall goals of the parking program and how each element of a parking program contributes to those goals; election of chair, vice chair and secretary.
- Sept 13 Consideration of **on-street paid parking** (via smart meters or kiosks) including review of available technology and costs, which streets, enforcement consideration, ordinance changes required, etc. *(Cornell will bring maps and provide background on available parking meters and kiosks)*
- Sept 27 Consideration of **paid parking in town parking lots**, including review of available technology, which parking lots, enforcement considerations, current and improved efficiency, etc.
- Consideration of a draft outline for a "parking fund", similar to the current Cruise Ship Fund, outlining sources of income and possible expenses. *(Cornell will provide a draft)*
- Oct 11 Consideration of **residential parking permit system**, including how such a system might work, who gets permits (residents, guests, renters), enforcement considerations, etc. *Possible attendance by Police Chief to review overall enforcement concerns/opportunities.*
- Oct 25 Consideration of the current and possible roles of the Downeast Transportation and **Island Explorer** in contributing to solutions to the parking situation (including service to existing or proposed auxiliary parking lots such as Ferry Terminal *(Paul Murphy will be invited to attend)*; update on **Acadia National Park transportation plan** and any implications for parking solutions in Bar Harbor *(John Kelly will present overview)*
- Nov 8 Bringing all the pieces together, **working toward draft task force recommendations** to the Council, including any income projections, ordinance changes, budget implications, schedule for implementation
- Nov 22 Consideration and **finalization of recommendations**
- Dec 6 **Presentation of final recommendations** to Town Council
- Dec 13 Consideration of any discussion or requests by the Town Council, based on Task Force recommendations

