

PARKING TASK FORCE

Tuesday, June 20, 2023

Video of the meeting: [HERE](#). Agenda packet: [HERE](#).

ATTENDANCE

Members Present: O.E. Burke, Elizabeth Jones, Wayne Lundberg, Tony Otte (chair), Gerard Pendergast (vice chair), Zoe Neuner, and Serge Sorese. Members Absent: none

Staff Present: Assistant City Manager Ron Neibert, Assistant City Clerk Ron Travis

PRESENTATIONS

Ride Service Vendor: Claudia Miro, a representative of Freebee [<http://ridefreebee.com>], a ride service based in Miami that operates about 150 vehicles in more than 30 communities in Florida.

- The Freebee concept is to provide free, on-demand transportation within a defined service area using electric vehicles. Users request service via an app, website, or phone.
- Local governments contract Freebee's services and determine the hours and areas served, as well as types of advertisements and materials to be displayed or provided to riders. The service is free to the user and the contract is fulfilled by payments from the local government, through grants, or through a split of advertising revenues (i.e., by wrapping the Freebee vehicles in ads).
- Costs range from \$30-40/hour per vehicle, depending on the type of vehicle used. As an example: 5 vehicles for 65 hours per week for a year would cost about \$590,000.
- Members and staff asked questions about the vehicle types, reliability, service delays, employee recruitment, approach to selecting and displaying advertising, experiences of other communities, types of leasing arrangements, and financing options.

SEV Chamber Fact Finding Committee: Bob Williams, board member of the Southeast Volusia Chamber of Commerce and a member of its Parking and Mobility Fact Finding Committee, elaborated on points he made during Public Participation to the task force on May 16, 2023 (where he had conveyed the willingness of the Chamber and its committee to assist the task force as needed). See the Chamber of Commerce's "[NSB Parking Task Force Fact Finding Committee Report](#)"

- Williams reviewed the task force's scope and objectives (that includes considering beach traffic, collaborating with Volusia County, and factoring in the dynamic needs especially on weekends, holidays, and for special events).
- He emphasized that the Chamber's fact-finding committee has been studying the science of and best practices for parking and mobility, and that they have learned that parking issues cannot be dealt with separately from understanding city-wide mobility.
- He mentioned that there are many technological options, including apps, that can be used to manage parking and mobility, as well as provide continual and current data to assist decision making.
- He suggested that the task force recommend to the City Commission to follow a two-phase approach to dealing with parking and mobility issues:
 - phase 1 (short-term) would include a focus on surface parking and the integration of technological innovations, including the development of certain public-private solutions, and
 - phase 2 (long-term) would build on and be informed by phase 1 efforts and include such policies as siting and construction of parking garages, as determined from data gathered during phase 1.
- Members queried and discussed with Williams about the use of technology and apps, and the need to gather data as soon as possible and to move forward with surface parking expansion options.

Transportation Study in St. Augustine: Sans Lassiter, a transportation engineer and Volusia County resident and founder of LTG Planning and Engineering Group.

- His company is conducting a transportation, circulation, and parking study in St. Augustine (Fla.), a community with similar issues to New Smyrna Beach related to parking availability, congestion, and impacts on residents.
- He and his company also conduct transportation and parking studies using origin-destination-routing modeling.
- He recommends that the task force review the approaches and outcomes of other communities.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- A participant spoke about his plans to develop a four-story parking garage near the intersection of 3rd Ave and A1A. He is reviewing the concept with city staff. See [“3rd Avenue Parking Garage Conceptual Site Plan Exhibit”](#).
- Another participant wants the task force to consider residents’ concerns early in the process and to consider alleviating the back-up of traffic on certain streets (i.e., Peninsula and Pine) as a top priority, and suggested that constructing parking garages on Flagler Ave would lead to more traffic congestion in adjacent neighborhoods.

NEW BUSINESS

Minutes of the task force’s meeting of **June 6, 2023**, were **approved unanimously**.

TASK FORCE COMMENTS

- Sorese wants to develop incentives for residents and tourists to use other modes of transportation (such as bikes or taxis).
- Pendergast is reading and recommends the book *Paved Paradise: How Parking Explains the World* by Henry Grabar, which includes relevant messages related to using technology, profitability of and revenue streams from parking, and viewing problems and solutions as a transportation system.
- Neuner, as a resident and business owner in the Flagler Ave area, stated that she is interested in finding solutions that respond to the needs of both residents and businesses.
- Lundberg expressed interest in developing public-private partnerships, asked staff if the task force could hear presentations from other communities about their use of Freebee, and asked what the status of the task force’s May 16 motion (requesting the city manager to initiate conversation between the city and Coronado Community United Methodist Church about expanded use of the church’s parking lot--the response from Neibert was that the city manager thinks it is premature to pursue such discussion at this time).
- Jones was interested in the Freebee presentation and thinks residents as well as tourists would use such a service. She indicated that she is a resident near and business owner on Canal St and has similar aims as those expressed by Neuner in terms of finding balanced solutions that address the range of concerns.
- Burke stated that the problems and solutions the task force needs to address are about mobility (not just parking) and expressed desire to make the quality of life better for residents and the quality of visits better for outsiders.
- Otte indicated that he has been requested to present an update to the City Commission at its June 27 meeting and asked for suggested points to make in his report.

Motion: Lundberg moved to extend the task force’s meeting by an additional 10 minutes (beyond the 7:00pm adjournment time). The motion was seconded and **passed unanimously**.