

Lynchburg Parking Authority - Public Input Meeting Minutes

Parlor Ballroom
108 9th St. Lynchburg, VA 24504
Wednesday, April 10, 2013
5:30 P.M. – 7:30 P.M.

Members Present: Vice Chair, Ed Koepenick
Council Member, Randy Nelson
Thorne McCraw
Tobi Jaeger
Urs Gabathuler

Members Absent: Chairman, Brandon Farmer and Jackie Wilkes

Staff Present: Kim Payne, Bonnie Svrcek, Valeria Chambers, Norman Hale, David Owen, Kent White, Brian Gleason, Tamara Rosser, Lee Newland, Joann Martin, Catherine Henry, Jennifer Kennedy, Charisse Curtis

Others Present: Mike Connor (Desman & Associates), Anna Bentson (Lynch's Landing), Ron Staton (Executive Director of CVCJTA), Alicia Petska (News & Advance), Carleigh Griffeth (ABC 13 WSET-TV)

A special public meeting of the Parking Authority of the City of Lynchburg was held on the 10th day of April, 2013, at 5:30 P.M. in the Parlor Ballroom, Ed Koepenick, Vice Chair, presiding. The purpose of the meeting was to provide the results of the Downtown Parking Deck Feasibility Plan conducted and presented to City Council on January 8, 2013. City Council requested that the Parking Authority study the plan and bring a recommendation back to Council for consideration.

Community Development Director, Kent White presented a brief history of downtown revitalization and growth including the Downtown Riverfront and Master Plan. Mr. White promoted public and private partnerships in order to reap the potential economic benefits of downtown. Mr. White stated that the parking issue is not a bad problem to have because it demonstrates the successes downtown Lynchburg has experienced to rebuild its population and commerce.

Economic Development Coordinator, Brian Gleason, reported on the growth of downtown commerce, redevelopment, and retail. Mr. Gleason presented the increase in business permits over the past few years within the Central Business District and showed areas of interest for future business construction. Approximately \$22.4 million of business permits were purchased over the past 8 years for downtown development, which, equated to \$87 million of private investments. With the increasing redevelopment projects, workers employed in downtown, customer base generated from local attractions and retail, and growing population, additional parking will be needed to support these events.

Parking Manager, Norman Hale, presented a brief history of downtown parking studies. The City of Lynchburg conducted three parking studies over the last 18 years: on October 13, 1995, Wilbur Smith Associates prepared and presented a downtown parking study to the Lynchburg Parking Authority; Sasaki Associates, Inc. presented the Lynchburg Downtown & Riverfront Plan in February 2001 (included was a parking plan); and in September 14, 2007, Carl Walker, Inc. presented the Lynchburg Strategic Parking Plan. Council endorsed the Lynchburg Strategic Parking Plan on December 11, 2007.

During the City of Lynchburg Parking Authority meeting on October 11, 2011, Central Virginia Criminal Justice Academy requested the Parking Authority consider sharing the cost to build a new downtown parking deck. The motion was proposed and seconded. It passed 7-0, and the Parking Authority requested that an engineering consultant be retained to study the feasibility of a new Downtown Parking Deck. February 22, 2012, a RFP was released to conduct a downtown parking deck feasibility plan. Five proposals were received. Desman & Associates was selected on June 5, 2012 to develop a Downtown

Parking Deck Feasibility Plan. During Lynchburg City Council meeting on January 8, 2013, the results of the Downtown Parking Deck Feasibility Plan were presented by Desman & Associates to City Council and the Parking Authority.

Desman & Associates, Michael Connor, presented the results of the Downtown Parking Deck Feasibility Plan including stakeholder interviews, review of the existing parking system, potential development sites for a parking deck, operational improvements, and financial ramifications. Mr. Connor stated that based on the development site comparison, building a parking deck at the 12th Street and Commerce Street site would be the most cost effective while maximizing parking spaces, and would be beneficial to the residential and retail development occurring in that area. The potential parking deck would be 4 supported levels and hold a total of 465 parking spaces.

Vice Chair, Ed Koeppenick, reviewed funding mechanisms for the parking deck including the utilization of public and private partnerships, debt services, and reiterated the Desman & Associates recommendations presented by Mr. Connor.

Forty downtown residents, business owners, developers, and property owners attended the public meeting and participated in group discussions. The forty attendees were divided into six groups; and were asked to provide recommendations and suggestions to the following three questions:

1. If parking is not addressed, how will it affect you, your business, quality of life, etc.?
 - Not enough parking for residents downtown
 - Less desirability for tenants/residents to move downtown
 - Impact business revenue
 - Cannot retain customers without sufficient parking
 - Businesses would close or re-locate
 - Reduces tourism, customers, sales, etc.
 - barrier to business access
 - Jeopardize existing developments and redevelopment projects
 - Limits growth of downtown
 - Holds back economic development
 - Decreases property values
 - Destroys the downtown area

2. If a parking deck is not constructed, what would you recommend to improve the parking situation downtown?
 - Not an option
 - Downtown Lynchburg needs a new parking deck
 - Paid on-street parking meters
 - Parking pass that “waves” or discounts meter fees for frequent downtown visitors
 - Market valuation of parking
 - Control prices to better incentivize private construction of parking facilities
 - Improved way finding signs
 - Most people cannot find the public parking facilities with the current signs
 - Will increase off-street parking revenue
 - Increases on-street parking availability
 - Private/Public partnerships
 - Private parking lot owners share resources/existing parking facilities
 - Creative incentives for private owners to open their parking facilities to the public
 - Parking Management Agreements
 - City of Lynchburg should buy more of the private parking facilities downtown
 - City of Lynchburg should create/zone more free on-street parking spaces
 - The City should incentivize the private sector to build parking facilities
 - Grants/Financial Assistance
 - Parking concierge, valet services, shuttle/trolley programs

- Better, more consistent, stringent enforcement
 - Hire more Parking Ambassadors to create more turnover on the street
 - Offer more residential on-street parking permits
 - Stop downtown employees from parking on the street
 - Encourage larger downtown employers to provide parking to their employees to free-up on-street parking spaces
 - Start image campaign to raise public awareness about parking issue
3. How do you think the cost of the public portion of the deck should be funded? (Paid on-street parking, borrowing, etc.)
- Paid on-street parking meters
 - Higher premium for on-street parking
 - Continue free on-street parking and increase ticket and parking permit prices
 - Value parking assets to leverage funds for off street (Market Value)
 - Establish long-term lease commitments
 - Developers/customers to prepay parking spaces
 - Proportional cost-sharing
 - If there were better signs for public parking, then people would use the paid spaces which will contribute revenue to the building of a new deck.
 - Low interest bonds
 - Public Debt Service - pay back with deck revenues
 - City of Lynchburg should reevaluate public infrastructure priorities (\$1 million dollars/year for infrastructure development)
 - Private Investors
 - Create a venture capital fund

At the close of group discussion, Economic Development Coordinator, Brian Gleason, told guests that there is an Enterprise Zone, which provides investment incentives covering 4,200 acres of commercial property in Lynchburg. The Incentives include cash grants for real estate investments and job creation, along with local benefits for qualifying investments. Qualified real property investments now include parking decks and lots. There is a 20% cash grant for real property rehabilitation investments above a \$100,000 threshold and a 20% cash grant for new construction investments above a \$500,000 threshold. The grants are capped at \$100,000 for investments less than \$5 million and \$200,000 for investments of \$5 million or more.

City Manager, Kimball Payne, thanked the attendees for their interest and ideas. Mr. Payne noted that many attendees recommended that the parking deck be funded by public debt service. Considering Lynchburg's highest parking permit rates are about \$50/month, Mr. Payne asked Mr. Connor how much it would cost to fund the new deck. Mr. Connor replied that approximately \$180 - 200 per space per month with construction costs, debt service, maintenance and operational costs. Mr. Payne concluded with a brief question and answer session.

Vice Chair, Ed Koepenick adjourned the meeting.

Next Steps

- Next meeting will be held on April 25, 2013 at 2:00 P.M., City Hall, 2nd Floor, Training Room