



City of Sidney, MT  
Parking Commission Meeting October 4, 2023  
October 04, 2023 9:00 AM  
115 2nd Street SE | Sidney, MT 59270

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The City Council meetings are open to the public attending in person, with masks encouraged when social distancing cannot be accomplished. If the public does not wish to participate in person, they are also invited to participate via a Zoom meeting. You can participate via phone:

Meeting ID: 713 080 5898      Passcode: 4332809      Call: 1-346-248-7799

Commission Present: DiFonzo, Rasmussen, Kraft, Meldahl and Hintz

Others Present: Clerk/Treasurer Chamberlin, Greg Hitchcock (Sidney Herald), Drew Pearson (via phone) and Kirk Farrelly (via phone)

**1. New Business**

**a. Holly Street Builders Parking Variance**

Mr. Pearson stated he is representing the developer for this project, which will be a Dollar General retail store. He stated city zoning requires a minimum of 64 parking spots and they are requesting a variance to reduce the number of parking spots to 45 spaces. He stated their reasons include Dollar General typically only has 45 spots or less for a store this size. Mr. Farrelly stated another reason is a required easement they must have.

Mr. Meldahl stated with the proposed snow storage location, those areas would remain clear for sight-triangles. Mr. Pearson stated they are working with FM/BI Rasmussen on location and how to do it correctly. Mr. Meldahl stated that could be a location for additional parking spaced without large changes to the plan. Chair DiFonzo stated that the snow area could be used for parking during the non-winter months, and Mr. Pearson stated they are not planning currently to asphalt that snow area, rather it would be a part of the landscaping area.

Mr. Meldahl stated the Dollar General in Williston did have crowded parking and was wondering if this location would be similar. Mr. Farrelly stated they did not develop that location and cannot comment on this. Mr. Rasmussen asked how many spaces the other dollar store in Sidney has since the square footage is similar and Chief Kraft stated around the 45 spots. The Commission agreed there does not seem to have issues with their size of parking lot.

Mr. Meldahl asked if they need to restrict parking on 9th and FM/BI Rasmussen stated that street is wide enough for street parking if they have overflow parking there.

PWD Hintz stated there is additional locations on the west side of the property if needed and FM/BI Rasmussen stated their original plan included parking in those spots. Mr. Pearson stated it is not because of lot size that they are requesting this variance, it is primarily based on other store history the additional spots are not warranted. Mr. Farrelly stated they do not want to see unused parking lot.

Chief Kraft stated Williston's code requires 43-46 spots for this size of building. FM/BI Rasmussen stated they do have off street parking credits that are not included in this variance request.

Chair DiFonzo stated in the future if it became an issue, Dollar General could add additional spaces to the west side of the parking. Mr. Farrelly stated potentially but wondered what issue could arise to cause that. Chair DiFonzo stated if it is a busy and additional parking is required, would they be amiable to adding in those spots. Mr. Farrelly stated if that should arise, they could look at restriping and reconfiguring the spots. Mr. Meldahl stated they could have the curb installed to be prepared for such a circumstance.

Chair DiFonzo asked if the variance could be rescinded if approved or if conditions could be applied to say they may have to increase the number of parking spots if the parking lot is full and Clerk/Treasurer Chamberlin stated this would be a question for the City Attorney but it is her opinion that unless there is cause to rescind the variance or the conditions outlined are very specific she does not feel it would be appropriate.

Clerk/Treasurer stated she has received no opposition from surrounding property owners for this variance and 3 properties contacted her either in favor of it or stating they had no issues with it.

Mr. Farrelly stated they have investigated other Dollar General Stores and the average spots used at one time is 9 and max spots is 20-25.

Motion was made to recommend the approval of the parking variance as requested by Holly Street Builders.

Motion made by Meldahl, Seconded by Kraft.

Voting Yea: Rasmussen, DiFonzo, Meldahl, Hintz, Kraft

## **b. Boys and Girls Club On Street Parking**

Chair DiFonzo stated when the parking variance was approved for the Boys and Girls Club the Parking Commission agreed to do restricted parking for half of the block in front of the building for drop-off/pick-up parking, with the other 150 feet to remain as public parking. He stated since then the BGC has gotten vehicles for their operations, including a bus, 2 vans and a SUV that they park in that public parking. He stated there has been complaints from the Middle School and others and it has been explained that no one has the right to public parking, but with those complaints something needs to be decided officially for that parking.

Clerk/Treasurer presented the plan for the on-street parking, the plan being creating a bus only parking spot between the current drop-off only and the public parking spaces in the middle of the lot by the light pole and to stripe the remaining public parking spots on the side of the block while

also striping the parking spots on the north side of their lot. She stated one of the complaints being issued is that the parking is too spaced out and therefore not appropriately giving parking spots, but by striping it they have to park within the stripes. Chair DiFonzo stated they are currently putting cones out to prohibit anyone from taking the bus spot, which this would resolve also. Chair DiFonzo stated another part of the issue is that the bus needs to plug-in in the winter, which is why the bus alignment needs to be with the pole.

Clerk/Treasurer Chamberlin stated with this plan two spots would be available above 2 van spots for public parking. Chair DiFonzo stated they do use the bus and the vans everyday. Mr. Meldahl asked if they could use part of the yard for parking and Clerk/Treasurer Chamberlin stated there was already a variance granted for off-street parking and the City Attorney would have to be consulted on if the City can require them to have more off-street parking due to now having the bus and vans.

Chair DiFonzo stated they would like to try the proposal and if it does not work the Parking Commission could meet again.

Motion was made to recommend approval of creating a designated bus spot adjacent to the current light pole in the middle of the lot and striping the public parking locations for on-street parking for the north and east sides of the block.

Motion made by Meldahl, Seconded by Kraft.

Voting Yea: Rasmussen, DiFonzo, Meldahl, Hintz, Kraft

Meeting was Adjourned at 9:41pm.