

Meeting Summary: Urban Development, Parking Management, and Community Concerns

Allentown Parking Authority Board of Directors Meeting

Date: February 26, 2025

Time: 12:00 PM

Location: Lyric Room, Allentown Symphony Hall

Meeting Overview

The meeting convened to discuss pressing urban development and parking management concerns, emphasizing, collaboration, and community-driven solutions. Key topics included parking permit policies, residential congestion, pricing strategies, and enforcement updates. Several community members voiced concerns, and discussions focused on actionable steps to improve parking availability, transparency, and equitable regulations.

The Board acknowledged challenges stemming from increased urban density, regulatory inefficiencies, and the necessity for fair enforcement of parking and traffic laws. The Board reaffirmed its commitment to fostering open dialogue, advocating for fair policy adjustments, and ensuring equitable access to parking resources.

Key Discussion Points & Actionable Takeaways

- Meeting opened by Board President Mr. Ted Zeller @ 12:12pm
- Motion to approve minutes:
 - Motion: Darryl Hendricks Seconded: Jeff Glazier
 - Motion carried
- Solicitor Dan McCarthy, announced that 2025 marks the official 40 year Anniversary of the Allentown Parking Authority's inception.
- Courtesy of the Floor offered to Multiple guests of the Meeting.

1. Addressing Residential Parking Congestion

- **Community Concerns:**

Residents voiced concerns about the oversaturation of residential parking zones, particularly the disparity between on-street parking permits and private parking garage rates. Some attendees pointed out that the low annual residential parking permit fee (\$20/year) allows multi-vehicle households to monopolize public spaces.
- **Board Response & Proposed Solutions:**
 - Advocate for a **tiered pricing model** where the first vehicle is charged a base rate, and additional vehicles incur incremental fees.
 - Explore **partnerships with private property owners** to alleviate congestion in high-density areas.

- Review residential parking permit policies to ensure fairness and efficiency in parking distribution.
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2. Parking Pricing Adjustments

- **Public Feedback:**

Residents suggested that increasing parking fees could help mitigate parking shortages by encouraging better distribution of vehicles. Some advocated for demand-based pricing to reduce overuse of certain high-demand areas.

- **Board Response & Next Steps:**

- Conducting a **comprehensive parking meter study**, expected to be completed by April, to determine fair pricing.
 - Exploring **dynamic pricing models** that adjust rates based on demand.
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3. Parking Enforcement & Safety Initiatives

- **Concerns Raised:**

- Illegal double parking, abandoned vehicles, and violations (e.g., parking in fire lanes) are rampant, causing public safety issues.
- Concerns regarding **tinted windows and unregistered vehicles**, which complicate law enforcement efforts.
- Parking violations around **schools and businesses** creating congestion.

- **Board Response & Actions:**

- **Increased enforcement efforts:** The Board reported that over 1,000-1,200 illegally parked vehicles were removed last year.
 - **Traffic safety advocacy:** Board members agreed to support legislative efforts to regulate tinted windows and ensure compliance.
 - **Expanded overnight enforcement:** This has already led to a reduction in parking violations.
 - **Coordination with law enforcement:** The Board will work closely with the police to enforce parking violations near high-traffic areas like schools, businesses, and emergency zones.
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4. Valet & Commercial Parking Regulations

- **Issues Identified:**
 - Inconsistent rules regarding valet parking spaces in front of hotels, restaurants, and private businesses.
 - Some businesses have taken over public parking spaces without permits, while others are paying for dedicated spots.
 - **Board's Commitment to Fairness & Solutions:**
 - Standardizing **clear, enforceable valet parking policies** to ensure consistency.
 - Suggestion of Implementing **green-painted curbs** and uniform signage for designated valet zones.
 - Organizing **a meeting with city officials** to establish uniform policies on public space usage for valet services.
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5. Long-Term Urban Development Strategies

- **Upcoming Initiatives & Projects:**
 - Redevelopment of **10th & Hamilton Street** to include structured parking.
 - Evaluating potential zoning modifications to accommodate increasing density and reduce strain on public parking.
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6. Community Engagement & Communication Enhancement

- **Public Information Initiatives:**
 - Enhancing signage and wayfinding for parking garages and metered parking locations.
 - Educating residents on alternative parking solutions.
 - Working with the city's GIS mapping project to improve signage clarity and enforcement efficiency.
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7. Enforcement: Oswaldo Tosado, Deputy Director

- **Report:**
 - Statistics for the month of January reviewed.
 - 1039 Enforcement calls. Down from previous months, showing effectiveness of Overnight Enforcement program.
 - Enforcement recruiting efforts have been strong
 - Current FTE count for PEO's stands at 30 and continuing to grow

- Concerns regarding “Liberty Bell Church” & traffic congestion, ingress/egress blocking.
- Tree Donation scheduled for Earth Day Celebration.

8. Appeals: Christina Dayton, Deputy Director

- **Report:**
 - 362 Appeals requested for the month of January.
 - 196 Found Valid
 - 25 were dismissed
 - 140 reduced to warnings after further review
 - 54% considered valid infractions
 - 46% dismissed or reduced
 - Introduction of new Appeal Process offering limited autonomy to Custer Service Representatives to determine appropriate level for appeal, to alleviate workload of process.
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9. Finance: Mark Toro, Deputy Director

- **Report:**
 - Review of January Financial Statement & Agency performance.
 - Board Member, Jeff Glazier requested additional information/detail moving forward regarding Purchasing Card expenditure reporting.
 - Provided Board Members with Statement of Financial Interest Forms to be returned by next Board Meeting scheduled for March 26, 2025
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Meeting Outcomes & Next Steps

Immediate Actions

- **Enforcement & Public Safety:** Strengthen ticketing efforts for illegal parking, double parking, and unregistered vehicles.
- **Residential Permit Reform:** Begin discussions on adjusting residential parking permit fees to a tiered pricing model.
- **Parking Fee Review:** Await results from the downtown parking meter study to guide future pricing adjustments.
- **Valet & Business Parking Guidelines:** Engage city officials to establish a standardized policy for valet and business parking.
- **Community Communication:** Improve signage, public awareness campaigns, and community outreach on parking policies.