

MAY 7, 2018

**CALL TO ORDER**

The scheduled Council Workshop of the City of Saint Marys was called to order by Mayor Louis Radkowski on Monday, May 7, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. The meeting was held in the Council Room of City Hall, 11 LaFayette Street. Notice of this meeting was sent to Council on May 3, 2018, posted at City Hall and published in the Daily Press.

**PLEDGE TO THE FLAG****ROLL CALL**

Present: Mayor Louis Radkowski, Deputy Mayor Gregory Gebauer, Nedward Jacob, Chris Pletcher, Andrew Mohny, Margie Brown, Bob Mohr, Manager Timothy Pearson, and Acting Recording Secretary Matthew Pfeufer and Public Relations Specialist Hannah Brock.

City Staff: Tom Nicklas and Tim Brennan.

**VISITORS**

Visitors included: Richard Sadley, Amy Cherry, Anthony Pistner, Mitchell Klender, Shaw Kronenwetter, Frank and Cheryl Straub, Warren Stewart, Lance Mohny, JoAnn Mohny, Brad Harshbarger, Ralph Tettis, Mike Shaffer, Larry Smith and Chris Smith.

**SWEARING IN  
CEREMONY OF NEW  
POLICE OFFICER**

Mayor Radkowski swore in Mitchell Klender as a new Police Officer for the City of St. Marys.

**Solicitor Wagner Enters**

**Solicitor Wagner enters at 7:05 p.m.**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

April 16, 2018  
Motion Passed

Mayor Radkowski noted the minutes were listed incorrectly on the agenda as March 19, 2018. He requested a motion to approve the correct date of April 16, 2018.

Bob Mohr made a motion to approve the minutes of April 16, 2018, seconded by Andrew Mohny and all were in favor.

**TOPIC FOR DISCUSSION:  
Downtown Parking Strategy**

Mayor Radkowski stated tonight's workshop was being held tonight to discuss downtown parking. He would begin the discussion with Council's comments on the topic and then move to a review of financials and conclude with citizens comments. He stated that he had recently come across minutes from a 1988 Borough Council meeting which discussed the same challenges the City is currently facing regarding parking, for example, whether to increase rates and the lack of capital to maintain the existing parking. He noted no decisions would be made at tonight's meeting.

Nedward Jacob stated he believed that parking should pay for itself and revenue is dropping for various reasons. He emphasized that control should be given to a parking authority for enforcement, maintenance, while rates would still be set by Council upon recommendation from the authority. He agreed free parking would be a nice thing to have, but an increase in taxes would be necessary to pay for the maintenance and upkeep of parking lots and the parking garage.

Andrew Mohny stated he believed the current parking meters were too confusing and not unified with too many different meter heads with different coin options. He stated he did not have a problem with paying a meter and believed it came down to a mindset.

Gregory Gebauer stated the seven meters on S. Michael Street

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that were bagged as temporarily no parking has helped with the flow of traffic and solved the safety issues. He believed those spaces should be permanently removed. He stated he believed the meters deter people from utilizing the downtown because they were not user friendly. He was not in favor of the meters because they are confusing. He stated he realizes that taxes would be raised to pay for parking maintenance if revenues do not increase. He believed because of there being more two-hour meters than twelve-hour meters, it discourages people from using the downtown. He would like to see more meters with more than a two-hour time limit. He stated businesses in the downtown no longer need the two-hour meters since the owners and employees utilize the spaces directly in front of their business. He also stated the City does not owe anything to any downtown business owner to provide them parking. Businesses out of the downtown pay for and take care of their own parking. He also agreed with Councilman Jacob's view of the need for a parking authority and believed business owners from the entire City should be represented on the authority. He stated people do not use the parking garage because they think it's too far away.

Bob Mohr stated he believed parking should be turned over to the downtown merchants and let them pay for it like other businesses have to that are not in the downtown. He also believed business owners are parking in front of their business and not paying the meter.

Gregory Gebauer stated in order to find what the residents wanted he suggested to place the matter on the ballot and let the people vote on it.

Margie Brown agreed with the need to pay for parking maintenance and also agreed she would not like to have a tax increase to pay for that maintenance. She stated technology changes very quickly and she believed the meters should be upgraded to provide digital options for payment.

Chris Pletcher stated, as the Mayor noted of 30 years ago, this is a matter that persists. He had previously sent his comments to Council listing strategic and financial considerations and asked the following questions:

- What was the intended purpose of the downtown? A gathering place, cultural center, or a commercial district?
- What was the role and purpose of parking? Access to the downtown, manages the flow of pedestrians and vehicles?
- How do we pay for it? It should be a profit for the City, but if not, what is the acceptable subsidy or loss?
- What is the parking rate that best supports the strategic purposes of the downtown at the minimal financial cost?

He then listed the following areas of focus:

- Hours of enforcement
- Rates
- Traffic flow

He was in agreement with the idea of a parking authority and also hoped that Council could agree on the necessary changes in order to get to the next level and then Council could delegate it to the authority.

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Manager Pearson then reviewed the financial documents provided for tonight's meeting. He noted estimates were contained in the information, but if specific line items were added to the budget in the future, it would provide more accurate data. In 2017 an estimate of \$118,000 was received in revenue from various sources and an estimate of \$141,000 in expenditures. The shortfall does not include any capital expenses, for the parking garage and overall maintenance of parking lots. Other municipalities he spoke with were having the same issues with the upkeep and maintenance of a parking garage. To offset the shortfall in revenue, funds were pulled from other department budgets or the work was not performed. He believed capital funds would need to be set aside for future expenses at the parking garage. Council had expressed the need for efficiency so a review of different technology platforms was being researched. The options included an application that could be used via a smartphone, which would not require a change in the meter heads. Proper marketing of the parking and/or meters could help with the ongoing debate on changing the meters maximum hours. Most people may not be aware of the numerous 12-hour meters that are currently available. He agreed with Councilman Pletcher that a goal had to be determined before administratively moving forward with any changes.

Council and the Manager discussed the details of the parking meter application "Meter Feeder".

Mayor Radkowski, the Manager and Tim Brennan, Public Works Director, discussed capital improvements and long-term maintenance.

Nedward Jacob explained he has been tracking parking revenue and expenditures since 2010. His figures showed a greater deficit than the City's figures. He explained his figures included more expenditures than the City's figures because of the unknown expenses for snow plowing etc. He stated he believed a parking authority could solve many of the issues with parking.

It was determined that one tenth of millage creates \$22,500 in tax revenue.

Bob Mohr noted six tenths of millage would be needed for parking expenses and Mayor Radkowski responded yes, for free parking everywhere.

Mayor Radkowski asked Solicitor Wagner if the City could create a parking authority and make it more operational in nature and Solicitor Wagner responded the City could reinstate a parking authority but he one concern he had was giving the authority enforcement powers. He was unsure if the City could delegate police powers to a municipal authority. He stated he would have to research that matter. He clarified the power to set regulations and fines. For purposes of tonight's discussion, Council could assume it was possible.

Mayor Radkowski hoped Council was in agreement of a direction to move forward.

Council and the Manager discussed the marketing of the parking, permit parking, different rates for on street parking, painting of meters costs, location of parking garage, and the

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cost of permit parking.

It was recommended to create a transition committee before creating a parking authority and to review the current ordinances on parking.

Tom Nicklas, Chief of Police, provided his comments on fines, upgrading to newer technology to assist with feeding the meter, track repeat offenders and possibly restricting the total time allowed at a meter.

Council, Chief Nicklas and the Manager discussed tracking the current parking along Erie Avenue to determine if the two-hour meters are beneficial for customers. It was also noted the smartphone application would assist with tracking of information at all meters. The rates were possibly not high enough to discourage people from parking on-street all day. What obligation does the City have in providing parking to downtown businesses? Businesses outside of the downtown are required to provide a certain amount of parking spaces for their customers by the City Code.

Tim Brennan commented the costs for painting meters was between \$40 to \$50 and converting the meter mechanism was approximately \$35 to \$40 per meter. There are 327 meters which could cost \$5,000 to \$10,000. He believed new technology was a better solution.

## PUBLIC COMMENT

Frank Straub, business owner, provided his comments regarding the number of on-street meters, short transition times, his customers and employees receiving numerous tickets, not needing the 12-hour meters, eliminating the parking permits around the Diamond and dynamics were different 30 years ago.

Council, the Manager and Mr. Straub discussed rates, fines hours of enforcement, businesses sponsoring spots in front of their businesses and parking tokens.

Lance Mohny, business owner, provided his comments regarding parking. He believed the outcome had to be long term and address the citizenry of today, which is an aging population and has a hard time getting around. He stated some permits should go away and hours of enforcement should be reduced, meters should be quarter only, no time limits on meters, increase fines, consider private parking lots and improve meter maintenance.

Warren Stewart, business owner, provided his comments on parking. He believed on-street parking should be the most expensive and suggested all of City Hall employees should be made to park in the parking garage before asking the businesses to park there.

## SUMMARY

Mayor Radkowski summarized action items which included forming the transition committee for parking, reviewing parking ordinances for inconsistencies and any other needed changes.

Nedward Jacob noted the no parking signage for on street parking 2 a.m. until 6 a.m. needed to be cleaned up.

Gregory Gebauer stated permits should be a priority.

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Bob Mohr stated rates should be raised.

Manager Pearson stated rates, permits and no parking 2 a.m. to 6 a.m. need to be separate items.

Chris Pletcher asked for regular updates from the committee once it is formed.

Direct Manager and Solicitor to draft an Ordinance to remove parking along S. Michael Street and one space along Chestnut Street (added to agenda)

Manager Pearson explained seven temporary no parking bags have been placed on S. Michael Street beginning at the intersection of Bruxelles Street to the intersection of Walnut St. One bag was placed per the request of the Post Master on the last meter along the Chestnut Street side of the Post Office due to concerns with site distance issues. He was requesting direction from Council by motion to address this issue to draft a change to the ordinance.

Motion

Nedward Jacob made a motion to eliminate the parking on the East side of S. Michael Street and one parking space on Chestnut Street.

Clarification

Mayor Radkowski clarified the motion was not to eliminate the parking but to direct the Manager and the Solicitor to draft the amendment of an ordinance.

Nedward Jacob agreed.

The motion was seconded by Bob Mohr.

Discussion

Gregory Gebauer questioned why Council was not taking a "deep dive" into parking and addressing everything all at once before everything gets turned over to a parking authority committee?

Mayor Radkowski agreed and stated if Council starts to go down this path right now it ruins the whole idea of Council strategically trying to address it.

Gregory Gebauer stated he did not want to piecemeal the parking ordinance.

Manager Pearson stated he believed these proposed changes were not part of the broader discussion of parking.

Nedward Jacob agreed with Manager Pearson and stated it needed to be taken care of now, since more businesses were going into the Airport Industrial Park and may create a safety issue.

Bob Mohr stated this issue has been discussed for almost two years and it kept getting pushed.

Gregory Gebauer stated then the next issue should be the parking permits.

Motion Passed

All were in favor of the motion as clarified.

Mayor Comments

Mayor Radkowski thanked the audience and Council for their participation. He commented technology will affect parking in the future and has to be taken into consideration when looking at parking in the downtown.

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS


Mayor Radkowski made the following announcements:

- Council's next regular meeting will be held on Monday, May 21, 2018, at 7:00 p.m. at City Hall.
- Clean-Up Day will be held on Saturday, May 19<sup>th</sup> from 8:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. at the City Garage on Graphite Road.

## ADJOURNMENT

Gregory Gebauer made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Bob Mohr. Meeting adjourned at 9:01 p.m.

  
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Recording Secretary

  
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Deputy Mayor