

**LODI CITY COUNCIL
SHIRTSLEEVE SESSION
CARNEGIE FORUM, 305 WEST PINE STREET
TUESDAY, AUGUST 19, 2014**

A. Roll Call by City Clerk

An Informal Informational Meeting ("Shirtsleeve" Session) of the Lodi City Council was held Tuesday, August 19, 2014, commencing at 7:00 a.m.

Present: Council Member Johnson, Council Member Mounce, Mayor Pro Tempore Hansen, and Mayor Katzakian

Absent: Council Member Nakanishi

Also Present: City Manager Schwabauer, City Attorney Magdich, and City Clerk Robison

B. Topic(s)

B-1 Receive Presentation on Downtown Permit Parking Fee (PW)

Deputy Public Works Director Charlie Swimley provided a PowerPoint presentation regarding downtown permit parking. Specific topics of discussion included downtown parking history, core area parking zones, downtown parking areas and permit versus free parking, downtown parking revenues, estimated reconstruction costs for Lots 3 and 4, annual costs for permit parking areas, parking fee comparison, public meeting, alternatives, and recommendation.

In response to Mayor Pro Tempore Hansen, Mr. Swimley stated that the reason behind the four-hour parking limit near the downtown churches was most likely to provide enough time for people to attend service and enjoy a local restaurant afterward.

In response to Council Member Mounce, Mr. Swimley stated he was unsure whether a majority of parking tickets issued were for out-of-town visitors or local residents. Traffic Enforcement Officer Aleisa Nunes stated that, from her experience, less than a quarter of the violators are visitors and that an overwhelming majority of those ticketed is made up of downtown merchants and their employees.

In response to Mayor Katzakian, Mr. Swimley stated that the parking restriction is Monday through Saturday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

In response to Council Member Mounce, Ms. Nunes stated the merchants are clever when it comes to avoiding tickets for parking longer than the time limit and are typically more verbal about citations than out-of-town visitors.

In response to Mayor Pro Tempore Hansen, Ms. Nunes stated she is the only traffic enforcement officer for the City, she works Monday through Friday, and she regularly adjusts the times that she chalks vehicles in the downtown area so merchants do not become familiar with set enforcement times. She is responsible for citywide enforcement; however, the primary focus is the downtown area. In further response, Ms. Nunes stated that residents of the Lodi Hotel do not cause a problem with parking violations, but a majority of the residents have handicapped placards, which allow them to park in stalls for up to 72 hours, thereby preventing others from utilizing those parking stalls.

In response to Council Member Mounce, Ms. Nunes stated that the parking enforcement scooter has been out of commission since November and staff is in the process of replacing it. City Manager Schwabauer stated he would follow up on this matter.

In response to Mayor Pro Tempore Hansen, Ms. Nunes stated that many merchants and their employees would rather pay the parking fine than pay the parking permit fee in order to park in front of their business.

In response to Council Member Johnson, Ms. Nunes stated that the Post Office decision to ban parking in its lot has forced more cars to park on the streets, a majority of which are employees of downtown businesses.

In response to Council Member Mounce, Mr. Schwabauer stated that the fine increased to \$45 around 2005 or 2006. Ms. Nunes further responded that the fine is \$45 for parking over the time limit, as well as for general parking violations.

In response to Mayor Katakian, Ms. Nunes stated that the City of Lodi Finance Department sells the parking permits, they are purchased for a three-month timeframe, and she was unsure if the process could be done online.

In response to Council Member Johnson, Ms. Nunes stated that the City parking garage is only full when new movies are released at the theater, otherwise it is typically only a quarter full.

In response to Mayor Pro Tempore Hansen, Ms. Nunes stated that a vehicle can be issued multiple citations. Deputy City Manager Jordan Ayers stated that the City does not track whether parking citations have been collected, but the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) has an intercept program regarding unpaid traffic tickets. In regard to the suggestion to start issuing 12-month permits rather than 3-month permits, Mr. Ayers stated he would encourage that change as it would help alleviate the traffic coming into the Finance Department. Ms. Nunes added that she believed the three-month permit fee was established to make the fee more financially reasonable, as some may not be able to afford a one-year fee.

Council Member Mounce stated that the public should have the option to pay the fee online and suggested the fee be made on a yearly basis, but with the option to pay for a three-month period with an added convenience fee.

Council Member Johnson pointed out that there are downtown business owners who pay the permit fee for their employees who, in turn, continue to park on the street.

In response to Mayor Pro Tempore Hansen, Mr. Ayers stated that the new financial system is being implemented in three phases and the accounts receivable portion is the third, which he anticipated would begin late this calendar year and go live early to middle of the next calendar year. The programming to offer the service of paying the permit fee online would be a part of the billing system, and he would look into how this could be incorporated into the system.

In response to Council Member Mounce, Mr. Ayers stated that the online Parks and Recreation registration and utility billing programs are stand-alone systems. He was certain this could not be added to the utility billing system; however, he was unsure about the registration program.

Council Member Mounce expressed support for changing the permit parking fee to \$18, but could not support the \$40 fee unless it were increased gradually. She further stated that the increase in the violation fine from \$45 to \$120 was too significant, and she could not support it.

In response to Mayor Pro Tempore Hansen, Mr. Swimley stated that the suggested \$120 fine was calculated by multiplying the proposed permit fee of \$40 by three months, similar to how the current fine of \$45 was calculated. Council Member Mounce stated that the same concept could be applied to the lower \$18 permit fee.

In response to Council Member Johnson, Mr. Swimley stated the City did its own calculation and did not compare fees with other communities such as Stockton or Sacramento, partially due to the fact that those communities have a higher ratio of parking garages, which are more expensive to construct, maintain, and operate, than parking lots. Most of the costs were based on proximity in the downtown and the fact that downtown is a safe area with much to offer, making parking a commodity. He believed that \$40 was on the high end of the range, but not that far out of line, and that it would pay for parking lot reconstruction costs.

Council Member Johnson also expressed concern about the significant increase in the fee and fine and further suggested creating a tiered fee that would increase the fine for chronic violators.

In response to Mayor Pro Tempore Hansen, City Attorney Magdich stated that, if a person is stopped by Police for a traffic violation, they can also be ticketed for having unpaid parking tickets. In addition, the DMV will not register a vehicle until all parking citations have been paid.

Mayor Pro Tempore Hansen concurred with the suggestion to increase the fine amount for the second and third violations and expressed opposition to the \$120 parking fine. He and Council Member Mounce suggested staff look into what it can legally do to address the issue of motorists creatively shuffling cars around and removing traffic enforcement markings to avoid citations.

In response to Mayor Pro Tempore Hansen, Ms. Nunes stated that the number of citations issued during the weekly Farmers' Market this season has increased; however, the number of vehicles towed has decreased.

B-2 Receive Presentation on Turner Road Parking Study (PW)

Assistant Traffic Engineer Dorothy Kam provided a PowerPoint presentation regarding the Turner Road parking study, between Lower Sacramento Road and Woodhaven Drive. Specific topics of discussion included citizen request for additional parking near the Lodi Wine & Visitors' Center, existing parking and no parking zones, 500 foot sight distance requirement, and recommendation. Ms. Kam stated that, based on staff's study, 2 additional parking stalls could be added to the already 15 existing stalls to the east of Bridgetown Drive. In addition, 35 parking stalls could be made available, through the encroachment permit process, utilizing the existing bike lanes on the north side of Turner Road during special events at the Visitors' Center.

In response to Mayor Pro Tempore Hansen, Ms. Kam stated this recommendation would add 37 parking spots to the area. Transportation Manager Paula Fernandez explained that, during a special event, the "No Parking" signs along the bike lane would be covered to allow parking via an encroachment permit.

In response to Council Member Johnson, City Manager Schwabauer stated that the two additional parking spots to the east of Bridgetown Drive, near the Visitors' Center, would be added permanently. Ms. Fernandez added that the remaining 35 spots would only be available during special events under an encroachment permit issued to the event organizer. Mr. Schwabauer stated that the 35 additional parking spots cannot be made available permanently as it would eliminate the bike lane. In further response, Mr. Schwabauer stated that the site distance requirements prevent staff from making parking spaces available near Katzakian Park. Council Member Johnson questioned why the City needed to pursue the encroachment permit option since that was not the request of the citizen who initially brought this forward to Council.

Council Member Mounce and Mayor Pro Tempore Hansen expressed support for the two additional permanent parking stalls, as well as the option to create additional parking by way of

an encroachment permit process along the north side of Turner Road.

C. Comments by Public on Non-Agenda Items

Ken Bingaman questioned why the sidewalks on Mills Avenue south of Elm Street have not yet been made handicap accessible, while the sidewalks north of Elm Street are handicap accessible. Further, Mr. Bingaman suggested that the noise ordinance be amended to extend the morning hour restrictions from 7 a.m. to 8 a.m. on Saturdays and Sundays.

City Manager Schwabauer explained that the City expends funds every year on handicap ramps, stating that, at times, it is part of a request associated with a high-traffic or problem area and other times it is associated with street repair, during which the City is required to bring the street up to standard. In this case, the north side was upgraded as part of a street project. He suggested Mr. Bingaman meet with staff to further discuss his concerns.

Council Member Mounce requested a future Shirtsleeve Session to discuss amending the noise ordinance as suggested and to address the concerns brought up by Timothy Miller in his letter to Council regarding noise concerns near the Grape Bowl.

In response, Mr. Schwabauer stated staff has done all it can to address Mr. Miller's concerns, including talking with neighboring residents, none of whom have expressed noise complaints.

D. Adjournment

No action was taken by the City Council. The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 a.m.

ATTEST:

Jennifer M. Robison
City Clerk