



MINUTES

COUNCIL/DDA Joint Meeting

7:00 PM - Wednesday, April 3, 2019
Riverside Arts Center

The REGULAR COUNCIL of the City of Ypsilanti was called to order on Wednesday, April 3, 2019, at 7:00 PM, in the Riverside Arts Center, with the following members present:

PRESENT: Beth Bashert, Council Member Jennifer Symanns, Council Member Steven Wilcoxon, and Council Member Anthony Morgan

ABSENT: Council Member Pete Murdock, Council Member Nicole Brown, and Council Member Lois Richardson

I CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

II ROLL CALL - DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Ben Harrington - Chair	Present
Andrew O'Neal	Present
Danielle Milner	Present
Jen Eastridge	Present
Ylondia Portis	Present
Kayia Robinson	Present
Andy French	Present
Dieter Otto	Present
Janette Rook	Present

III INVOCATION

Mayor Bashert asked all to stand for a moment of silence.

IV PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

- a) I pledge allegiance to the flag, of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

V AGENDA APPROVAL

DDA Board Member Portis moved, seconded by DDA Board Member Hinton to approve the agenda.

On a voice vote, the motion carried, and the agenda was approved.

VI INTRODUCTIONS

Mayor Bashert introduced the following individuals; Community Development Manager/DDA Director Christopher Jacobs, City Planner Bonnie Wessler, MML Program Coordinator Richard Murphy, Parking Enforcement Officer Sandra Rogala, DDA Coordinator Elize Jekabson, and Rich & Associates Parking Planning Director David Burr.

VII PUBLIC COMMENT (3 MINUTES)

1. Rex Richie, 40 E. Cross, asked how many people at the table have actually read the report in its entirety.
2. Corrine Sikorski, Ypsilanti Food Coop, expressed that many businesses in the city would benefit from short term parking.
3. Martha Kern-Boprie, Friends of the Frieghthouse Board Member, encouraged the installation of parking meters in Depot Town.
4. Nicole Bell, 512 Washtenaw, Vegorama Manager, stated there needs to be better signage for parking.
5. Jeanne Adwani, 36 N Huron, stated the city needs parking meters in order to create greater turnover for parking.
6. Jessica French, 56 E Cross, stated the recommendations are based on a study that lasted only two days, and feels the study is not comprehensive. She added if the city adopts a policy to have a 50% private/public parking the city would need to provide over 200 additional parking spaces. She suggested examining a parking structure.
7. Carolyn Mckeever, 23, 25, & 29 E Cross, stated her concern with both her commercial and residential tenants. Both categories need to have spaces to park, and she does not want to charge outrageous prices for parking because she would never be able to acquire tenants.
8. Sallie Richie, 40 E. Cross, stated she does not feel the study is an accurate reflection of the parking in the city.
9. Jason Branham, 36 E Cross, stated when the city wants to get something done it gets done. He does not agree with other business owners that the study is not a reflection of parking. He stated he wants to see progress in parking.
10. Tyler Weston, 302 N Grove, stated he is disappointed in the process and asked for something to be done quickly to help the situation.
11. Bekah Wallace, Cultivate, stated she hopes the city is not just going to put a Band-Aid on this problem, or continue to kick the can down the road. She is concerned what will happen when Thompson Block is finished.

VIII RESOLUTIONS/MOTIONS/DISCUSSIONS

a) Discussion of the Parking Strategy Report and Recommendations

DDA Board Member French asked if there has been any thought to using gates rather than have meters gate the lots. This would help to reduce cost for signage and new meters. Gates will also allow you to collect revenue twenty-four hours a day. Rich & Associates Parking Planning David Burr replied that technology is expensive, and the technology used now is a multiple space pay station. These stations allow a user to add time to their space using a phone app. Mr. French replied the city would need to employ a person to monitor the meters. According to the study Depot Town is stressed until roughly 10:00 p.m. Is there a plan to staff parking enforcement until 9:00 to 10:00 p.m. Mr. Burr replied it is a recommendation to expand enforcement hours.

DDA Board Member Portis asked if there has been any consideration regarding outsourcing the entire parking system. Mr. Burr responded no, however there are organizations that provide that service.

Mr. French asked how the DDA would play a larger role in the parking enforcement. Mr. Burr responded the city is going to develop the policy and the DDA will ensure those policies are implemented. Mr. French asked if the DDA is going to implement the policy. Council Member Morgan interjected that is according to the recommendation. City Planner Bonnie Wessler stated the DDA might not necessarily implement the policy.

DDA Board Member Milner asked what makes Ypsilanti's parking system unique and what similarities are there between other communities. Mr. Burr responded Ypsilanti is unique in that it has three distinct districts. Ypsilanti is similar in that each district has its own parking issues.

Council Member Morgan asked what exactly a Parking Manager would be responsible. He also asked what the difference is for having privatized parking and having the DDA control parking functions. Mr. Jacobs responded the Parking Manager would take the lead in policy setting with the direction of Council and the DDA. Ms. Wessler added a parking committee would assist the Parking Manager performing their duties. The Parking Manager would be the one point of contact. Mr. Jacobs stated the DDA overseeing the system is different the privatization because it can set policy.

Ms. Portis asked if the report identifies a best in class in research regarding other jurisdictions. Mr. Burr responded for policy development the research is based on the best practices a municipality should have.

DDA Board Member Harrington asked how parking supply can be effected, especially in Depot Town. Mr. Burr replied adding capacity will not happen overnight, there is potential to build a parking structure. Mr. Jacobs suggested shared parking.

DDA Board Member Hinton asked if a parking structure in Depot Town is feasible. Ms. Wessler replied nothing is off the table. Mr. Burr added that is a policy decision.

DDA Board Member Eastridge stated she understands there is a parking deficit in Depot Town, but that problem also exists in the Downtown.

Mr. French stated the study lists Depot Town as the one district that meets the 50% threshold private/public parking. However, there is a 250 parking spot deficit and in the near future it will be north of 300. He stated when the city creates a policy of 50% threshold the city is responsible for those upgrades. Not having that parking is a major threat to business. He asked if there is a recommendation for the city to loosen that policy and allow private business to purchase land to provide parking. Mr. Burr replied private parking will only be for that specific business. Public parking encourages a park once mentality, in that a person parks and moves through the city enjoying everything it has to offer. Mr. French stated by having that goal it puts the onus on the city to provide that parking. Mr. Burr responded in the affirmative.

Council Member Symanns stated the city needs a long term strategy. However, it would be great if there were some quick wins. She asked if there is something as simple as having better signage. Mr. Jacobs responded that and policy.

DDA Board Member O'Neal stated he owns a building at Cross and Normal and there is not a parking supply issue there. There needs to be flexibility in policy for the districts.

Mr. French stated he sees the Parking Manager as a very important role, especially from an economic development standpoint. He asked who this person would report to. Mayor Bashert replied this person will not decide things, they would only execute policy created by Council and the DDA. Council Member Morgan suggested the DDA fund the salary of the Parking Manager. DDA Board Member Otto stated city staff should be examined to see if there is potential for a Manager to come from current employee stock. He added this would assist in getting change moving forward.

Ms. Portis stated outsourcing this position should be considered. Mayor Bashert responded the city is not afraid to outsource.

Mr. Harrington stated the current revenues created through parking are realized through the city, but some of the parking costs are realized through the DDA. He believes having this under one body in streamline both repairs. Council Member Morgan stated parking is a city problem that affects everyone, not just businesses.

Council Member Symanns stated centralizing parking could build efficiencies.

Mr. Harrington stated the DDA does not have a specific role in mind that it would like to pay other than support the stakeholders involved. He added there are many different stakeholder in the area and that parking does not meet their needs. There is an influx of development and daytime businesses, and that revenue created through parking should be directed to the parking system. Mayor Bashert responded the DDA is not looking for a major role in parking. Mr. Harrington replied the DDA is open to either potential.

Council Member Symanns stated generally she is not a fan of privatization, however, it has been effective in some instances. She would like to see the DDA play a bigger role in the parking system. Mayor Bashert stated the privatization of parking is not going well for EMU, there would be a loss of control.

Mr. Harrington stated roughly ten to fifteen years ago the DDA funded the reconstruction of the Downtown parking lots, without revenue to fund the construction. The DDA is still paying \$80,000 a year to pay for the construction, but cannot afford to repair them. The city and the DDA have enough revenue to provide a better system. It might not be a bad idea to have a public/private system with city oversight. Mayor Bashert added the loan the DDA took to fund that construction was for longer than the life expectancy of the parking lots.

Mayor Bashert stated the city's current parking meters are in terrible condition. The city has been discussing a kiosks system, they are expensive but they do pay for themselves. Council Member Symanns agreed the parking technology needs to be modernized with consistency throughout the city.

Ms. Portis agreed for the need of smart technology, but asked where the revenue created would be held. Those funds should only be reserved for the parking system. She added much of this discussion is punitive but parking should be designed for people to walk through the city.

Council Member Morgan stated he understands the need to increase revenue, however, he is not in favor of increasing enforcement too late. Mayor Bashert

stated the discussion has been to extend enforcement until 8:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Ms. Hinton agreed with Council Member Morgan to not extend enforcement until late into the night. Ms. Bashert replied no matter what is decided some people are not going to be happy.

Council Member Symanns stated parking enforcement is a necessary evil, and part of the intention is to create turnover in parking. If there were better signage to inform people where the long term parking is located it would be helpful. She suggested enforcement be expanded to other areas in the city. Mr. French stated Royal Oak just extended enforcement until 9:00 p.m. and it appears that is the new rule in areas with an active night scene. Mayor Bashert stated there is a value in coming to Ypsilanti.

Council Member Symanns stated she has always had to have a residential parking permit, and it might make sense to expand that to other areas of the city.

Mayor Bashert asked if there are any thoughts regarding public/private shared parking. Mr. Harrington responded it would be good in general, however, consistency is important. He added in his day job he tries to bring additional businesses to Ypsilanti, and it has become difficult to encourage growth without available parking. There is not an effort to provide parking for daytime users.

Mayor Bashert asked how people felt regarding two hour street parking, and longer term parking being further away.

Council Member Symanns stated there needs to be safe ample parking for employees. There should be lots for employees the city sells.

Mr. Harrington stated he supports the recommendations as written it does a good job of balancing the needs of the retail and employee parking.

Mayor Bashert stated there is a need for better parking signs and employees should not be parking in prime spaces.

Council Member Symanns stated there might be a partnership available with the AAATA to provide busing for downtown employees. Mr. O'Neal suggested a commuter bus that travel throughout the central business district. Council Member Morgan stated there is already a bus line through the College of Business.

Mayor Bashert stated she is in favor of encouraging biking and keeping the city looking its best.

DDA Board Member Rook stated she bikes to work each day, but there are issues with crossing Huron. She asked if there is a way to traffic calming. Ms. Wessler responded last fall a traffic safety analysis was performed at that location and MDOT authorized the City to fund, at its own cost, certain traffic calming methods.

Council Member Symanns stated all of the city's parking lots need updates. Mr. French stated he is glad the city is open to creating an enterprise fund for parking. He asked if there are plans to get parking lots into serviceable conditional in the near term. Mayor Bashert responded the city does not have the funding available to fix the parking lots. However, the city is looking at different strategies to fix those lots.

Mr. Harrington stated 50% of the DDA Tax Capture is going into bond payments for the parking lots. The city and the DDA need to work together to increase revenue.

Mr. Harrington asked if there is any way to increase parking especially in Depot Town. Mr. Burr responded there is potential to pick up spaces in the Frog Island lot. Mr. French asked if there is potential to use the land north of the Freight House. Ms. Wessler replied that land is owned by the railroad.

Mr. French stated he has heard autonomous vehicles are many years away, and the city cannot rely on that to solve these issues. Mr. Burr agreed.

DDA Board Member Portis moved, seconded by DDA Board Member Hinton to extend the meeting until 9:05 p.m.

On a voice vote the motion carried and the meeting was extended.

IX PUBLIC COMMENT (3 MINUTES)

1. Mike, stated there are two issues; one, visitors and owners and two, metering enforcement at night will not work in Ypsilanti when people can go to Ann Arbor.
2. Corrine Sikorski, Food Coop, thirty minutes parking is very important for businesses like the coop.
3. Audience member stated having employees park far away at night is not safe.
4. Audience member stated the system should be privatized allow an outside company to make all the profits while Ypsilanti sees the benefits.
5. Kirista, Freighthouse Manager, stated she would like to see an employee walk, bike, ride program. She would like to see electric charging stations and more bike parking.
6. Audience member stated it is exciting to be a part of this city. There needs to be two approaches to solving this problem; one immediate and one long term.

7. Jason Branham, 36 E Cross, stated during the earlier meeting most of the people in attendance were residents and he asked how that information was presented to Council.
8. Jessica French, 56 Cross, stated her concern with the 50% public threshold, and the city better be able to provide that parking.

X ADJOURNMENT

Council Member Morgan moved, seconded by Council Member Wilcoxon to adjourn the meeting.

On a voice vote, the motion carried, and the meeting adjourned at 9:01 p.m.