

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

City Hall – Council Chambers

June 7, 2021

The Committee of the Whole met at City Hall at 6:20 p.m. on June 7, 2021, with the following Committee persons in attendance: Mayor Robert M. Green, Frank Darrah, Sudan deBuhr, Kelly Dunn, Simon Harding, Daryl Kruse, Mark Miller, and Dave Sires. Staff members from all City Departments and members of the community attended in person and teleconferenced in.

Mayor Green called the meeting to order and introduced the only item on the agenda, Downtown & College Hill Parking Discussion.

Mayor Green introduced Director of Finance and Business Operations Jennifer Rodenbeck. Ms. Rodenbeck gave an overview of the previous year: parking studies were done in the College Hill and Downtown Cedar Falls areas in 2018 & 2019, parking study was implemented in October 2020, Special meeting was called in December, and Council gave direction to suspend paid parking in municipal lots until April 1; at the March 1, 2021 meeting it was extended until August 1. Ms. Rodenbeck stated a letter from Community Main Street was received and it's been requested to revert back to pre-parking study in municipal lots; which consists of city lots to be free with a four-hour limit.

Mayor Green introduced Kim Bear, Executive Director with Community Main Street.

Ms. Bear gave an overview of the last 15 months: parking study in 2018; 2020 implementation and trainings for the board of directors, businesses and property owners took place; March 9th Governor Reynolds implemented the Emergency Health Proclamation and businesses began to close; March 2020 parking was suspended; October 2020 parking system was implemented; December 2020 parking was suspended until April 1; and on February 10, the Community Main Street Board requested an extension to the suspension until April 2022 and Council granted a reprieve until August 2021. March 25, 2021 Community Main Street held a parking Town Hall meeting to discuss parking and with stakeholders. Community Main Street requests city lots are free with a four-hour limit. Community Main Street appreciates the expansion of spaces on State Street, addition of three-hour parking and 15-minute spaces to accommodate take-out and curbside service. Ms. Bear stated College Hill is much different from Main Street and can't be considered a one size fits all.

Mayor Green introduced Kathryn Sogard, Executive Director with College Hill Partnership.

Ms. Sogard referred to the letter that was submitted to Council and stated that Community Main Street and College Hill have unique needs and are different and have different demands. Ms. Sogard asked if paid parking is removed how will that affect enforcement; enforcement is very important to the College Hill area and how will this affect capital improvements of College Hill and the parking lots. Jacque Danielsen, City Clerk stated College Hill enforcement would continue. Ms. Danielsen stated that revenues at this time are not separated between College Hill and Community Main Street. Ms. Rodenbeck stated we can begin to separate the revenues of the parking

system (College Hill and Downtown). Ms. Rodenbeck stated that the City would base capital improvements on need and the enforcement will still be in place. Support for those capital improvements will eventually be taken from selling bonds or the general fund, since the parking fund would no longer support the capital improvements.

Mark Kittrell, 250 State Street, agrees with the Downtown Vision plan. He asked the Council if now is the time for a parking ramp and doesn't agree with having paid parking in Downtown Cedar Falls. How do we bring additional parking into the City?

Darin Beck, 504 North Highland Drive, stated the City needs to plan for future growth, include in the Downtown Vision plan and protect the integrity of Downtown Cedar Falls. He agreed that Downtown and College Hill are not the same and stated that parking needs to be a priority. Mr. Beck suggested a public and private collaborative.

Councilmember deBuhr wanted to verify that this discussion is to decide if we do paid parking or not. Mayor Green stated the issue tonight is whether Council ends the moratorium on paid parking or not. Councilmember deBuhr asked for a summary of what was the implementation that was going to be put in place from the parking study. Ms. Rodenbeck confirmed the parking in municipal lot hours for Downtown Main Street before suspension was 9 a.m. – 8 p.m. at .50 per hour and \$3.00 set amount from 5 p.m. – 8 p.m., but the \$3.00 flat rate was not implemented at the request of Downtown businesses. Ms. Rodenbeck confirmed that equipment was purchased and installed and only implemented for one month in October. Councilmember deBuhr confirmed that lots are full because it's free and unlimited time limits. Ms. Rodenbeck confirmed lots are full and an ordinance change would be needed if Council would like to modify parking in the municipal lots. Councilmember deBuhr asked if problems were documented in the month the pay stations were implemented. Ms. Danielsen stated concerns might have been that people didn't know the parking implementation had started and the permit system had some software issues. Councilmember deBuhr confirmed that enforcement is paid through those parking funds and it will be depleted if there's no revenue from parking. Ms. Danielsen confirmed the information that Councilmember deBuhr stated is true and added that the parking hours on College Hill are 9 a.m. – 6 p.m. Ms. Rodenbeck informed Councilmembers of the parking fund revenue: before parking study in parking fund there was \$900,000; as of today \$662,000; spent \$200,000 plus on parking study and equipment; fund has lost \$161,000 since July; about \$14,000 per month. Ms. Rodenbeck stated that evening and weekend enforcement times did increase since the parking study and an additional part-time parking attendant was hired. Councilmember Harding asked how much property taxes would increase if the parking fund was depleted. Ms. Rodenbeck is not certain of an exact amount per household at this time. Councilmember Sires would like to give Community Main Street the free city lots with a 4-hour parking time limit. Councilmember deBuhr asked about how the kiosks would work for 4-hour parking. Ms. Danielsen stated the kiosks would be removed and no long-term parking would be available in the lots since meters were removed after the parking study. Councilmember Harding asked how the parking fund was accumulated over the years and Ms. Rodenbeck stated revenues were collected and no capital projects had been scheduled yet. The CIP has money set aside for parking lots in College Hill and Downtown. Ms. Rodenbeck confirmed that general fund

money could be transferred annually to the parking fund, which will affect property taxes.

Ms. Sogard stated the College Hill Board of Directors envision removing paid parking when school isn't in session because the demand for parking decreases, but the board believes in the parking study when college is in session and confirms the 2-hour lots would be acceptable when the college session ends. Councilmember Harding is concerned about property taxes and capital improvements. Ms. Rodenbeck clarified the \$900,000 was only parking revenues (generated from meters, tickets, etc.) and parking revenues in the future will not keep up with expenses and the general fund would contribute to the parking fund. Councilmember Darrah stated that if there's a parking ramp in Downtown's future and asked what about a commitment of the businesses in Downtown, since this is a partnership. Mr. Beck expressed his concerns about College Square Mall offering free rent and free parking, and taking customers from the Downtown area if paid parking is reinstated. Councilmember Dunn asked if the parking ramp is going to be free; people will not use a paid ramp if parking lots are free. Councilmember Harding stated we need to work with the businesses to solve the issue of employees parking in customer parking. Mayor Green commented that customers that won't pay in the lots will just go elsewhere. Councilmember Kruse is concerned about enough parking in the Downtown Vision Plan and this will increase the demand for parking.

Councilmember Miller motioned to approve Community Main Street's request: Municipal lots, free with a 4-hour limit and the required ordinance changes. Councilmember Sires seconded.

Councilmember Harding made an amendment to draft ordinance changes for Community Main Street and speak to College Hill on how to proceed separately. Ms. Rodenbeck confirmed the Community Main Street request and that the suspension of paid parking in the College Hill area would continue until City staff could have discussions with College Hill Partnership to determine needs.

Councilmember deBuhr asked if the equipment is returnable and Ms. Danielsen stated it is not returnable and there's currently no guaranteed resale value.

City Administrator Gaines recommended staff draft an ordinance for Council's approval for an upcoming meeting.

Councilmembers voted on the amendment to separate College Hill paid parking. Aye: Miller, deBuhr, Kruse, Harding, Darrah, Sires and Dunn. Nay: None. Motion carried.

Councilmember voted on original motion (motioned to approve Community Main Street's request: municipal lots, free with a 4-hour limit and the required ordinance change). Aye: Miller, deBuhr, Kruse, Harding, Darrah, Sires and Dunn. Nay: None. Motion carried.

There being no further business, Mayor Green adjourned the meeting at 7:21 p.m.

Minutes by Kim Kerr, Administrative Supervisor