

**CITY OF NEWARK
DELAWARE**

**PLANNING COMMISSION
PARKING SUBCOMMITTEE
PUBLIC WORKSHOP MINUTES**

May 7, 2018

**Council Chamber
7:00 p.m.**

Present at the 7:00 p.m. public workshop were:

Chair: Frank McIntosh

Committee Members Present: Will Hurd
Chris Locke
Lee Mikles
Alan Silverman

Committee Members Absent: Jordan Abada
Rob Cappiello
Rich Rind

Staff Present: Mary Ellen Gray, Planning and Development Director
Mike Fortner, Planner
Courtney Mulvanity, Parking Supervisor

Mr. Frank McIntosh called the Parking Subcommittee public workshop to order at 7:09 p.m.

Mr. McIntosh: Good evening. Is that working? It's green.

Mr. Will Hurd: Yes.

Mr. McIntosh: I'm green, too. Celtic green. That was wrong. I probably shouldn't have said that. Okay.

[Secretary's note: During their presentation, the Parking Subcommittee referred to a PowerPoint presentation being displayed for the benefit of the public. Links to the Parking Subcommittee report and PowerPoint presentation can be found at the end of this document.]

Mr. McIntosh: Changing the Way People Think, Parking in Downtown Newark and the Surrounding Area. A holistic approach to parking issues in our city. Open-minded. No built-in bias. Devoid of partisanship. All voices welcomed with meaningful participation. Tonight's meeting is informational. You're welcome to make comments or ask questions. The Commission and Council meetings are upcoming, where if you want to be officially recognized for your concerns or accolades, such as it may be, you can do it there. All the ideas that we would hear tonight will be captured.

So, the steps on our journey. This began back around this time in 2017, when there was the actual formation of the idea or commission for this committee. In the interim time between then and August . . . these are not dates, those are months and years, so keep that in mind . . . in the interim period, we recruited the people that were going to serve on the committee. The idea behind that was to have a group of people who represented the stakeholders of the downtown area. And I think we did that pretty well. Probably the first time that group of people came together, or a group of people like that came together, to discuss this very important issue to our community. In the interim time from that opening meeting in August,

we held seven more meetings, public meetings. We amassed some 1,800 hours of work in this process from that time in August until today. There's over 330 pages of transcripts about our deliberations.

The strategic issues that came about as a result of this are listed here. But before going into them, we had a philosophy. The philosophy was we are going to deal only with problems, not symptoms. And that would mean that we would have to really drill down to get past the symptoms. Parking has been an issue, as best as we've been able to ascertain, back to the mid-80s. I was living in Denver then, and they had parking problems there, too. A different kind. But, yes, all those years and we're seemingly still talking about the same issues we talked about in 1985. If we keep putting band-aids on, if we keep solving symptoms, we will never solve the problem. They work for a very short period of time and they look good, but they don't last because we haven't addressed the real issue. So, it was our objective to get to the real issue and whether or not we succeed, ultimately, in this endeavor, will be because we did that, and for no other reason. The net result was seven strategic issues and ten solutions. The issues are broad-based to very focused. Here are some of them.

Cultural thinking around parking. There is a belief that there is a parking problem in Newark. Everybody will tell you that. There is a parking problem in Newark. And I don't care where you are. If you're in Wilmington, they will tell you there's a parking problem in Newark. We can one-up Wilmington in terms of their problems, but we have parking problems, and that's the perception. We need to change that perception if we're going to be successful, and one way of doing that is to get the cultural thinking to shift and become something different than it is today.

Parking distribution and availability at certain times of the day. There are plenty of times when you can waltz into downtown Newark and park anywhere you want. Particularly at 3:00 a.m. Whereas other times, like 5:30 p.m., it's very difficult to park in downtown Newark. So, that's what we mean by that.

The Zoning Code – suburban versus urban parking standards and other things. We need to begin to look at the issues the Zoning Code is causing for parking within our community.

There are stormwater issues that come as a result of having pavement everywhere.

Employee parking. It's estimated that somewhere between 200 and 300 spaces each night, on the heavy nights anyway, are taken up by employees of the various restaurants and businesses that are open. So, one of the thoughts was that's an opportunity. Maybe we want to remove that kind of parking.

Independent, private lots that are not part of the City network. It's an issue but it's really also an opportunity. What can we do with that?

And, then, the economics of parking.

These strategic issues are balanced off by solutions. Solutions that are comprehensive and built to last. Solutions that are holistic and cross over multiple issues. The strength of the plan that we're presenting is in that very concept that these solutions cross paths and get at the heart of keeping the strength behind the entire plan. So, you know, if there's a chip here and a chip there, it doesn't break. It stays in place. Cherry-picking and pulling away from solutions that are offered is going to destroy the plan. So, what are some of the solutions?

A comprehensive marketing plan, understanding where we're going and how we're going to get there.

Development of a parking app, so our visitors coming to the City will be able to have really concrete information about where there is parking.

Improved information on wayfinding signage. Some of you have probably seen some of that that's already underway as a pilot, to see how that's working. We had a meeting where they showcased that for us, the IT people I guess it was, or was it GIS? I don't know who it was. Somebody. Nice people. Anyway, it was fascinating because you look back and you say, oh, there's ten spaces. Oh, now there's seven spaces. Wow, there's only one space. And then there was twelve spaces. So, you know, it's the kind of thing that can tell our visitors a lot.

Explore the feasibility of a circular bus route to distribute parking needs and direct parking to outer lots. Very important. The employees still have to park, we just don't want them parking in the central district. We want to move them to some other place. But if we do, we have to be able to bring them back and get them back there when they're done work. So, there is the need for this.

Decarple . . . decarple? What is that? It's a decarple. Decarple? Is that sort of like a disease? What is that? I don't know. Decarple syndrome. That's when you're typing a lot, I think. No? Okay, we're going to move on. Decouple parking requirements for residential uses.

Utilize dynamic fee structure for on-street parking and off-street lots.

Pursue agreements with private entities and the University of Delaware for employee parking.

Eliminate barriers and prohibitions on private lots.

Create parking districts with different parking requirements.

And, finally, continue to explore options for a downtown parking garage.

If we do this, people will think about Newark and parking differently. We'll address how that's done. We'll address the ease of getting around once they're here. We'll address creating more available spaces. We'll address transporting people to and from outer lots. We will rework the zoning ordinances. We'll rethink fee structures. We'll eliminate barriers wherever possible to do so. And, finally, we'll explore the feasibility of a downtown garage. Comprehensive planning for parking in our fair City.

And I will turn this over now to Lee Mikles, who is the owner of Craft, Grain Craft Bar + Kitchen. Why did you change that name? He decoupled his own garage. Let me get out of the way.

Mr. Lee Mikles: Thanks. As Frank said, I'm Lee Mikles from Grain Craft Bar + Kitchen on Main Street. So, our perceptions of parking vary greatly – by time of day, by our intended use, by the time of year. It's all based on our own experiences. To some, there's too much parking. To some, it's just right. To some, there's just simply not enough. And that depends on our own experiences. So, one of the issues that we looked at were the sheer magnitude of parking requirements that exist in the City. Currently, on the books, there are 34 different off-street minimum parking requirements. So, this is how many spaces a specific business is required to have. And this is based on the type of business that it is. So, there are uses in these documents spelled out for how many parking spots a bowling alley is supposed to have, how many parking spots a restaurant is supposed to have, drive-in, and even undertakers are spelled out in this document. So, these are all requirements that are complicated, widely varied based on use, and the problem is that for these spaces, the uses will change over time and the physical parking requirements can constrain the future development of that building. So, a building that may originally be designed for X number of parking spots, is now locked into that, and it becomes a challenge for it to move into another use.

We're proposing that we take a different approach to parking. We want to start with a clean sheet. One that reflects who we are, one that reflects who we want to become, and one that allows us to advance as a city. We want to start by addressing what Newark really is. Newark is a city and parking should match that. This is an actual picture from Main Street. We need to

approach parking as if we were a city. We need to approach overall mobility, moving beyond just thinking of cars, but thinking of biking and walking. We want to make Newark more walkable, more bikeable. We want downtown to attract people. Just imagine this same scene if these cars were parked elsewhere and how much more attractive Newark would look. And now I'll turn it over to Frank.

Mr. McIntosh: It hardly seems like I left. Okay, this is a mind map and I put it up here not so you can see my scribbles but to give you an idea of the complexity of this issue. Things move hither and yon, in and out. There's a lot of moving parts, a lot of stuff going on with this whole parking situation. And this, I think, demonstrates that. One of the things as we began to think about the complexity, we began to think about what did we have to do? We had to break down the components of this whole parking issues. We had to isolate the big issues and identify the problems. We're not solving symptoms. We had to keep asking why, why, why, until we got to the problem. Solutions based on real problems work over time. Nothing else does. Problem-based solutions have collateral coverage. They will pick up things that you might have missed. Usually smaller things, but they'll pick them up and they'll bring them in and they will make them work.

Now, one of the things that was important to us as we were assembling the team that was going to do this was to get across that this is about the greater good. This is about the City of Newark and its future. And, so, partisanship was not a welcome participant in our discussions. And what we wanted people to do was to park their hat at the door when they came in. Park their partisan hat at the door. We all have it. I mean, let's face it, we live and do things and those things shape how we think. So, we have to take and move that and say, okay, I'm not that now. I'm not representing that. When I come here, I represent the City of Newark, and I'm going to represent it without any regard to anything else. What's best for the City? That's the only thing. What's best for me? That's okay, I'm going to put that aside for the time-being. And I can tell you, the members of this committee did that, time and again. And you would see it if you read the minutes of the meetings, which are verbatim minutes. You would see that in the discussions.

Now who were these wonderful people that were involved? I've already kind of gone through that list. It's in your narrative. If you don't have it . . . does everybody have that narrative, Mary Ellen? Well, if you don't have it, it's up on the counter up there. Anyway, so all these people had a different viewpoint of the world when they came together. You can imagine the Planning Department people are focused on planning issues and the like. Commissioners are focused on other things. If you own a restaurant, boy, you want people in that restaurant and you're going to do whatever you can to get them in because that's your life blood. Or, if you're building multi-million-dollar developments, you want people to come. Well, you know, the fact is that if we build a great Newark, we have a great Newark, then all those things are going to happen anyway. And that's what the committee thought was a really good idea. A new way of thinking. When we recruited people, we went after specific people. People who have diverse backgrounds, that were open-minded, and thoughtful individuals, and that they represented a stakeholder base that was important to the discussions that we had.

Now you know who was at the table and, now, we're going to talk about how they acted when they got to the table, if you will. So, we had ideas, you know, looking at the broad issue, isolating problems, not symptoms, creating solutions. Thinking, is it really a problem? What is it? How do we solve it? These were all the kinds of ideas and the way we focused our thinking. And that lead to solutions. That was the process that took us to solutions. So, we organized. We had all those meetings – seven meetings – that were well-attended. This committee, unless they had extraordinary things, were at every meeting. And we had interim preparation work. There's all sorts of things going on. Transparency was very important to us from the very beginning. Absolutely important. We did things that no one else has ever done. If this were a committee meeting and you were sitting in the audience, you would be invited to sit in on our group discussions. At the core level, when we're dealing with the exact nature of how we were going to fix this or what we were going to do, you would have been part of that. No one has

that kind of access in a typical situation. You get your three minutes at the podium and sit down. We did not do that. We gave value to each person that was here in the room. And I think that's transparency, or it's a piece of it.

So, our small groups dug into the issues. The report-outs, they captured more ideas because we then had the whole group interacting with them and saying, here, did you think of this? Did you think of that? Well, why did you say that? Really, why did you say that? So, it was that kind of interaction going on. The community, the participation, was a core part of our process. Our discussions were deep and long. There were multiple opportunities to challenge conclusions many times, maybe going from one month to the next, until we finally came to an agreement. It was a collaborative effort from beginning to end, and it was reflected in the good work that the committee did.

Will? Let me get out of here. Do you know how to use this thing? Did you know that this has something very, very special? Look at that. This is Will Hurd. I've been wanting to do that.

Mr. Hurd: Glad you got a chance there. Good evening. I'm Will Hurd, Planning Commissioner and local architect. I'm here to talk to everyone about the changing world of parking, as we saw it. A central part of this process was understanding the changing nature of our downtown area and how parking requirements fit into the new holistic model of development that we're seeing enacted elsewhere. As Lee noted, our current parking requirements are based on a suburban model where cars are the primary mode of transportation and they are designed to provide sufficient parking at every location. This requirement to provide a space for a car at every place it could be, produces an onerous supply of parking in a dense area like downtown. You see the results of this along Main Street, with tall first stories for parking and the need to combine lots to make a large building so that the required parking can be accommodated. Parking that often sits empty at the end of the day and during school breaks.

To support our City's desire to have our downtown become a vibrant place that attracts a variety of visitors, there needs to be a cultural shift away from the existing model that elevates the car, to an emerging model that accommodates many modes of transportation. As noted by one member of the public at our meetings, parking requirements and constantly expanding parking supply elevates one mode of transportation – the car – over all others. One effect of this is that the cost of private car travel, including parking, is rarely visible to the consumer.

The setting of minimum Code-required parking requirements now becomes a policy choice about what systems of transportation do we value and what broader goals and plans do we wish to support? Parking requirements affect many policy areas such as land use, environment, economics, and health. Only by stepping back and viewing parking in this larger context can we see the interconnections and start to make decisions in a holistic way. The vision of the current Comprehensive Plan desires complete streets that support all transportation options, as well as compact and mixed-use development that is pedestrian-friendly. As these other modes of transportation – walking, bicycling, transit, car-sharing, and ride-handling services – increase, we need to reevaluate our parking requirements and the locations of parking within the downtown area. These changes will prepare us for the future and the new populations that we want to live and work in the City.

Mr. Chris Locke: Free parking is not free. Parking comes at a cost not only to the property owner in increased construction cost or lost revenue, but it also comes at a cost to the City and its taxpayers and also to the environment. To the City and the taxpayer, it's a loss of property tax and a loss of utility revenue which is so important for the operating budget of the City of Newark. This loss is not a one-time loss, but a perpetual loss for generations to come. It's a cost to the environment by increasing the volume of stormwater and the quality of stormwater management, and the perpetuation of car pollution instead of other, cleaner modes of transportation.

Currently, a substantial amount of the most valuable real estate in our City is not being used effectively for the benefit of all the stakeholders of the City. Parking is not a UD problem, it is not a merchant problem, and it's not a downtown problem. It is a City problem. It affects all the citizens, businesses, and visitors to our City. UD had addressed their parking concerns by providing over 9,000 parking spaces throughout the City and creating their own bus system which had over 1.2 million riders last year. They've also constructed two parking garages in the last 15 years.

Private land owners have also provided a tremendous amount of space, but this comes at a substantial cost. These lands, as I said, are the most valuable pieces of real estate, and the lack of development comes at a loss of tax revenue and utility revenue. And these lands are vitally important to the commercial vibrancy of downtown. This is a property located on Delaware Avenue. You can see the amount of the building that's being used for parking, which is barely being used at all.

A vibrant downtown is not only good for business owners, but also to homeowners in increased real estate values. Young buyers and families looking to move to Newark are desiring to have a downtown area that has plenty of areas to eat, shop, and be entertained. By allowing parking spaces to be used differently, this would increase the amount of commercial space available for lease, which would bring lower rates for commercial spaces, which then would attract different types of retail businesses and start-up businesses. By allowing such a large amount of real estate to be used for parking, it actually also has an adverse effect on the type and cost of apartment housing that we want in the downtown. For example, much has been said in the past about the type of residential apartments in our downtown. However, the current parking regulations put a tremendous cost to developers and a prohibitive cost to have smaller apartments. The typical parking space is about 9' x 18', or 162 square feet. This could generate anywhere from another \$2,400 to \$4,800 of rental income for the property owner, which would then increase the value of the building, which increases the tax assessed value of the building. In most buildings over the last 20 years that have been developed, the City has lost anywhere between 25% and 30% in additional tax revenue. That doesn't count the tremendous amount of utility revenue that could have been generated as well.

The cost to the environment is also substantial. When looking at parking regulations, a lot of cities are looking to revamp their parking regulations. Parking lots become heat islands. They increase stormwater runoff and reduce groundwater recharge. Parking lots collect all sorts of pollution such as leaking oil and fluids from parked cars. Parking lots increase the volume of stormwater, which puts tremendous stress on stormwater management. Conversely, a well-designed development free from parking requirements reduces the negative effects on the environment. Parking regulations invite more drivers to downtown, adding to congestion and air pollution at the expense of other modes of transportation. What do we want for the future of our City and downtown? Would we rather have a sea of asphalt or modern buildings reflecting the history of our City for its citizens to engage each other? Frank?

Mr. McIntosh: Solutions create the need for resources – resources that are readily available or resources that have more of a stretch to it. But they all do that in one way or another. One of the tools that we used in the process of going through our research and our understanding of the issues and of the solutions was a gap analysis. If you're not familiar with that, it is simply to look at what the solutions are and determine the difference between what you have and what you need. And when you look at that, for some, you may say I've got what I need. I can do this now. I don't have anything in my way. Something else you might look at and say, well, I don't have the resources to do, I only have some of the resources to do. Well, that's a really great thing because now you can focus in on what can you do to close that gap. And that's where your energy is focused. So, what do I do? How important is that? Well, we determined that everything that was in this plan was important and we determined that it was vitally important. The only one that we didn't make absolutely vitally important was the garage, and yet that still seems like it's pretty important. But as this plan unrolls, and as what happens as a result of

this, and the increased numbers of people that come to our fair City, that garage is going to become very important. Very important.

So, we did a gap analysis on every solution. I believe we laid out some matrices that have policy implications and gap analysis in them. Now they're nice and color-coded and all that, and we worked with them very easily because we worked with them for seven months. The uninitiated might have a little bit more problem, but if you stick with it, you'll see where it goes. We looked at what it was and we laid it out. We knew what was going to be the reach and what could be done easily, and we put that all together. So, the idea is that it gives you a flow of activity. The low-hanging fruit that you've got everything for, you can just start. As a matter of fact, some of it is already underway because of that whole thing we talked about with the countdown spaces. We're experimenting with that right now. So, these, you have them in hardcopy, they'll be on the website as well as all the other material that was put here. Correct, Mary Ellen? When will they be there?

Ms. Mary Ellen Gray: Tomorrow.

Mr. McIntosh: Not bad. Tomorrow you can see them. So, the matrices, however, represent just a moment in time when they were created. So, things have happened since then and they may not be encompassing of everything that was here. We didn't need to recreate them because we already got from them what we needed as we went through to the resource piece of it.

So, what are the components of a solution? What do we do now, with the existing resources, and how do we pave the way for tomorrow, now? So, as we look at the right-now kinds of things, it's wayfinding, countdown signs, dynamic fee structure, GIS . . . those people, those of you who are [inaudible], those people are great. They're doing some wonderful things. Amazing things. Not to take away from anybody else, but it was just amazing for me. An app for smart phones. That's something we can do. We can do it right now. And collaborating with UD on parking spaces is easily done. And Richard Rind was a gem for our committee. Any thought of the University of Delaware flexing its muscles and whatnot, that was never seen. Richard did everything he could to help this group do its job. And he is a pretty smart guy and he knows a lot about parking, so we took advantage of his goodness.

How do we pave the way for tomorrow? If we don't have a marketing plan . . . you know, it's like the old adage of getting out in the harbor without a navigator. Not a good idea. Not a good idea. Moving this plan forward without a professional marketing plan is not a good idea. It's a really bad idea. We have to subscribe to a can-do mindset. It really isn't . . . we focused this down, we focused this so you know exactly where you have to go. They don't have to go over here or over there. Or is this going to work or not? We've got you where you need to focus your energy. So, just say I can do this. We have to think outside the box. We have to allocate the needed resources. Without them, it's sort of like those unfunded mandates we get from the state. How do you expect us to do that, by the way? We don't have any money to do that. Well, figure it out. Well, here, we can't say figure it out. We want to solve this. We want a new city with new ideas and creativity, we need to put the resources there, and be innovative and bring in new resources, and just have a lot of fun doing it.

So, for the marketing strategy, use an outside resource. Get people to think you can park in Newark. We can promote the City. We have a mindset from fight-to-park to park-and-stay. Park and stay. Come here and spend the day. It doesn't cost that much. You can put all your money into the merchants. Or you can go to a, you know, a soccer game at the University, or whatever it is that makes you happy. And keep being mindful that changing perspectives takes time and money. Lee?

Mr. Mikles: So, as a team, we looked at how can we adjust the demand? Again, there are times when there are too many spots and there are times when there's not enough. And, so,

how can we get the right people in the right spots at the right times? What are the things we can do to start to think differently? How can we better use that inventory?

One of the things that came out of our discussions was the employee needs. As was mentioned earlier, there are 200-300 employees, conservatively, that are working downtown and parking downtown, potentially taking guest spots, as well, downtown during our busy times for restaurants and late-night businesses, as it's a very busy time. Well, that's also a time when UD has a lot of extra parking. And, so, as part of this discussion, again, we discussed jointly how can we come up with these solutions, and the University has offered this to us as an after-hours parking solution. So, we can use their excess capacity for shifting the employee use. So, starting at 4:00 p.m., and most of the shifts start at 4:00 or 5:00 p.m., and all day on the weekends, for \$17 a month, an employee can get one of these monthly parking passes. The lots are managed and maintained by the University. They're patrolled by the University. They're good lots. They're not far away. They're right there, right off Main Street. And this is extra capacity that's not being used. So, this was a great solution that was proposed. But if it stops just there, nobody is going to use it. And, in fact, there are ideas like this that have been brought up before that just haven't been used. So, as was mentioned earlier, we need a comprehensive marketing plan so that we can make sure that the businesses know that this is available to them, and how to take advantage of it. Because a lot of the employees of these businesses aren't interacting with the University on a regular basis. So, we need to make it very clear to them as part of our overall marketing effort, how do we get them to take advantage of this resource. So, can we shift those employees off Main Street? Can we shift them to these other lots that are maintained and secure? Can we get them to shift there and make more parking available when it's needed? And these were just some of the ideas that were discussed.

I want to talk about my business, in particular. It's on Main Street and this is a view from the front. So, if you look here, the unshaded area is our lot, where the little red pin is. So Main Street is coming across the bottom here and it's a long bowling alley lot. Newark Shopping Center, as you face this, is to the left there. McDonald's and such would be over here. It's a great spot. I love Newark. It's where I've chosen to start my business. It's where my business partner and I both went to the University. It's where I got my engineering degree. It's where I got my master's degree. So, Newark was real important to us. We've been very, very fortunate with our success on Main Street and it's actually been great. And one of the biggest requests that we have as a business and missed opportunities that we have is for private dining. Our space just doesn't allow it. It wasn't designed that way from the beginning. But you see all these parking spots behind it, and we are fortunate that we have a large lot. One of the few that do. But we would love to be able to add to that. How can we take this property that's being well-received and how can we grow? Well, if we didn't have this parking obligation, we could expand. If you take the yellow area, we could expand the kitchen. And the people in the kitchen would be very happy about that because the kitchen was designed for a very small space. And then take the orange area and make that a private dining facility. Now, in doing that, we would increase the tax revenue to the City, we would increase the utility revenue to the City, we would have more opportunities for employment, and more opportunities for people to experience Main Street, downtown Newark, and our restaurant. And, like I said, this is something we would love to do. This is something that we've kicked around ideas on how can we sort of handle the parking issue, and we've always come to a stumbling block. But we would love to find ways to expand. And this is just us. This is just an example of one business on Main Street. And every business on Main Street probably has a story like this where, if parking wasn't such a big part of the conversation, that they could make better use of their resources and make better use of Main Street.

Mr. Locke: Currently in the City, the design of a building follows parking regulations. This is a property on South Main Street. Again, a tremendous amount of space being wasted for just some cars. What we should be doing is more properties like this, where the design of the building follows the people, not parking regulations. This is a building that had no parking available to it, as well as the building next to it. Our parking regulations that we currently have

have made us addicted to driving our cars to downtown rather than walking to downtown. We've become spoiled when we can't park exactly in front of favorite coffee shop or eatery. When I was younger, I grew up in an area of the country where we walked everywhere. It was in our mindset. We just walked everywhere. When my family moved here to Newark 40 years ago, we quickly realized that the only way to get around was to drive a car. My mother never even had a driver's license until we came down here. And not much has changed in our City over the last 40 years except there's a lot more cars.

This committee brought, as Frank said, every type of stakeholder to the table to achieve a holistic approach to solving the City's parking issues. We have to look at parking as a utility. Pricing for parking cannot be stagnant. It must be flexible, depending on supply and demand, depending on the time of day, and depending on the type of season that we are in. In our time as committee members, we learned many things. For example, the current parking voucher system must be revamped for both the benefit of the business owners and to minimize abuses of the voucher system. The vouchers have actually become almost de facto currency, like a bitcoin to be traded among people. Hey, you got some vouchers there? I got some vouchers. I'll buy you this. Okay, sounds good. We've also learned, as Lee and Frank have talked about, employees of businesses must park at remote areas so that the premium parking spaces can be used for both our customers and visitors to the downtown area. As Lee has spoken, UD has been instrumental in the proposal that they've come up with, but we have to do more. We also learned that Lot 2, which is right across the street from Lot 1 on Main Street, is strategically located as a premier parking lot and can be used to reduce the pressure of Lot 1, matching parking use and revenue. But right now, it is hamstrung by issuing monthly parking permits. That needs to be readdressed. And then the other solution and the other thing we observed, parking rates need to be flexible. Not because we're trying to pick winners and losers, but rather because the basic economic principle of supply and demand should be followed. Currently, UD charges \$2.00 an hour to park in their garage. We charge a lesser amount for more desirable spaces. If we want to induce and reduce a certain population of our City not to use the best parking spaces, then we need to use the economic model of supply and demand to counter that behavior. We have to look at parking like a bouquet of roses, like on Valentine's Day. This is a classic example of supply and demand. We've all been there. We're rushing around. We have to get roses for Valentine's Day and the same flowers that three days before were \$19.95 are now \$59.95. Why? Because the greater the demand, the higher the prices. Parking spaces are no different than roses. And just as the beautiful big roses are the most expensive, so should be the best parking spaces. By being creative with pricing, we can balance supply and demand, and also put a premium value on the most valuable parking spaces. Those who want to walk will be incentivized to park away from downtown by lower rates. And those who want to be right in the heart of downtown will pay for that luxury. In the end, these changes will make everybody happier.

Mr. Hurd: So, following these efforts to provide better information to drivers so they can find available parking and efforts to shift demand, the next step is to address how the Zoning Code currently determines parking requirements and how it also restricts the use of dedicated parking. We determined that the current requirements for parking in the Zoning Code have created some of the strategic issues we've identified, specifically the economic cost of parking, the lack of available employee parking in the evening, stormwater issues, and empty lots that can't be used to buffer times of peak demand. Minimum parking requirements are often not based on research or analysis, but rather on what neighboring municipalities do or on political and economic forces that desire convenient and free parking. These requirements become the real limit to urban density and a barrier to creating a walkable and sustainable city, as well as restricting varied housing opportunities.

So here are four different uses on the same lot. You can see how the different parking requirements change the size of the building that can be built and the effect this has on the streetscape. We can see here how form follows parking. Many communities are beginning to address these issues through parking reforms that better suit their policies and goals. Building on that, the committee recommends that the City revise the minimum parking requirements

for the downtown area. Specifically, we suggest the following solutions; solutions that have been successfully implemented by innovative cities that are seeking to create a vibrant and sustainable downtown core. We feel that these changes, taken as a whole, will create a better downtown for all users – residents, students, visitors, employees and business owners. We propose creating two parking districts in the downtown area. One that encompasses the high-density area along Main Street and Delaware Avenue, and the second that contains the medium-density area surrounding downtown.

In the high-density district, we suggest that the Zoning Code be changed to remove the minimum requirements for parking from all uses. Many cities are enacting similar changes to allow for growth for redevelopment. For residential uses, this decoupling of parking from bedrooms shifts the cost of car ownership directly to the renter and removes the current subsidy paid by all tenants for the land dedicated to parking. In a well-managed comprehensive parking system, there will be many alternative parking locations at a variety of price points that a resident can use. With no parking requirements, apartment buildings can create public space within or come up to the street. The garage front style shown here is one that is very familiar downtown. For commercial uses, this will allow the ability to redevelop existing buildings and provide full use of the lot, providing better stormwater management, a larger variety of uses, and an increase in the tax base. Any excess parking attached to an existing building now becomes available to the market, for use by business owners and employees.

Within the medium-density area surrounding the downtown, an area we feel is within comfortable walking distance to amenities, we suggest setting the off-street parking to half of the current requirement for shopping centers. In conjunction with these changes, we recommend that the Code be revised to allow the management of previously dedicated parking by private entities, who can offer the spaces to a variety of users depending on time of day and time of year. This additional supply helps shift demand away from the City lots and meters.

This is a map of cities around the country that have removed or are considering reductions to their parking requirements. All the green dots are cities that have no parking minimums in their downtown areas, blue is where they have lowered the minimums, and the orange areas are those that are considering changes to their requirements.

The remainder of the City would remain with the current requirements. We suggest adding provisions to the Code to allow for reduction in the required parking based on specific amenities that encourage alternate modes of transportation such as bike lockers for businesses, car-sharing for residences, and ride-hailing spaces for restaurants and bars. Finally, in conjunction with the Code changes, we recommend that the Planning Department develop a framework to determine the expected parking needs of the future. Parking requirements place parking on prime areas of land downtown and we, as a city, need to start thinking about the cost of locating parking there, and start to shift new parking development to the edges. The University of Delaware has recognized this need and developed their own transit system to support remote parking, which allows them to continue to add buildings to their main campus area. Taken together, these holistic adjustments to the Code and the development of an integrated parking management system will allow the downtown area to grow in a sustainable manner.

Mr. McIntosh: When Chris was talking, it reminded me of a time a few years ago when the family got together and drove up to Boston to watch a baseball game and we wanted to see . . . well, my youngest daughter said we want to go, and I said it's not going to be possible because the Yankees are in, and there's no seats. And she said, you said that about Boston Garden and now they've torn it down. So, I redoubled my effort and we got tickets for the game. So, we went. We piled everybody in the car and went up there. We had a grand old time but there's no parking around Fenway Park. The park part is an illusion. There is no parking. So, the gas stations, they don't close down but they give all their space to parking and they leave a little bit for somebody to get gas. So, I pulled into a nice space and, you know, as a kid I was a season ticket-holder, and so I was down there all the time and this was one of the places we went to

park our car. So, he said to me after I parked the car, that will be \$60. And I said, come again with cream cheese? Sixty dollars, he said. I said, well I really wasn't trying to lease the space. I just want it for a couple of hours while we played a baseball game here. He said, sir, you can go to any other lot you want around here and they're all going to be \$60 or more. So, do you want this space or do you want me to give it to somebody else? That's the dynamics of parking. If somebody wants something, they're going to get it. And one last comment, I've seen that slide of the roses a lot and you refer to Valentine's Day. That's my birthday. And I have never gotten any of those roses like that, ever. I'm just saying.

So, our parking solutions . . . I'm sorry for those digressions . . . parking solutions envision a new Newark. We want to put the new back in Newark, and we want to emphasize it. And to that end, in a way of wrapping up, it's a holistic approach. You've heard that word time and again, because it is, and we have to get it into our head. You can't take little pieces. They have to all come together. They have to all work together. They have to get into the sand yard and play nice. That's what they have to do. That would be the sand box. It could be a yard, I guess.

So, holistic to an evolving Newark. Solutions are intertwined with each other. The strength of the plan. The strength of the plan – you can't take out and you can't cherry-pick. It provides for things that depend upon each other for success. Newark wins and the stakeholders get something . . . everybody gets something in this. Nobody does not get something. Newark gets a lot but all the stakeholders get something. Restaurants get new customers. Workers pay less to park. Events are more manageable and encourage more participation. The University fills more spaces and students have more opportunities. The developers can focus on what works best for them and the City. And the City receives more tax dollars. A lot more tax dollars if you add up all the things that we've talked about. Newark becomes walkable, bikeable, parkable, eatable and entertainable. That's what we're looking for. That's the vision. People want to come here. They want to be able to walk around without smelling fumes. They want to be able to bike if they choose to. Take that great trail that goes up through the reservoir and so on, and land downtown. We have great restaurants, so let's have people sit in the chairs and eat at them. Don't make the decision to go to Capers and Lemons because they have a big parking lot. Go to Taverna. The same owners. They'll be happy. They don't care. Entertainable. We have a lot of things going on. The University has things going on all the time. We can promote that and we should promote that. And we have things going on all the time. So, all we have to do is make ourselves parkable. That's all we have to do. And it can be done. Newark is known in that respect. It is a wonderful thing. The government, the staff, the community unite behind this new look. They're open-minded and they recognize the time, energy, and commitment are all part of the plan. You can't just ignore that. It can't happen tomorrow but it will happen over time. We talked about these solutions. They're in your hand-out; you can look at them. When we're doing this and when we're involved in implementing the plan, more solutions will come about. That's the iterative nature of this kind of planning. So, there will be more things that we'll think about as we go along. Or because we've done something, something else will come about. And it just grows from that. It grows and it prospers. The plan is a living document. All plans are. And it's meant to be upgraded. Solutions cover more than the issues stated and the collateral coverage will solve less important problems, as well.

What's next? Well, the end of this presentation part of this meeting is just a few seconds away. That's part of what's next. There will be presentations to the Planning Commission and to the City Council. Implementation plans are under development in the Planning Department, where they are appropriately assigned. It's not our job to come up with implementation, but we did take the opportunity as Mike was giving us some feedback on things that he was doing for us to give them feedback on what we thought of that kind of implementation and what might be better and might not be as good. So, educating the stakeholders is a vital part of this plan. Because Lee gets it doesn't mean somebody else is going to get it, unless we talk to them. And that has to be part of it. And demonstrating the benefits to them. So, all of this stuff, it's here. We know what we have to do. The question now is, let's get out and do it. Just do it. Who came up with that?

Mr. Locke: You did.

Mr. McIntosh: No, I thought that was somebody else. A swoosh. Just do it. But that is what it is. Just do it. And we got here because of the collective intelligence and work of the committee, and I would be remiss if I didn't say something about somebody before I close this meeting off, and that's Jim Jones sitting here in the audience. As a participant and as a citizen, he made countless observations, he educated us in areas that he's smart about. We tried to educate him in areas that he wasn't, so that enabled him to go to Germany and drink beer. But he did some great work for us and we are so thankful for that, Jim.

So, with that, that closes our presentation and we would entertain any questions or comments that you might have. Yes?

Ms. Caitlin Olsen: Should I use a mike?

Mr. McIntosh: Sure, a mike is important. Mike, could you get a mike?

Ms. Olsen: Caitlin Olsen, University of Delaware, but I'm here as a friend. I also think Rich Rind is a gem. Two things that I was thinking. One is I know you talk about the rates, say, in Lot 1 where we have a lot of students and faculty and staff are parking there, and trying to equal it out so that we push them to the UD lots. I just worry about that raising the prices for the people who are there for lunch. I mean, we're not asking them when they come into the lot who they are. Just to think about that. We don't want to hurt the businesses in any way. And then the other thing I was thinking, unfortunately, the next couple of years, Main Street is going to be under construction, so at points there are going to be large parts of Main Street where there is no parking in certain areas, along the lots and things like that. So, I just worry, I really want the marketing to work out so that we can really get the word out about the signage and the maps and all that. I just don't want people to think they're being tricked because they're coming down and there are cones everywhere. So, just something to think about because these next couple of years are going to be a little rough. So, maybe the original marketing may have to be about that and where people can go, and then we kind of switch to, well, these are the regular lots and these are good times and good rates, and all that. So, just a couple of thoughts.

Mr. Locke: A response to the two parts. In regard to rates, I didn't say Lot 1 would be equal. It could be more. So, that would be determined by the necessary bodies that have to determine those. In regard to the construction on Main Street, being the chairman, also, of the Merchant Committee, I can tell you that all that construction is being done at night and they are sensitive to the businesses, as well as the needs of the community. So, most of that will be done at night and be done early in the morning before we even get up and start using Main Street.

Mr. McIntosh: Anybody else? Well, either we were totally brilliant and answered all of your questions . . . and let's go with that. I like that.

Mr. Locke: Yeah, let's go with that.

Mr. McIntosh: Why would we move off of that really good point that I just made? So, it is about time for tip-off, and so, therefore, it's about time for us to leave. Thank you so much for coming.

There being no further discussion, the Planning Commission Parking Subcommittee public workshop ended at 8:11 p.m.¹

As transcribed by Michelle Vispi
Planning and Development Department Secretary

¹ The final meeting of the Planning Commission Parking Subcommittee was held on April 11, 2018.

Attachments

Exhibit A: [Parking Subcommittee report](#)

Exhibit B: [Parking Subcommittee presentation](#)