



CITY OF HENDERSONVILLE DOWNTOWN ADVISORY BOARD - LOCATION CHANGE



City Operations Building | 305 Williams Street| Hendersonville NC 28792
Tuesday, June 13, 2023 – 4:00 PM

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

In Attendance –
Caroline Gunther
Mark Pavao
Joseph Dinan
Carol Sitzler
Matthew Hickman
John Ryan
Chris Cormier
Patsy Dupre
Gerald Fitzgerald
Heang H Uy

Also present: Councilwoman Debbie Roundtree

Absent:
Jared Bellmund
Phil Wilmont
Anthony McMinn

Staff present: Jamie Carpenter, Downtown Manager, Lew Holloway, Brian Pahle, Brandy Heatherly, Sgt. Garret Gardin, Terry Jacobs, Dakota Parker

2. **PUBLIC COMMENT** – Matthew Hickman made a motion move public comment regarding parking to be after presentation. John Ryan seconded the motion. All were in favor.
3. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA** – Jerry Fitzgerald made a motion to approve, Patsy DuPre seconded. All were in favor.
4. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
 1. April Downtown Advisory Board Minutes – Matthew made a motion to approve. Patsy DuPre seconded. All were in favor.
5. **NEW BUSINESS**
 1. Parking Review – Brian Pahle, Assistant City Manager presented on the current income/finances

Short term and long term solutions provided:

Short term – within a 3 month period

- Remove 30 minute zones
- ADA spaces free
- Citation rates
- More signage / kiosks

Long term – less than one year

- Pay by half hour
- Enforcement hours
- Resident discount
- Avenue rate different
- South end permits

Chair Caroline Gunther opened up the meeting for public comment –

Daryl Waldrop – Owns 4 businesses on Main St + 5th Ave W

Foot traffic increases about 5% per year

YTD sales down 5.5%

Transactions down 11%

Some contributed to the economy, payroll increase COGS increase due to inflation, looking at about 30% drop in adjusted sales. Seeing families in a rush to get to parking space before the hour is up. Not seeing people strolling down main street, seeing dad hurrying family for the day. Please consider stopping the pay to park. Understand charging needs to happen. Penalize employees/businesses for employee parking. Would like to have space on Main between Church and King free. Not sure that they'll survive with the amount of drops

Lisa Waldrop -

Hearing the 30 minutes / hour free is too quick of a turnover of the parking spaces because people are getting out and running back before their time is up. The free hour is not really free because it charges double. Impulse buys are what brings their sales, stopping and strolling. Watching their clock is what is problematic. Stress on customer and stress on the merchant because they don't have the freedom to walk/enjoy downtown. Town is as good as its downtown, all they are hearing is complaints about parking and being rushed to get back to cars. Have not had a birthday party at Gem Mine since parking has been canceled.

Super buckets at gem mine are down because of the time. They are selling the smaller buckets that take less time.

Just doing the same / breaking even from last year, you are down.

Later hours / open later – gets busier later in the day but people cannot be there all day to accommodate the free hours in morning and at night. Cannot afford to hire extra people to come in for store.

Number of transactions is decreased.

Traci English – High Country Furniture

Biggest issue is confusion – the 30 minutes free is confusing – they don't sign in / check in. If there was one way – the process is confusing. Payment is not as big of an issue.

Barbara Glassman – Would like to suggest a group of volunteers to be ambassadors on blocks – help people to download the app, show them how to do things and be a friendly face. Retired people as ambassadors.

Merit Wolfe – Wine Sage Gourmet –

Thinks the implementation has been the most challenging. People are confused about what they are supposed to do, where to go. Signs are too high on pole. Half hour increments are a big issue. Making people renew for an hour is problematic. Have customers that like the quick and convenient parking but do not know about checking in.

Employee parking – the employee parking is problematic – burden on employees and the cost issues.

Sales are flat, foot traffic is down.

Caroline Gunther read emails from people who could not be here today:

Barbara Hughes – Narnia – customer feeling

Ken & Sharon Allen – property owner/manager on Main Street – frustration with customer experience. Ticket prices/experiences. All restaurants are hurting

Morgan Futrell – haven't felt the strain, we love being able to find a spot

Lily & Michael Hall – Tempo – sad the hourly parking fee is a negative factor. Free parking was to encourage more downtown shopping to compete with free mall shopping / online. New fees and schedule to improve upon – have visually witnessed fewer shoppers downtown. Regular customers have ideas: 1. Hourly fee reduced from \$2 to \$1 per hour. 2. Suggest afternoon hour be changed to 5-5:30pm to help with evening diners. 5-7pm enforcement scares off diners.

Question for Brian on revenues and how the ticketing/ enforcement has come into play – enforcement isn't a substantial part of the revenue model.

Lew Holloway commented on historical data from the lots – were not being used

Chris Cormier – question on private parking lots and revenue models

Question on towing / signage for private lots

Lisa Waldrop – question on paid/free parking.

- Business owners didn't have an opportunity to vote for paid parking as an option vs tax increase.
- Paid parking is the primary issue. Other issues are irrelevant.

Pricilla – Brush it Off Salon

- parking Church Street. Parking issues with app and smart phones. Ticketing was a solution for employees parking downtown in the past
- Garden Jubilee – customers getting hair done – app was not working – issues with parking –

Sanctuary Boutique

- Numbers are down – locals are not coming into town

Patty Adamic – Mike's on Main – has been hard to navigate waters – only does breakfast and lunch – have noticed people aren't eating out because continental breakfast

- Missing dinner rush – not getting first rush they normally get
- Curb market – easier to pay – pay by place not pay by plate
- Curb market willing to work with employees

Pat Martin – Homestead Linens

- marketing campaign on parking
- Step by step how to do parking on sheet of paper

Becky - Sherman's Sports

- issue with moving to different zone
- Received a warning ticket even though they were still checked in

Kurt Darnell – Kingmakers – down due to dinner rush being down – they had good traffic from customers waiting for table

Jeff Buchanan – Sweet Frog – suggesting avenues free – help employee situation/ safety situation – may provide a solution

Mikey Bellamy, Skyland barber shop – ease of use for older people has been problematic. Issues with handicap parking / customers at kiosks

- paying per car is problematic – shift payment instead of individual passes for staff – bulk purchase

- Idea – reduce hourly rate over period of time based on usage

Dugout – plates per spots – issues on permits on employees. Would be helpful to attach several license plates allowed per permit for employees.

Virtual comments:

Juls Buckman - I am a by appointment only studio on Main Street, so I am not as affected to the parking, but I can tell you my clients usually stayed for shopping and dinning before my sessions that are not not doing that anymore due to parking. Also, many come in and did not know they had to pay, despite being told. The signs are not visible from every parking space, and people driving don't focus on signs until they find a spot. The ticket price is so high, too high. The first hour is not free its is just postponed, and that causes so much confusion. I would like to validate parking for my clients as well, since they are now coming just for my services and not staying to eat and shop anymore, which hurts my neighbors. We need more clarity, more signs and education, and for sure help for anyone over age 60. Please change the time back to 5 Or 5:30 for fees as well.

Chris Rivera - I just wanted to say I appreciate and understand everything you guys have done. My name is Chris Rivera and I am the private parking operator that is working with local properties in Hendersonville. Is employee parking not available ? Because, We have inventory that we can work with the city and provide. Also, we would love to offer valet parking on Main Street we can valet park them to our lots. We can also provide greeters to help with the kiosk or app for the city self Parking. It would help all. We can also do a validation valet program to the local business

The Bellamys - This is Mikey Bellamy at the Skyland Barber Shop. We have heard the comment from locals that a parking sticker should be sold to locals that you pay annually . That way the pressure of time restrictions is eliminated.

Board member discussion:

Mark Pavao – Black Bear Coffee – encouraging people to come to the meetings. Once a month, Tuesdays at 4pm

Carole Sitzler – impact on the backs of merchants on main street

Chris Cormier – concerned about making any substantial changes when the new parking has only been in place for a few months

Patsy DuPre – as a non-business owner, but frequent supporter of downtown, this hasn't stopped her from coming and shopping downtown.

Caroline – one person today and many others have said they are at risk of closing.

Joe Dinan – asked about pay by half hour instead of pay by hour as moving into short term. The board agreed.

6. OLD BUSINESS

1. Downtown Workplan Updates - Matthew Hickman– would like to table old business / workplan updates – motion – 2nd . Mark Pavao seconded. All were in favor.

7. OTHER BUSINESS

8. ADJOURNMENT

The City of Hendersonville is committed to providing accessible facilities, programs and services for all people in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Should you need assistance or an accommodation for this meeting please contact the City Clerk no later than 24 hours prior to the meeting at 697-3005.