



**PARKING STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING
JANUARY 17, 2017/ 2 p.m.
Public Works Conference Room**

ATTENDANCE: Alex Knopp, Chairman Library Board
Bill Collins, Chairman SoNo Task Force
Richard Brescia, Chairman Norwalk Parking Authority
John Igeneri, President Common Council/Chairman Public Works Committee
Jackie Lightfield, Chairwoman Norwalk Center Task Force

STAFF: Laoise King, Chief of Staff
Kathryn Hebert, Director Norwalk Parking Authority
Liz Stocker, Director of Economic Development
Tim Sheehan, Director of Redevelopment
Steven Kleppin, Director of Planning & Zoning

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Ms. King started the meeting by saying that parking is an issue that comes up repeatedly, and there have been special requests recently from companies, and people from areas of town that are having parking issues. She said that they are requesting a temporary solution, in a quick turnaround time. She said with these issues coming up at the same time as the POCD is happening, staff thought it may be best to hold off on making any temporary arrangements, and figure out what the current parking needs of the city are and what the capacity needs will be in the future, and look at in comprehensively. She said in the process of discussing this staff has realized that there are funds available through the Fee in Lieu of parking account, to use to hire a consultant to perform a capacity study about what the current parking capacity is, and to look at where additional parking is needed in the future, make recommendations about available property and partnerships. This study would then be used in the POCD.

2. BACKGROUND AND CURRENT PARKING ISSUES

Ms. Lightfield asked if there is a restriction on the fee in lieu account and said that she thought the funds can only be used for capital projects, and not for operations. Ms. Hebert said that the statute allows for capacity development and Ms. King said it's very possible that one of the recommendations that may come out of the study is that the city may need to invest in additional parking, so the fund is allowed to be used for both building projects, and also for studying if they need to be built and where.

Ms. Lightfield said there was a capacity study already done in 2012-2013. Ms. Hebert said it wasn't a capacity study but a gathering of information at a point in time and was not as detailed. Ms. Lightfield said that very little parking was added since 2013, and suggested to begin the process with that study. Ms. King said that information will be shared with the vendor who is chosen.

Ms. King suggested that there be a discussion about the parking shortage, and said that it is anticipated that it will continue to be an issue, and what the next steps should be. There was discussion ensued and Ms. Lightfield suggested circulating the capacity study and the connectivity plan that was done to everyone on the committee and that they should be used as a baseline to build on.

Ms. King said this is not an exhausted list put locations that have come up recently in terms of issues around parking.

a. Merritt 7

Ms. King said that that Merritt 7 has recently approached staff expecting to have a vast increase and a need for parking. She said that they currently need approximately another additional 500 parking spaces short term, but potentially up to as many as 1500 additional spots in the next several years.

b. Library

Ms. King said there is insufficient parking for the library. Ms. Lightfield said that the capacity is there but is difficult to get to due to the locations of the post office.

c. South and East Norwalk Railroad Station

Ms. King said that both railroad stations have a long waiting list for parking, and potentially there will be some issues in the short term in the East Norwalk area due to the Walk Bridge project. Mr. Collins suggested if necessary the consultant should recommend that structured parking may need to be built around the SNRR, and will need participation from the DOT. Mr. Knopp suggested looking at the Danbury line. Ms. Stocker suggested including the Rowayton Railroad Station in the plan. Mr. Igneri said the 6th Taxing District is in the process of upgrading the parking, and they are talking to the DOT about adding parking spaces in Rowayton.

Ms. Stocker asked if the Transit District has done any studies. Ms. Lightfield said that the DOT is doing a high speed bus capacity study between Norwalk and Stamford, and that they should probably look into that. She said at the federal level there is a high speed rail plan.

d. **Webster Lot**

Mr. Sheehan said that they are looking at a potential development in Webster Lot, and that a vast majority of the site on what the city controls has to be used for a parking resource, and at the very least replace one for one, and figure out what the background growth will ultimately be .

e. **GGP** – Ms. Hebert said that GGP requested a large number of permit parking at the Maritime Garage during construction and up until their garage is built for workers.

f. **Walk Bridge**

Ms. King said that even though GGP and the Walk Bridge are temporary projects, they are long in duration and will cause major parking disruptions.

Ms. King said that Wall Street should also be added to the list, and there have been several complaints received from some of the business owner’s regarding the construction on the street, and asked that there be a solution.

Mr. Brescia asked if there should be a fund that the city creates where property acquisitions can take place and that should be part of this committee’s discussion.

There was discussion ensued regarding the Norwalk Parking Spaces map that was distributed and updating the map to include other locations such as:

- Liberty Square
- Rowayton Railroad Station
- Veterans Park
- Matthews park current parking configuration
- Merritt 7 RR Station
- Glover Ave TOD (proposed)
- SoNo Library
- East Avenue commuter lot
- New Canaan Avenue commuter lot

3. PURPOSE , GOALS AD ROLE OF COMMITTEE

a. Timeline- when do we need a final product and how often to meet?

Mr. Igneri asked how much money is available to put out an RFP for a consultant. Ms. King said approximately \$150,000. She said that staff would like to get an RFP out in February, with the responses due in April, have the selection process in May and have Phase I of the study done by October.

Mr. Igneri said while the RFP is going through the process, there is development going on and there will need to be some near term guidance set so that there is some extra parking. He suggested splitting the committee up and having some members looking at the long term fixes and others looking at short term fixes.

Ms. King distributed a sample Strategic Parking Plan and asked that members of the committee read it and send any comments they may have via e-mail to herself and Ms. Hebert.

- b. Relationship to other committees (POCD, TOD Master Plan, Etc.)

4. ISSUE RFP FOR CONSULTANT TO:

- a. Survey current public and private parking capacity
- b. Survey and engage stakeholders
- c. Review current zoning requirements and recommended changes that impact capacity
- d. Recommend immediate, near, mid and long term opportunities that could include property acquisitions
- e. Recommend funding resources
- f. Recommend a process

There was discussion on what the process should be and after further discussion it was decided that it should be included on the next Parking Authority agenda as an action item.

5. RFP PROCESS AND TIMELINE

Ms. Hebert said that staff will work on the RFP draft and that if anyone had any comments or suggestions to send them to her and Ms. King. It was decided that the next meeting will take place February 8, 2017, at 11:30AM at the DPW office suite conference room.

- a. Review sample RFP

6. OTHER

7. NEXT STEPS

The meeting adjourned at 3:25PM