

Special City Commission Parking Workshop
September 24, 2024
Video and Agenda Packet
(Note: Video starts at 3:20 on counter)

Mayor Fred Cleveland, and Commissioners Lisa Martin, Jason McGuirk, and Randy Hartman were present. VM Valli Perrine had an excused absence.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- Four residents thanked the City Commission for moving forward with recommendations from the Parking Task Force, adding that all had been done the right way by involving “stakeholders”. They commended discussions on hiring a Parking and Mobility Director. One recommended that Compliance Enforcement at kiosk lots needs to be consistent, but noted, too, that all staff were courteous and helpful. One hoped that the analysis would lead to solutions for parking and suggested that the Action Plan items have due dates.
- One resident stated that she had written to the State Department of Environmental Protection along with the Commission asking what importance our wetlands play in stormwater movement and management. She suggested that may need to be looked at before we can address parking issues, for people cannot park on flooded streets.
- One resident liked the report but felt that it didn’t go as far as it could have. He asked about possible legal risks using the license plates readers outside of law enforcement.

WORKSHOP

Mr. Matthew West, the Director of Engineering and Planning at LTG, Inc., presented the summary of his company’s Parking Report and Action Plan. He stated that their plan included research and information from previous studies, interviews, existing conditions, and the August 1st Parking Forum. They define parking problems as part of the transportation system. He listed the four top parking issues as:

- Not enough convenient parking at times
- Lack of parking restricts business opportunities
- Lack of parking negatively impacts near-by residential
- Searching for parking creates frustration and congestion

He then listed the top four ranked steps of the 23 step Action Plan:

- Hire a Parking and Mobility Director who can collect data as NSB implements actions. That person will make recommendations that will move the program forward.
- Have metered parking on and off Canal and Flagler which will help in managing our parking assets. It will not only bring in revenue but will also create the data needed before more lots and garages are discussed. (Note: Policy will need to be reviewed regarding residents paying and other issues.)
- Begin Demand Management, which means using technology for parking i.e. parking apps and providing parking information on business websites. When tickets are purchased for events “Know before you go”.
- Continued coordination with Volusia County sharing toll and app information as well as piggybacking opportunities.

Mr. West added that when looking at the Action Plan items, some will be short term while others will be long term but with both being fluid, adjusting to circumstances.

He continued explaining the importance of a Mobility Director and his/her department and looking at where the department should fall: Public Works, Transportation, or the City Manager like in St. Augustine. He also felt that it would be up to the city if they wanted a Parking and Mobility Board but keeping in mind that it would take additional staff and/or time to have one.

He closed the presentation by saying that they had done a parking study of the length of time needed for parking (currently 4 hours allowed) on Canal St. using eight (8) spots between the UC and Yellow Dog Eats for four consecutive 12-hr. days in June. They discovered that Canal St. has a surplus of spots as the spaces were filled only 50% of the time, and out of the 408 recorded cars, only 7 went over the 4-hr. limit. This led them to believe 2-hrs. would be enough there and an even shorter time in other areas. He also mentioned a few report changes and added that a quick fix to one Action Plan item would be to have obvious paint colors for loading and a more obvious color in front of the Flagler Ave. P.O.

Discussion Highlights

- Commissioner McGuirk felt that most of the recommendations were good. The Mobility Director should have specific tasks. He did not see anything about employee parking in the report. He questioned the use of parking apps since we don't have a lot of designated lots and those in commercial districts do have employees parking in them.
- Commissioner Martin asked how license plate readers (LPRs) work for parallel parking. Plates are read via an app as the driver puts in their car's number and fees paid online.
- Commissioner Hartman liked the use of two key words, "perception" and "data" as explained. The only way to change perception is with data. If we focus on these, we can move forward in solving this problem.
- Mayor Cleveland feels that we finally have a desire for change, especially since the process is fluid. He asked if a director would be needed before we began with the immediate Action items to which the reply was YES, since it may take months to find one. Mayor Cleveland asked CM Cowper what he would do to move this forward. Mr. Cowper responded that he will get senior staff involved immediately focusing on the short-term items. He agreed that parking issues are usually management ones, so he will be looking at our parking resources and how their utilization can be best organized.