



Ted Zeller – Chairperson
Daryl Hendricks – Vice Chairperson
Santo Napoli – Secretary
Bina Patel – Treasurer
Jonathan Haney – Interim Executive Director
Dan McCarthy, Davison McCarthy – APA Solicitor

ALLENTOWN PARKING AUTHORITY BOARD OF DIRECTORS MINUTES

A regular meeting of the Allentown Parking Authority Board of Directors was held at 12:00 p.m. on Wednesday, May 22, 2024, at the Offices of the Allentown Parking Authority, located at 603 W Linden Street, Allentown, PA 18101.

The following attended:

Ted Zeller – Chairperson
Daryl Hendricks – Vice Chairperson
Santo Napoli – Secretary
Bina Patel – Treasurer (Absent)
Yamilett Gomez – Member
Dan McCarthy – APA Solicitor (Phoned In)
Jon Haney – Interim Executive Director
Christina Dayton – Deputy Director
Jayme Adams – Minutes

Guests:

Carson Swick (WFMZ)
Sandra Albright (Allentown Resident)
Brian Engler (Allentown Resident)
Zack Sienicki (City Center)

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Zeller called the meeting to order at 12:18 p.m.

APPROVAL OF THE APRIL MEETING MINUTES

Mr. Zeller asked for approval of the April meeting minutes. Mr. Napoli made a motion to approve the minutes, Ms. Gomez seconded the motion. The Board voted and approved the April meeting minutes.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

There were no items for executive session.

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR

Mr. Zeller moved up Courtesy of the Floor to give members of the public the opportunity to speak. Brian Engler spoke first. He lives in a small alley by Little Apple at 7th Street and Tilghman Street. He stated there is a parking lot next to the alley. He stated that residents are parking by the ledge which blocks the garage and park in marked no parking on the street zones in the alley. Mr. Zeller inquired about the ledge. Mr. Engler stated it used to be a brick factory. Behind his house it used to be a loading dock. At the end of it is where people are parking which blocks and makes it difficult to get out or through. Mr. Engler stated that these individuals need to be addressed. He has a neighbor with him, Sandra Albright, who is frequently blocked from getting out of her garage by these parkers. Mr. Napoli inquired to Mr. Haney if it matters if a citizen is coming or going if dispatch is called and Mr. Haney responded that if dispatch is called and a garage is blocked, and the person requested it we will tow the vehicle. Mr. Engler stated that the police department informed him that they will tow the vehicle if it is blocking a garage when you are trying to leave but if you are coming, they will ticket it. Mr. Zeller summarized that for the last three years the Authority is the sole dispatch for parking complaints. He continued that anytime we are called we will come out and ticket or tow. He encouraged Mr. Engler to continue calling when there's an issue. Mr. Zeller also stated that the \$15.00 no parking fine is another problem, but it is at City Council and the hope is it will be raised to an amount to be a deterrent. Mr. Engler acknowledged that the fine rate is a joke in the community. Mr. Napoli proposed promotion of surface lots for people who are parking in the neighborhood to allow homeowners relief. More discussion ensued. Mr. Zeller again stated that Mr. Engler should continue calling the Authority's dispatch with parking issues instead of the police department and confirmed that our dispatch operates 24/7. Mr. Napoli clarified people can call in for safety violations 24 hours a day. Mr. Zeller clarified that we stopped regular patrols overnight, but you can still call. Mr. Engler requested to have his alley put on regular patrol. Mr. Napoli again encouraged Mr. Engler to continue to call us. Mr. Zeller informed Mr. Engler that last month we had a new record set for dispatch calls resulting in a total of 1,734. Mr. Engler addressed the fact that his neighbor, in attendance with him, has an even harder time where she lives down the alley from him and is particularly affected when people park on the apron resulting in her not being able to pull out or in from her garage. Mr. Zeller asked if she can see it from her house and she said no she's not able to see if there's an issue until she goes out because a two-story garage blocks the view. She expressed that when she's trying to go somewhere, she leaves with enough time to get to her destination. Oftentimes, she puts her garage door up and there's a car there which will make her late to wherever she's going. She will call and wait for the tow truck to remove the vehicle that's blocking her from getting out but it's such a problem. Mr. Napoli inquired to Mr. Haney if that is a violation or a tow and Mr. Haney replied that it is both. Mr. Zeller reiterated that frequent offenders need to be towed and that he hopes City Council will hear these types of complaints to inform their decision on the no parking ticket fine increase proposal and people are deterred from doing this because it's just not fair. More discussion ensued about the parking and potential towing challenges in that alley including vehicles going off the apron to the Little Apple lot. Ms. Albright mentioned that she has made a list of the license numbers parked behind her garage and stated one she knows by heart because she's always there. Ms. Albright continued that her issue is more frequent at night. Her neighbor has a woman living with her that is Ms. Albright's main offender. Ms. Albright stated that when she comes late there's usually a car parked blocking her from getting in so now she books a hotel room if she goes out for dinner and a show and she doesn't feel she should have to live this way anymore. There was agreement from the board that this is not right. Mr. Haney stated that he will have that area patrolled at 10:30pm before active patrol ends. Mr. Engler thanked everyone for anything they can do. Mr. Zeller asked if Mr. Engler is involved in neighborhood watch and Mr. Engler replied that he is. Mr. Zeller proposed that a letter sharing anything with council about parking challenges could be helpful. Mr. Engler reiterated in community meetings they have heard many times in the community the parking fine rates are a joke and would ask his wife who is president to type something up. Mr. Hendricks expressed they could show up in person as well. Mr. Zeller stated we will support them as much as we can but they need to call us so we can be alerted to the issues. Closing comments were made in support of helping Mr. Engler and Ms. Albright.

Mr. Zeller inquired if anyone else wanted to speak for courtesy of the floor. No one did.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Haney reported that we had an emergency repair at the Spiral Deck. We have a giant commercial overhead door that had a broken spring that cost \$16,000 to repair. We tried to find other solutions but were unable to. Mr. Hendricks asked who did the repair and Mr. Haney responded that Overhead Door did the repair and it was the only company that could get the part and complete the repair.

Mr. Haney also wanted to share that the striping in the Spiral Deck was completed and went well. We had wanted to tidy the deck before the DaVinci opening so we completed that as well as some other painting.

Last month, Mr. Haney stated that last month he had reported that we had worked with the city, specifically Dan Diaz, on putting together a parklet program. We now have one applicant and is going to be putting a parklet up on the 900 block of Hamilton Street to support the restaurant, Amigos. Last year they had a one month trial and they are now the first applicant who will have one up this season. Mr. Zeller inquired about the rate. Mr. Haney replied that for \$1500.00 the parklet is rented from May to October (a six-month time period). Mr. Zeller asked how many spaces and Mr. Haney answered it is for one space. More discussion ensued about the program and the size of spaces.

Mr. Haney mentioned that we are working on the agreement with Symphony Hall with some bartering exchanging use of the Lyric room in exchange for some rates at ATC. Mr. McCarthy is assisting in putting that agreement together within the next week or so.

Mr. Haney announced that IPMI has confirmed that our Maple Street Deck won the Apex Award for Sustainable Design which will be received in roughly three weeks in Columbus, Ohio at the IPMI Conference.

This morning, we launched our first Coffee and Customers at Community Deck. It offered a greeting and welcome with coffee. Additionally, 150 informational pages were distributed with directions on how to use parking equipment or phone in issues and how to sign up for our Code Red program to receive text alerts about things pertaining to their deck or street closures, street cleaning, etc. Mr. Zeller stated that he would like to see more of that.

Mr. Haney had one last item and that was to state that the hockey promotion for the Phantoms went great and was well received. He stated that it was great to see that in a short period of time we could get together and collaborate with Ms. Dalrymple from City Center and make the offer for free parking in support of our Phantoms.

Mr. Zeller asked for a DaVinci sign update. Mr. Haney stated that we are waiting to hear back from FastSigns again regarding a vinyl and mesh sign. He continued to state that we have a contact within our vendor, AdPark, who are putting the signs on the T.V. monitors in the decks, who may be able to give us pricing on a sign through them. Mr. Haney will forward that information to the board when he receives it.

Mr. Napoli stated that it was great to see everyone come together for the hockey event but wanted to comment that the Event staff kept saying "it's free tonight" and he would like for us in the future to acknowledge that it's free courtesy of the Parking Authority to help the message get out there. Ms. Gomez contributed that there is a lot of positive that the Parking Authority does but the public doesn't become aware of it and would like the community to hear the positive stuff, too. Mr. Haney replied that we have recently put out some press releases with the media and would like to continue that positive relationship.

Mr. Zeller asked if we moved forward with the deed that the city turned over to us and Mr. McCarthy stated he hasn't heard from the city.

APRIL ENFORCEMENT RESULTS

Mr. Haney reviewed the enforcement results.

Double parking on North 7th Street: we issued 7 tickets making the total for the year 25. Mr. Zeller asked if it was 7 and Mr. Haney replied that we are still ramping up and working with the officers being more cognizant of that issue and addressing it more than we have had in the recent past.

Double parking on Hamilton Street: 18 issued in March for year-to-date total of 50

Dispatch fielded 1,497 calls for service with a total of 4,188 for the year.

APRIL CUSTOMER APPEALS RESULTS

Ms. Dayton reviewed the customer appeal results.

There were 239 appeals. 64% valid. 36% dismissed or reduced to warnings. 152 were valid. 21 were dismissed. 66 were reduced to warnings.

Mr. Zeller stated that it seems more people are using this process but the numbers have ticked more to a 60/40 split instead of 50/50 before. He asked her how she is managing it and if it is too burdensome and Ms. Dayton responded that she has help. Mr. Napoli stated that since warnings are only admitted once, anyone that already received a warning will now be dismissed if the ticket is upheld so it makes sense that numbers are ticking because all the warnings are unavailable for the second time. Ms. Dayton stated that she also believes they are learning. She will include notes about options for parking lots near them or notifying them of areas within their permit zones. Mr. Napoli inquired if we have stats on how many people were ineligible for a warning because it was their second request. Ms. Dayton stated that she does not but could find out.

Ms. Dayton continued reporting. Year to date: 840 total. 525 were found valid, 47 dismissed, and 268 reduced to warnings. 68% valid, 32% either dismissed or warning.

PAYMENT PLAN REPORT

Mr. Zeller requested an update. Mr. Haney stated that we are at the point where we just have to make a decision. Mr. Zeller asked about the cost and Mr. Haney responded that the ballpark number is \$25,000 but could be between \$30,000 and \$40,000. Mr. Zeller stated that if City Council approves the ticket fine increases, we can look to approve this next month. Ms. Gomez stated it is costly but needed. She stated that if this is implemented it will help a lot in the community and they will also be OK with other stuff. Mr. Napoli stated that the optics of spending this money when we're running a deficit is tricky. He continued that he had seen people online where people were asking about why we were handing out free parking for hockey when we're in a deficit. He stated it feels like we can never win. He agrees it is great for the community but is concerned it will backfire. More discussion ensued on this topic. Mr. Zeller stated the payment plan will effect our revenues as we will be offering credit to people and it won't always work out in our favor. It will be a revenue drain but is needed. The question is, is it fiscally responsible. Mr. Haney reminded the board it will take significant time to implement once we agree to move forward because they have to create the software.

Mr. Zeller proposed a motion. If City Council approves the parking fine increases as we proposed then we will move forward with the payment plan investment. Ms. Gomez stated that we should wait until the next meeting. Mr. Haney stated that he will inquire with the vendor about offering us a payment plan for our payment plan. Mr. Zeller stated that knowing there will be a lag time he is trying to offer the quickest path forward.

APRIL FINANCE REPORT

Ms. Siegfried reported. Total revenue for the month of April was \$1,257,070 (5% above budget). YTD total revenue was \$3,980,124 (17% below budget).

Mr. Zeller asked to pause, and Mr. Haney stated he and Ms. Siegfried believe that number was pushed up due to the 940 revenues. Mr. Zeller inquired about the overall and if it was because of the old budget. Ms. Siegfried replied that yes, this is with the new numbers. Mr. Zeller asked if everything is retroactive and confirmed that we are still 17% below budget. Ms. Siegfried stated that is correct. Mr. Zeller asked why and Mr. Haney stated because of overnight enforcements monthly loss of \$300,000. Mr. Zeller stated that we didn't budget for it and Mr. Haney responded that we didn't reduce our expenses by that much either. More discussion ensued and then Ms. Siegfried continued the report.

Operating revenue was \$1,242,581 (7% above budget). YTD operating revenue was \$3,916,598 (16% below budget). For the month, Enforcement revenue contributed \$554,169 (7% below budget) and Off-Street, Events, and Customer Service contributed \$688,411 (21% above budget). Non-operating revenue was \$14,489(60% below budget)

Total operating expenses for the month of April were \$647,691 (13% below budget). YTD operating expenses were \$2,554,146 (14% below budget). For the month, personnel costs were \$450,870 (17% below budget). Services and charges were \$184,653 (even), and materials and supplies were \$12,168 (17% below budget).

For the month of April, total revenue exceeded total expenses by \$609,379 (34% above budget). After transfers to capital, the City and the debt service fund, the general operating fund shows a net loss of \$5,888.

Overall, for the four-month period ending April 2024, total revenue exceeded total expenses by \$1,425,978 (22% below budget). After transfers to the capital, the City and the debt service fund, the YTD total decrease is \$822,135.

The total notes payable for the 940 Linden is \$13,500,000.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SEARCH COMMITTEE

Mr. Zeller stated there is not a lot to report other than the job description was finalized and the job was posted. A lot of resumes have been coming in but we are seeing a lot of candidates who are not qualified. We have not scheduled any interviews. We may look to start scheduling interview by next week.

PART-TIME EMPLOYEE PARKING

Mr. Zeller inquired if anyone had any additional business comments or questions. Mr. Napoli raised the ongoing challenge of part-time employees who are working 10-15 hours a week who are now

paying \$2.00 an hour to park. He stated that it makes sense to get a monthly contract if you are working 30 hours a week. It is a competitive disadvantage for small businesses to retain employees. Since it went to \$2.00 there has been more concern about the parking fees. Mr. Napoli mentioned a few ideas about discount parking. Mr. Haney stated that the surface lots are still \$1.00 an hour. More discussion ensued. Mr. Zeller stated that we needed to be careful when considering what we are considering as part-time due to certain employers downtown who have monthly permits for employees but don't necessarily have their employees in on five days per week. Mr. Napoli raised the idea of a program that is only for restaurants and retailers and stated that we must find a way to serve our business community as it is part of our mission to help them. Mr. Zeller asked Mr. Haney to consider the technological side of it. Mr. Haney stated he would and that he had some things in mind. Mr. Zeller requested this is added to the agenda for next month's meeting.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS REPORT

Mr. McNulty gave his report. He stated that Cohesion meetings are going well, and we are attending all of them. They stated last week that we are one of their best partners. Our presence allows us to troubleshoot problems with members of the community directly. We attended St. Luke's Lutheran Church meeting last week. We handed out important information and contact information to help them as they were expressing a lot of concerns about parking.

Mr. McNulty created a one sheet for arts organizations detailing on-street and off-street possibilities and how to operate kiosks and leave decks.

We are working with our web designer to do an overhaul of our reservations dedicated to Authority lots and decks and be able to reserve it from the site.

Mr. McNulty is interested in launching a survey on people's overall opinions of the Authority from enforcement to office hours etc. and feels this information would be valuable to the new director when they are named. Mr. Zeller inquired about the execution of the survey. Mr. McNulty responded that there are so many events happening right now and thinks going to places where there will be a lot of foot traffic or even going door to door with an option to submit online.

Mr. McNulty stated that Chamber of Commerce meetings have been going well. He was invited to go to the rotary club meeting and speak on behalf of the Authority.

One hundred and fifty flyers were handed out today.

Mr. McNulty was on a ride-a-long when an abandoned vehicle was immobilized in ATC Deck. The vehicle was in the deck for the last month. He met with the vehicle owner who was an immediate tow due to a boot tamper. He called her and told her we were willing to make an agreement with her that if she was willing to pay certain invoices we would forgive the abandoned vehicle status granted she purchase a monthly parking permit. She seemed receptive to the idea.

Lastly, Mr. McNulty stated he will do a once-a-month ride-a-long to stay up with certain trends and proactively contact community groups to work towards resolutions.

This meeting was adjourned at 1:31 p.m.

The next Board Meeting will be on Wednesday, June 26, 2024
at The Offices of Allentown Parking Authority at 603 W Linden Street