

Meeting Minutes

April 25, 2012

7:30 PM

Conference Room C

Mt. Lebanon Municipal Building

Parking Facility Ad-Hoc Committee

Attendees:

David Egler
Alan Kramer
William Lewis
Steve Silverman
Mark Quealy

Absent:

Tonya Winkler
Kristen Linfante, Commission Liaison
Tom Kelley, Staff Liaison

Public/Residents:

William Matthews
Kelly Fraasch, Commissioner, Ward 5

Call to order: The meeting was called to order at 7:40 p.m. by Bill Lewis.

Public Comments:

1. Bill Matthews expressed what had been long standing concerns regarding the accuracy of Parking Authority accounting and financial statements, and presented a 2010 letter (attached) to illustrate just one of many repeatedly expressed examples to the Parking Authority and Municipality. He also recounted his frustrating experience in disclosing and seeking resolution of the Authority Bond indenture requirement of 110% debt coverage ratio based on net revenues, and Authority and Municipality “stone walling” on compliance, one to have Maher Duessel eventually agree with him. Mr. Quealy indicated that subsequent to Mr. Matthew’s 2010 letter, the Authority had modified its accounting practice for Accounts Payable. Mr. Matthews also recommended that Mt. Lebanon exercise the “buy-back” provision in the Zamagias sales agreement and recover the former Pennzoil parking lot property.
2. Mrs. Fraasch, speaking as the Ward 5 Commissioner and property owner across the street from the Academy Avenue parking lot, expressed neighborhood concerns about public disorder and drug dealing and using in/around the parking lot and the associated public safety issues. She also expressed concern that the potential construction of a parking garage above the Academy Avenue lot might add to or exacerbate public misbehavior and problems. She requested that the committee take this into serious consideration with respect to any garage proposals.

Approval of March 28, 2012 Minutes: The minutes were amended to correct the date under the topic heading work assignments, to December 31, 2011 rather than 2012, and approved as amended.

Introduction of Mark Quealy and Comments: Mark was invited to attend in order for us to get to know one another and for the committee to learn about Mark's history with the Parking Authority and his new responsibilities. Mark was with the Authority for almost 29 years, and his final position was Financial and Facilities Manager reporting to the Executive Director, who was Rich Sahar. Mark is now Parking Enforcement Supervisor reporting to Lt. McMurtrie in the Police Department. Mark is responsible for three (3) activities: Cashiers, Meter Enforcement and Meter Collections. In Meter Enforcement, he interfaces with the Tax Office regarding parking meter tickets. A discussion of his various responsibilities followed, and Mark indicated that a new Scofflaw and Booting program for enforcement will hopefully be in force by May 1, 2012.

Mark also indicated that the reported \$800,000 in outstanding unpaid parking ticket fines since 1997 actually indicated that fines for nine (9) out of ten (10) parking tickets issued, or 90%, had actually been resolved, which he said was a highly credible record in the municipality or governmental parking industry. He said a \$10 fine of years ago, because of policies for collection delinquency, would be booked for about \$40 today. Bill Lewis stated that the Municipality record indicated that there were some 32,000 outstanding unpaid parking ticket fines since 1997. At \$800,000, the average unpaid fine would be \$25. Mark was aware that an amnesty letter was being considered, and Mrs. Fraasch indicated that such a letter was still under consideration but not yet approved by the Commission. Bill Lewis asked if collection agencies and/or factoring companies had been considered for fine collection recovery. No one knew. Nor did anyone know if the reported "law" (perhaps a GASB or GAAP accounting rule) that after two (2) years uncollected or outstanding, a fine would be "written off" and therefore become uncollectable. And, no one could explain why Maher Duessel audits had not uncovered such outstanding fines in previous Authority books. Lewis will inquire at a Commission meeting when 2011 audits are presented. Mark also indicated that Chapter 10 of the Mt. Lebanon Code, a/k/a "Traffic Regulations" is being updated (actually most recent Ordinances, if any, codified). This chapter includes and covers local laws related to parking.

Facilities Overview and Capital Improvements: Alan Kraemer presented his written report and assessment (enclosed), dated April 25, 2012, of the Bakewell Parking Study of 2010 regarding North and South Garages. His assessment included specific recommendations under (B) Revenue Control Upgrades; (C) Property Condition Assessment; and, (D) AES Proposal that will be topics for discussion in our May meeting, as will his (E) Questions from Review of Study.

A brief discussion followed on the Atlantic Engineering reports and a concern as to whether the existing 2012 CIP for Parking is adequate to address the most immediate identified repair and maintenance issues and problems. The need for an independent structural engineering evaluation of the South Garage as well as its' cathode protection system as in its useful life and O & M requirements to achieve and possibly extend that life was supported by members present and by Mark Quealy. Because Tom Kelley was unable to attend this meeting, this matter will be on the May agenda, as will the 2013-2017 CIP.

Planning – Rich & Assoc. Report: Tonya Winkler and Bill Lewis were to collaborate on an assessment of the Rich report. Tonya was unable to attend a scheduled meeting with Bill the previous week and unable to attend tonight’s meeting. Therefore, Bill presented his assessment in a two (2) page handwritten form (attached) of the Rich report of January 2011. He indicated on the first page that he agreed with Rich & Assoc. that the most pressing issue in Parking is the South Garage, its structural condition, useful remaining life and steps necessary to achieve or even exceed that remaining life. Bill referred to this issue as “the elephant in the room.” He repeated his view of a need for a structural evaluation of the South Garage and its cathodic protection in keeping with the Rich & Assoc. and Bakewell reports. Bill also indicated he supported consideration of listed Rich & Assoc. recommendations on other Parking equipment and procedural practices or procedures.

The second page of Mr. Lewis assessment provided reasons why he disagreed with Rich & Associates findings and conclusions on parking supply/demand and alleged parking deficits in the so-called, by Rich, “business district”. Bill concludes that by incorporating the vast considerations not made by or included by Rich & Assoc., there is no parking deficit or space shortage now, nor likely to be in the future. He also questions the “need” for on Academy Avenue garage, now scheduled for 2015 in the 2012-2016 CIP. This whole matter will of course be discussed in detail in a future meeting.

Financial Review: Because December 2011 and January-March 2012 Parking financial statements were not available, nor were Operational Results or the July-December 2011 Maher Duessel audit, these subjects will have to be covered in the May meeting. Because of the hour (9:30 p.m.), item C of the Agenda will be deferred until May. Dave Egler did indicate he had had a discussion with our District Magistrate, Blaise Larotonda, about ticketing, enforcement, appeals and ordinances. Blaise would like to attend one of our meetings.

Adjournment: Seeing the time was 9:40 p.m., the remaining Agenda items will also be deferred to May and the meeting was adjourned. The next meeting is scheduled for May 23, 2012.