

New Smyrna Beach PARKING TASK FORCE

Tuesday, July 18, 2023

Video of the meeting [HERE](#). Agenda packet [16-page pdf] [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 Kelly McQuillen

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

City Commissioner Lisa Martin indicated that there could be a good tie in using the payment processing approach with Volusia County and its beach side lots. Brian Carwile, who is proposing to build a parking structure at 3rd and A1A, asked the task force for a slot on the agenda to make a presentation at the August 15 meeting (this was granted).

NEW BUSINESS

Selection of new chair. Chair Tony Otte resigned his position as chair and will continue as a member of the task force. The task force elected a new chair and vice chair. **Motion** to nominate **Gerard Pendergast** as new **chair** was approved unanimously. **Motion** to nominate **Zoe Neuner** as new **vice chair** was approved unanimously.

Approval of minutes of the task force's meeting of **June 20, 2023**, was **unanimous**.

PRESENTATION

Parking Payment Options: Megan Stewart, Parking & Transportation Services, University of North Florida, Jacksonville, FL, and previously manager of the pay-to-park program for the Cities of Atlantic Beach and Neptune Beach. *This presentation was by Zoom.*

- Stewart indicated that there are several options for processing payment for parking:
 - mobile apps
 - phone (no downloads)
 - text (no downloads)
 - QR code
 - meters/physical hardware
- **Mobile apps:** frequent travelers may already have and use one or more such apps (many are used regionally or nationwide); creating an account saves time for return trips; reasonably secure; option to “white list” an app, i.e., to make it specific to your city; often can be integrated with events, validation codes, permits, etc.; generally customers like and use apps; connectivity & download issues can be a problem; requires software updates.
- **Pay by phone/text:** call or text to a specific number to make payment; requires cell phone but not necessarily a smartphone or data plan; no download required; transactions can be completed quickly; no app account setup needed.
- **QR code scan/web-browser:** platforms allow you to complete a transaction directly from a QR code through the web browser on your phone or tablet; no download required but cellular connection is necessary; provides a “fast transaction” experience similar to pay by phone/text.
- **Parking meters and hardware:** an option for customer groups who don't use cell phones; but technology and hardware can quickly become obsolete; high-maintenance investment—parts, travel, labor; coastal climate can be extremely damaging—issues with rust, wear, and water intrusion; needs a plan and substantial budget for regular maintenance and outages; could be part of a hybrid approach using multiple options.

- **Pay to park has several positive outcomes:**
 - creates an incentive for turnover spaces (i.e., to keep customers coming and going in support of local businesses)
 - improves parking availability in core areas.
 - captures a revenue stream from parking users that can help the city to offset maintenance costs
 - provides the city with a concrete data set to make informed decisions about transportation, development etc.
- **Management of payment processing:** in-house or third party (pros and cons for each approach).

Assistant City Manager Neibert provided details on parking structures for the Cities of Cocoa Beach and Ocala on behalf of representatives from those respective municipalities.

Cocoa Beach Parking Garage: 241 spaces costing \$5.2 million (\$21,600/space)

- completed in May 2019 (about an 18-month process)
- city charges \$5/hr or \$20/day for parking
- revenue services 100% of the debt for a capital bond used to build the structure and pays for maintenance.
- parcel is owned by the city and the bond was backed by revenues through a CRA
- payment processing uses the Passport program app, or by phone or at a kiosk. Payment is made by users for a specific space and tied to their vehicle's license plate.
- structure is in good condition, and there are no problems with equipment.

Ocala Parking Garage: 400 spaces costing \$5.6 million (\$14,000/space)

- completed in October 2016
- cost was paid 65% from the city's general fund and 35% from CRA revenues
- parking is free.
- city staff recommends, based on hindsight, detailed considerations for these:
 - signage, lighting, anti-graffiti paint
 - storage for equipment
 - retail space or other mixed-use
 - using a consultant to advise city on best management practices
 - hosting events at (on top level of) garage
 - electric vehicle (EV) spots

New Smyrna Beach Surface Lot Data

Neibert presented data on availability of surface parking spaces in the Canal Street and Flagler Avenue areas and how the number of available spaces compares with the number needed (i.e., both with and without factoring in the city's regulatory requirement of spaces with a 50% discount to businesses).

Canal Street: Total spaces available is 703 versus a requirement of 554 spaces for a net "surplus" of 149 spaces (or versus 1108 spaces if there were no discount, for a "shortage" of 405 spaces). Available spaces: 365 (private property) + 179 (public lots) + 159 (streetside)

Flagler Avenue: Total spaces available is 1168 versus a requirement of 696 spaces for a net surplus of 472 spaces (or versus 1392 if there were no discount, for a shortage of 224 spaces). Available spaces: 715 (private property) + 453 (public spaces)

Members asked about specific parcels (private and public) and the amount of possible surface parking on those parcels in the Canal Street, Flagler Avenue, and North Causeway areas. Neibert will provide more data on this at the next meeting.

TASK FORCE COMMENTS

- Pendergast: The author of the book *Paved Paradise* has accepted an invitation to speak via Zoom at the August 1 meeting; another book Pendergast is reading is *The High Cost of Free Parking*.
- Sorese: Can the county inform users of beach parking in advance when spaces on beach are all allocated; supports private-public partnerships for addressing parking needs.
- Otte: Is a proponent of satellite parking on leased parking lots; there are almost 400 spaces in the North Causeway area, for example, and there is a potential opportunity to use these types of spaces for relief on beach overflow or when removed at high tide.
- Neuner: Has been thinking a lot about the potential with a service such as Freebee, especially with satellite lot, and liked how such a service could help promote local businesses.
- Lundberg: Based on the Cocoa Beach and Ocala costs, the cost of building spaces for NSB seems high now, but it likely will be more so in the future, so why postpone the decision. What about financing options?
- Jones: Feels information gathering is essential and appreciates that aspect of the various presentations. It seems that solving the parking problem in the Flagler area is more complicated than in the Canal Street area.
- Burke: The presentations at this meeting were excellent. Likes concepts like the arts overlay district. Thinks it would be a good idea to explore hiring a consultant to assist with management and policy development, especially related to mobility, like Ocala did. Likes the notion of working with private sector partners to guide development of parking solutions that meet the city's vision and needs.

There was a free-flowing discussion about revenues generated from parking, public-private partnerships and availability of land to site structures, including possible locations on Canal and Flagler, and other amenities to include with parking structures, such as restrooms and event space.