

TOWN OF SOUTHTON
PARKING AUTHORITY
PUBLIC HEARING
REGULAR MEETING
Thursday, March 5, 2009

A public hearing before the Parking Authority of the Town of Southington was held on March 5, 2009 in the Town Council Chambers of the Southington Town Hall at 75 Main Street, Southington, Connecticut. The public hearing was called to order by John Solury Chairman at 1:00PM.

Chairman Solury outlined the proposed change to the short term parking in the municipal lots. The current two hour parking restriction is from 8-6 daily. The proposal by the Parking Authority is to modify the regulation, limiting two hour parking in posted spaces, between 8-6 and 9-12AM on Saturday, with no restriction on Sunday.

Public Comment

Art Cyr 103 Berlin Street He spoke in favor of the change proposed. He also recommends a change in the regulations for on-street parking.

Dana Lombardi 21 Rockwood Drive She is in favor of the change. She spoke about her personal experience when her desire to remain in the downtown area to have lunch was changed by a parking ticket.

Nellie Shepherd 234 Marion Ave., Plantsville She spoke in favor of the change on behalf of the First Congregational Church. She spoke of unfortunate incidents when church members have been penalized by the short term parking.

Jim Sinclair 852 Savage Street He speaks in favor of the change on behalf of the Masonic Temple which utilizes the municipal lots for special events, often on Sunday. He noted that activities in the downtown area have changed since the two hour parking initiative in 2002. He congratulated the Parking Authority commissioners on their incredible "taking the bull by the horns" approach.

Lou Perillo Southington Economic Development Director He had some suggestions for the panel regarding two hour parking regulations and reminded them that downtown parking needs to encourage people to remain downtown, during the business day as well as at night. He noted that Planning and Zoning has changed their regulations to increase the number of necessary parking spaces for restaurants. He feels that people are spending more than two hours downtown. He has spoken against raising the parking ticket fines from \$10 to \$25. He feels that \$25 will leave a bad feeling and might deter people from coming downtown again.

There were no other speakers. Chairman Solury asked that a police officer in the audience speak on the issue of on-street parking.

Southington Police Chief Daley spoke briefly to the Parking Authority acknowledging that his personal feeling is that uniformity is good policy. He will look into making changes in the on-street parking regulations.

Chairman Solury closed the public hearing at 1:12PM.

The regular meeting of the Parking Authority of the Town of Southington was called to order at 1:13PM in the Council Chambers of the Southington Town Hall, 75 Main Street, Southington, Connecticut by John Solury, Chairman.

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance to the American flag was recited by all present.

Roll Call

Present: John Solury Chairman, Mathew Florian, Mark Dziubek, Erin Kane, Dee Babkirk and Asst Town Manager/Town Attorney, Mark Sciota.

A quorum is determined.

John J. Solury, Jr. assuming the Chair:

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Dziubek made a motion to accept the minutes of the February 5, 2009 meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Florian. The Chair called for a roll call vote: Mr. Florian-yes, Ms. Kane-yes, Chairman Solury-yes, Mr. Dziubek-yes, Ms. Babkirk-yes. The motion is passed.

Public Communications

None

Commissioners Communications

Chairman Solury reported that he and Commissioner Babkirk attended a CBA meeting on February 19 at the Southington Chamber of Commerce offices. It was well-attended. Businesses were represented as well as the Police Department. Great ideas were presented and discussed and some will be addressed at the time of the spring walk around. Commissioner Babkirk was introduced as the liaison from the Parking Authority to the CBA.

Bills and Payments

Mr. Dziubek made a motion to pay the stenographer's bill of \$106 for this meeting. It was seconded by Ms. Kane. The Chairman called for a roll call vote: Mr. Florian-yes, Chairman Solury-yes, Mr. Dziubek-yes, Ms. Kane-yes, Ms. Babkirk-yes. The motion is passed.

OLD BUSINESS

Music on the Green

The Park and Recreation Department had asked for use of the Bank of America lot and were asked to furnish a map of the lot, outlining the areas they plan to use for their mobile trailer, storage trailer, and the car show area. Each commissioner has received a copy of this map.

Rules and Regulations

Current rules and regulations have been handed out to each commissioner.

Budget

The finalized budget from the Finance Board and Town Manager has been distributed. It is noted that everything has been approved with the exception of the \$9500 carryover. The Chair explained that he understands if that money has not been spent by June 30, 2009 that it will disappear. There were some questions. Attorney Sciota explained.

Maps of Lots

Maps of all municipal lots have been provided and distributed. One will be given to the Police Department. The Riccio Way lot map needs to be updated, with the help of Engineering.

Dumpsters

Commissioner Florian reported on his discussion with John Myers. He continues to explore this project and report.

Two hour Parking

Chairman Solury asked for discussion on the two hour parking change on the table. Presently in place every day from 8-6, it will be amended to restrict parking to two hours from 8-6 Monday thru Friday, 9-12 on Saturday, with no restriction on Sunday. Ms. Kane is in favor of it. She spoke about the urgency of making this change in light of the number of people who spoke at the public hearing and the fact that the commissioners are concerned with the effects that it has on downtown businesses and the Renaissance efforts in Southington. She noted the increase in ticketing in the town lots is a factor. She has spoken with Mr. Perillo and discussed the rationale

behind the two hour parking regulations with him. She feels that this issue speaks to the need for a parking study. Parking patterns have changed dramatically since the last study was done. There is no information to draw upon in order to make informed decisions on two hour parking locations. Obviously, the goal is to promote traffic in the downtown area and to encourage people to remain and use services. Funding for the study is the issue. She feels that amending the parking regulations so that they are not as restrictive is a move in the right direction, but it is not the answer to this problem.

Chairman Solury spoke about parking waivers. Apparently Planning and Zoning has increased the number of parking spaces required for restaurants a year and a half ago, but there are no additional parking spaces made available. There are about 550 parking spaces downtown and more than 600 parking waivers issued.

Ms. Babkirk asked about the parking study cost, mentioning that she understood that it would be about \$25,000.

Attorney Sciota suggested that this panel work with the Town Planner and Economic Development to see if perhaps this funding could be split among a few budgets. Chairman Solury thought that would be a good idea.

Ms. Kane said that a suggestion had been made to her that communal parking meters would be an answer, such as what they use in West Hartford.

Mr. Dziubek made a motion that the parking regulations be amended at presently posted two hour parking spaces in all municipal lots, to 8-6 Monday to Friday, 9-12 on Saturday and no restriction on Sunday. Ms. Kane seconded his motion. The Chairman called for a roll call vote: Mr. Florian-yes, Ms. Kane-yes, Chairman Solury-yes, Mr. Dziubek-yes, Ms. Babkirk-yes. The motion is passed. Ms. Kane clarified for the record that this will not alter the overnight parking regulations. Mr. Florian spoke in favor of signs that will be easy to relocate in order to accommodate the changing needs of business and future businesses. The Chairman will effect the change. The signs will be ordered and the new regulations posted. The change be enforceable 20 days following the public notice.

NEW BUSINESS

Spring Walk of Lots

The Chairman scheduled a walk of the lots for the purpose of assessing condition and necessary work. It was decided to meet on Saturday April 4 at 2PM in the Riccio Lot.

Spring Clean Up

After the walk this will be addressed. The Chair has spoken with the Park and Recreation Dept to ask if they could help do some routine cleanup. They do not have the manpower to tackle this. Therefore, the Parking Authority will go out to bid for the clean up of the lots. The Chairman will coordinate this with the Town Attorney.

Miscellaneous

Ms. Kane suggests that bike racks be installed downtown, perhaps in the municipal lots. She feels that it would alleviate some of the motor traffic, if bikers had a convenient secure area to park their bike. Ms. Kane will discuss this with the Police Department, the Town Planner and the Town Engineer.

Ms. Babkirk shares photos of the present signage being used in the lots, for purposes of future reference.

Adjournment

Ms. Kane called for adjournment, second by Mr. Dziubek. All were in favor adjournment. Chairman Solury adjourned the meeting at 1:40PM.

John Solury Chairman
Parking Authority
Town of Southington