

TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMISSION

Minutes of Public Hearing
November 18, 2004

Downers Grove Public Works Building
5101 Walnut Avenue, Downers Grove

I. OPENING OF MEETING

Chairman Gress called the Transportation Advisory Commission meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Present: Chairman Lawrence Gress
Chairman Robert Kollmar
John Loper
Richard Mueller
Geoffrey Neustadt
Anthony Schiller
Linda Kunze, Downtown Management Corp., ex-officio,

Absent: Robert Nastal

Staff present: Dave Barber, Director of Public Works
Dorin Fera, Traffic Division Manager
Officer Tim Sembach, Parking Enforcement Division
Kirsten Coulman, Recording Secretary

Residents: Mr. Jim Mulqueeney, 1190 Parker Avenue
Mr. William Waldack, 1409 Willard
Ms. Shannon Malik (student)

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

October 21, 2004 Minutes - Minutes were approved on motion by Commissioner Schiller, seconded by Commissioner Mueller.

Aye: Schiller, Neustadt, Mueller, Loper, Kollmar, Gress

Nay: None

MOTION PASSED. VOTE: 6-0

III. MONTHLY REPORT FOR OCTOBER 2004

a. Ridership Update - Mr. Barber reported there were 273 riders but during the Columbus day holiday ridership was low. Ridership numbers for this year were lower than last year.

b. Parking Deck Daily Fee Use - There appears to be a positive growth trend but the deck is not full. Mr. Barber indicated that approximately 400 people were on the waiting list for Main Street but must be finding other areas to park because 160 park deck spaces still existed. Approximately 650 people were on the entire waiting list. Due to the cheaper monthly parking versus daily fee (\$3.00 per day), he believed those figures were driving people towards purchasing monthly permits. Commissioner Mueller asked whether Mr. Barber could create a profit and loss graph for the month to see if some adjustments could be made to the fees, wherein Mr. Barber indicated the deck was not intended to be a revenue-generating facility, however, some revenue was anticipated from employee permits and the daily fee, which was averaging approximately \$300 per day. The issue

was that 250 or more spaces existed but would disappear next year when the Curtiss block is developed and not everyone could be directed into the deck.

Per a question, Mr. Barber explained that when part-time staff was culling the waiting list, they were not asking the individuals how they were getting to the station. More recently, staff performed a license-plate check on everyone in the daily fee spaces. The police station will cross-reference the list of license plates and the individuals on the waiting list to identify those who are on the waiting list. In November, periodic counts of the deck will be taken for occupancy purposes.

Ms. Kunze asked whether meters on Warren would be removed wherein Mr. Barber explained that on-street parking will be reviewed by an outside contractor with the goal of having certain hours for certain areas. Mr. Barber will be speaking to the Parking and Traffic Commission and some ideas being considered by staff are to take the daily fee meters off the street and place them into the parking deck in order to provide more turnover for businesses.

Referring to the buses, approximately 30 to 40 bus signs are up. Staff is working with a consultant to review the bus routes. Staff did meet with the owner of the proposed Park & Ride site at 63rd Street, who seemed interested in using his land. The site has the potential for 51 spaces. Therefore, the southwest route may be reviewed to drop off riders at the Belmont station. Commissioner Schiller mentioned the fact that hazardous conditions seemed to exist in the winter at those bus stops where a "T" intersection existed and riders were forced to wait in the street. Mr. Barber said Mr. Fera would follow up and coordinate with the police department.

Continuing, Mr. Barber indicated that he is considering having an earlier and later route run for the southern portion of the Village, per a bus driver survey. Approximately 40 to 50 individuals were interested in the expansion of bus routes.

c. Marketing Activities - The marketing material is being installed on the buses. To date, four contracts exist. A policy was recently revised to include advertising for the interior of bus.

d. Advertising Activities - Copies of marketing articles were in commissioners' packets. Per Mr. Loper's question regarding fare savings for use of the shuttle, Mr. Barber explained the computation was based on 21 working days. The Local Transportation Subcommittee did discuss the advantages of someone purchasing a monthly ticket versus daily permit, and, after some discussion, the fee was brought back in line with what it was prior to the 2003 rate change. Addressing fleet maintenance, Mr. Barber explained a per unit mileage can be assessed to calculate cost per mile as compared to PACE's program, but the Village's cost will be higher due to the lesser amount of miles traveled as compared to PACE. In December, staff will address alternatives for purchasing buses.

Positive comments were received on the bus signs. Chairman Kollmar conveyed that once the routes were expanded, staff should really "splash" it across the newspapers, since it appears those steps attract more riders. A question was also raised as to whether the bus drivers provided their own feedback if they could work earlier or later. Mr. Fera indicated the drivers were asked but no responses have been received from the supervisor to date. As to the fee paid by the Village to the owners of the Park & Ride facilities, Chairman Kollmar asked whether the owners would be willing to barter away the fee for advertisement on the buses so that a no-cost cash transaction existed between the parties. Mr. Barber explained the fee was very low and the number of cars are tracked in the lot. Once a year the Village sends a check to the owner of the lot.

Chairman Kollmar offered to meet with staff and the consultant to review the bus route scenarios. Mr. Barber concurred and asked the commissioners to send him any information they had in order to reduce the cost of the consultant. Mr. Barber estimated he would have the consultant's information by January 2005.

- e. Review of Service Enhancement Action Plan - The Rider Appreciation program at Joyful's was successful with a 70% response.

IV. DUPAGE AREA TRANSIT PLAN

- a. Presentation by Bob Dean - This matter was deferred to next month.

V. HANG TAGS AND STICKERS FOR COMMUTER PARKING (continued from October)

Per staff, the process of going from decals to the hang tags has begun. Approximately 600 to 800 parking tickets a quarter were being issued to vehicles for improper display of their quarterly stickers. Mr. Barber presented a proto-type of the hang tag/badge, believing the new tag would address many of the concerns being expressed and hoped to have it ready by January 2005. Officer Sembach explained the new tags were smaller in size but according to Illinois Vehicle Code, anything hanging from the mirror which obstructed vision was illegal. It was open for interpretation, however. He believed the smaller tags would not obscure vision. Regarding tickets issued specifically for obstruction purposes after drivers left the lot, Officer Sembach and Mr. Barber were not aware of any tickets issued throughout the Village. Discussion followed that this commission should forward a positive recommendation to permit staff to move forward without seeing the finished product in order to meet the first quarter deadline and due to vendor time. Mr. Barber and Mr. Kozlowski would work together and send out a letter to all commuters explaining the new process and why it was implemented. Due to concerns about the letter being forward to Village Council without this commission's approval, Mr. Barber stated he would forward the letter and samples to the commissioners for their review and feedback.

Dialogue arose that it was important to include the new modifications to the hang tag/badge holder in the Village's ordinance so as not to delay the process and to reduce the number of tickets being issued. Dimensions of the hang tag and badge followed: tag: 2-3/4" inches x 6" inches; badge: 3" inches x 4" inches approximately.

COMMISSIONER MUELLER MOVED TO DIRECT MR. BARBER AND STAFF TO PROCEED ON THE CREATION OF THE NEW HANG TAG STICKER AND HOLDERS AND TO ORDER THEM FOR DISTRIBUTION FOR FIRST QUARTER 2005. SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER SCHILLER.

MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE. 6:0

VI. REPORT ON GROVE SHUTTLE REVENUES & EXPENSES THROUGH 10/31/04

- a. Discussion of Strategic Objectives - Per staff, the journal entries to the reports have not been completed yet, however, Mr. Barber reported expenses were over by approximately 2% to 3% and 3% to 5% on revenues, or a deficit of approximately \$300,000, which was discussed at prior meetings. In order to prepare for the budget for next year, staff will be focusing on increasing ridership, increasing revenue, and reviewing routes and Park & Rides. Staff indicated there was a comment that the monthly parking rate should be the same as the monthly bus ride to create some equity in taking the bus versus parking in the downtown parking lots, which idea was not reviewed internally by staff. To date, revenue was not being tracked per lot.

- b. Begin Discussion on Rates (Parking & Transit) - Dialog followed that the rates should be based on distance and desirability of the location to the train station and non-residents should pay a premium no matter what lot they use, wherein Mr. Barber indicated only a handful of non-resident

commuters used the downtown lots. Discussion followed on the difficulty of tracking residents and non-residents in the parking deck. Conversation was also raised on the fact that with the agreement with Metra, staff would not raise the \$3.00 daily fee rate, but rather, consider raising the monthly permit fee. Chairman Gress asked staff whether it was appropriate to put a recommendation together to raise the rates based on resident, non-resident, and lot location proximity, to coincide with the issuance of the stickers for the next quarter. Staff did not believe it was necessary because the budget process was beginning and the matter would have to go through the public process. As in the past, rates were adjusted in July, or, the third quarter.

Chairman Gress recalled one of the questions from the July 2002 report addressed annual payment versus quarterly payment for parking and sixty percent preferred to pay annually. Staff indicated that an annual permit was considered and could be put into effect in July, during the annual budget process, and could provide reduced administrative costs. Further discussion followed on whether a fee could be assessed to those individuals on the waiting list to remain on the waiting list, thereby culling the list down. Staff was not sure about assessing an ongoing fee but conveyed that from discussions with other towns east of the Village, a \$50 non-refundable fee was not well received, even though it would have been applied to the first quarter payment. Tracking the money was an issue. A one-time fee could possibly be reviewed. Chairman Gress indicated he was trying to find funding and mentioned that it could push some individuals off the wait list and onto the buses.

Mr. Barber pointed out the notion that Metra would like to remove the monthly parking and use the daily park fee, thereby doubling the revenue and reducing staff's administrative costs. Discussion arose that the Village raised parking rates two years ago but then lowered them shortly thereafter due to issues raised by Metra. Mr. Barber provided some of the details of Metra's verbal commitment regarding capital improvements promised to the village which were not completed to date, and agreed discussions with Metra were necessary. It was noted that revenue could be doubled if those lots closest to the train station became daily fee lots. It was also noted that lots could be oversold given their larger size and were easier to manage.

Commissioner Loper agreed that due to the short time frame, it was important to develop some of the scenarios and develop a cost index for increased rates. Mr. Barber suggested commissioners provide him any information to provide a cost analysis. Chairman Kollmar stated that while he liked staff's rate schedule listed in its memo, it was missing an "average cost per mile for personal vehicle use" figure in the calculation. Once that figure was determined, the cost of operating a car may not be considered a viable option for individuals who could use another form of transportation. Mr. Barber agreed and would come up with alternatives in a spreadsheet.

VII. OLD BUSINESS - None

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

Commissioner Schiller handed out a draft letter (for discussion purposes) which he would like to be sent to those individuals on the waiting list, discussing the available parking options, the fact that parking spaces will become diminished in the future, and to offer them a bus ticket for a certain period of time, survey them on the service, and eventually convert them to regular bus riders. Mr. Barber would work with Mr. Kozlowski to draft a promotional piece.

Resident Jim Mulqueeny, 1180 Parker, liked the letter and suggested that the letter be individually addressed in order for the rider to provide identification in order to receive the free ride.

Chairman Kollmar suggested that it would be advantageous for this commission to provide an update at Village Council meetings of the discussions and goals taking place at this commission,

such as the strategic plan. Commissioner Neustadt provided bus route maps he revised and offered to speak to the Village Council on a regular basis on behalf of the TAC.

Resident Bill Waldack, 1409 Willard, commended the commission for its work and said he attended the October 21, 2004 DuPage Transportation "Are We Meeting the Challenge" forum and shared some of the statistics from that meeting, including the fact that Downer Grove's Main Street train station, out of 255 stations, ranked 4th; the Belmont station ranked 23rd; and Fairview ranked 114. The bus transportation in DuPage County was at 6% and he believed there was room for improvement. Other statistics and programs followed, i.e., the "I Go" program. Mr. Waldack also attended the Interagency Paratransit Coordinating Council meeting ("IAPCC"), of which he is the vice-chairman, and expressed concern that there was no representative from Downer Grove at the IAPCC meetings. Mr. Barber asked to be carbon copied since Mr. Balicki has not been able to attend those meetings. Mr. Waldack encouraged the Village to begin intergovernmental relationships with the township as it relates to the Dial-A-Ride program, since both entities were ideal for the program and could save money on the taxi subsidiary program. Mr. Barber indicated the financing department was reviewing the program currently. Lastly, Mr. Waldack announced that on December 4, 2004 the Village Council will be holding a public input session on the upcoming budget. Mr. Waldack would provide minutes to staff.

Discussion followed on the chosen developer for the Curtiss Lot, which was Opus. To date, a development agreement with Opus has not been finalized and will be worked out within the next 60 to 90 days. Mr. Barber reviewed the next steps for the plans, i.e., permitting process, Plan Commission review, etc., explaining that this commission was not in the formal review process for the project. Responding to Mr. Waldack's question, there was no public input received in choosing the developer; however, the Village Council would provide the public an opportunity to speak on the matter. Conversation followed regarding the status of keeping part of the post office's operations in downtown Downer Grove. The next TAC meeting date was confirmed as December 16, 2004.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Mueller made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:28 p.m. Commissioner Loper seconded the motion.

Motion passed by voice vote. 6:0

Respectfully submitted,
(as transcribed by tape)

/s/ Celeste K. Weilandt
Celeste K. Weilandt, Recording Secretary