

**DUNEDIN, FLORIDA  
MINUTES OF THE CITY COMMISSION WORKSHOP  
NOVEMBER 18, 2014  
9:00 A.M.**

**PRESENT:**

**City Commission:** Mayor Julie Ward Bujalski, Commissioners Heather Gracy, Bruce Livingston, Deborah Kynes and John Tomga.

**Also Present:** City Manager Robert DiSpirito, City Attorney Thomas J. Trask, City Clerk Denise M. Kirkpatrick, Deputy City Manager Doug Hutchens, Director of Communications Courtney King, Director of Finance Karen Feeney, Director of Planning and Development Gregory Rice, Transportation and Traffic Engineer Joan Rice, Director of Economic Housing/CRA Bob Ironsmith, CRA/Special Projects Coordinator Trevor Davis and approximately 28 people were in attendance.

The press was represented by the Tampa Bay Times Staff Writer Keyonna Summers.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Bujalski called the workshop to order at 9:00 a.m.

**1. APPROVE THE WORKSHOP MINUTES OF THE MAY 8, 2014 AND THE BUDGET WORKSHOP MINUTES OF JULY 14, 16 & 21, 2014**

**MOTION:** Motion was made by Commissioner Livingston and seconded by Commissioner Gracy to approve the Workshop minutes of May 8, 2014 and the Budget Workshop minutes of July 14, 16 & 21, 2014 as presented.

**VOTE:** Motion carried unanimously.

**2. DOWNTOWN PARKING DISCUSSION**

Director of Economic Housing/CRA Ironsmith introduced the agenda item for discussion:

Downtown parking has been a number one issue as far as how to create and provide additional parking.

The Downtown has done very well and there is some anxiety over what will happen in the coming years.

The Downtown Parking Committee met once or twice a week since August, so it has been an extremely intense calendar to get to this point.

Mr. Ironsmith introduced the Walker Parking Consultants:

Jon Martens AICP CAPP Parking Consultant  
Thomas Sobczak, Director of Business Development

Mr. Ironsmith provided a PowerPoint Presentation "DOWNTOWN PARKING." The following are highlights and comments:

Thanks to the Parking Work Group with the goal to determine downtown parking solutions and objectives:

Find practical solutions.

Examine all possible alternatives.

Consider public/private partnerships

The hotel representative is here today and represents a great public/private partnership

Engage stakeholders.

Work toward consensus.

Make recommendations.

No action taken is a decision implies things are fine the way they are and let's just leave it alone; however, staff feels it is not in the best interest of the Downtown.

Some people think paid parking will change the character and ambience of Downtown; however, staff and many merchants do not feel that way.

#### Existing Downtown Parking Supply

The graphic on page 5 indicates the permanent and At-Risk parking and the Development Pending which is of concern including the Gateway, the Keller Site being considered for the hotel and Victoria Place/200 Main Street is going away very soon.

Currently there are 1,013 parking spaces in the Downtown of which over 50% are high risk meaning it will be going away and there has to be consideration for what will happen in the future.

Only 37% of the current parking is permanent.

Mr. Rice made the following comments:

The City has a parking management problem and it is being exacerbated by a few things including:

Staff thought there was time of at least a couple of years to solve the problems; however, the pending development has led to the loss of three large parking lots; therefore, the time has to be compressed or there is the risk of losing the hotel development.

The best national parking consultant was hired to provide the best practices on their recommendations to solve the parking management problem.

Mr. Ironsmith commented this is not a study; it is an analysis looking at a parking management plan, and is an action plan.

Mr. Rice continued:

The original PowerPoint was all about parking; however, now a significant portion of it includes the hotel, Hilton Garden Inn.

The parking management problem is having the wrong people in the wrong spots and the desire is to get the right people in the right spots which are residents, visitors and customers should be receiving the prime parking closest to the restaurants and merchants and shops

while everyone else, employees should be a little off the beaten path and that is the what is attempting to be achieved.

Last week at the Economic Development Workshop Donald Shoot, author of Essential Readings in Urban Planning was mentioned and Mr. Rice is reading the book, which tells a lot about the history of planning, roads, vehicles and parking. This author also wrote a book "The High Cost of Free Parking" about parking not being free and the development of society dictating the need for at least four parking spaces per car, one at the home, one on the street at the home, one at church, one at school, one at the grocery store among other places and the book goes into great depth about the costs and the effect of free parking on the demand.

When looking to raise the costs of building permits staff felt strongly the user should be the one paying the bill and the question is should it be the citizens of Dunedin paying this bill for all the parking requirements in the Downtown.

Mr. Ironsmith advised Walker Parking Consultants are looking to complete the Parking Management Plan by the end of December. He continued reviewing the PowerPoint:

Being Fiscally Responsible (Page 8)

The City spends \$75,000 annually on leased parking.

Use of the General Fund revenue to fund new parking is not feasible.

Use of new property taxes (raising millage rate to fund parking is not viable.

The bond window is closing (Community Redevelopment Area Tax Increment Financing dollars cease in 2033).

History of Parking studies from 2009 -2013 all showed significant need to address parking.

A review of the solution process with various departments and groups coming together to engage is looking at options including possible vertical parking identification of possible locations.

The former Keller Lot on Douglas is a possibility, it has been streetscaped and the Hilton Garden Inn is a potential partner for public/private parking.

The graphic on Page 11 depicts Potential Structured Parking Locations and Page 12 photographs show that vertical parking garages can look nice and do not have to be aesthetically unpleasing.

The drawing on Page 13 represents a Public/Private Partnership for the Douglas Avenue Hotel project with the vertical parking element bedside the hotel.

A hotel and more beds were part of the Economic Development Master Plan and this plan includes a conference area which will bring in people as well for the restaurant and retail.

The Hilton Garden Inn is number one in getting reward points for business travelers who will want to come to this hotel and with the conference area this will probably overflow to other area hotels as well.

Jim Graham referred to the drawing and explained the aspects of the plan:

The garage element uses the same design character as the hotel building.

The hotel has 107 rooms, retail space, a restaurant and conference area and the proposal includes diagonal parking along Douglas in front of the hotel and in front of the parking garage. This moves the planned walkway back to under the canopy in front of the hotel.

The first floor will have the retail space, offices for the hotel and a restaurant with seating for 150-200 and conference area; above that is three floors of hotel units all within the 52-foot height requirement per ordinance and design parameters of the Downtown Core.

This is a Scottish Inn Design style from the Hilton Garden Inn styles that fits in and is carried over to the parking garage element that has four levels of parking and enters off of Monroe Street which eliminates the problem of traffic stacking on Douglas; there will be access to the garage from the hotel side.

The hotel owner Jack Brown was present and Mr. Graham commented regarding being fortunate to have him and his son who is in marketing and does "The Where Book" and is well known in the area.

The hotel requires 140 parking spaces and the garage will house approximately 350 spaces leaving about 200 for the City to use.

Mr. Ironsmith recognized Jerry and Scott Rehm in the audience who were instrumental with marketing the property and bringing this hotel into the City. He explained the emphasis on the hotel in the discussion of parking because of the opportunity coming for a public/private partnership in a location where the City wanted to see a downtown vertical parking structure.

City Manager DiSpirito made the following comments:

The project which the City is hoping will come and will be considered independently by the City Commission, an application has not been submitted as yet; therefore, from the quasi-judicial standpoint it is not engaged, it is a concept.

This does provide an excellent case in point of the type of intersection between general parking needs for the Downtown, the financial reality of needing to partner in order to afford providing the public parking and an opportunity to bring other great assets like a hotel into the Downtown.

There are a number of elements overlapping and interconnected; however, the focus this morning is on a general policy with respect to downtown parking.

Staff felt for the public and the Commission a brief discussion of this proposed project would bring into focus of how these concepts could play out. He noted Director of Finance Feeney will be providing information on the design of how such a project could work.

Mr. Ironsmith reiterated the hotel is a case in point. The proposal just happened to come together and is linked as a potential opportunity. Whether the hotel happened or did not, the downtown parking challenge is still there and is independent of the proposed project. It is a great way to do many things including meet the Economic Development Master Plan, give more hotel rooms, build a tax base, be a catalyst and meet some downtown parking needs.

Mr. Ironsmith continued to review the Power Point:

Page 14 outlines the economic impacts of the proposed hotel project including increased tax base from \$2,800 to \$75,000, support for other downtown businesses, create jobs, help build General Fund increase and stimulate other redevelopment.

Pages 15 and 16 reviews the partnership or the garage element at approximately \$8,931,695, with 65% for the City and 35% for the hotel developer that would be over a 30 year time period and the developer would continue to pay for the operation and maintenance.

Page 17 addresses the positive aspects of Vertical Parking.

Director of Finance Feeney explained:

The reason for showing the numbers on Page 18, Preliminary Parking Structure Costs is to show it can be done and:

The City and the hotel paying for the number of spaces needed and one does not subsidize the other.

The entire project could not be cash funded, there would be debt involved, possibly Penny funds and cash from the CRA and each entity will own some land to contribute to the project.

The costs will change; however, the point is it can be done and there will be some mix to pay for it.

Mr. Ironsmith reiterated this project will be seen again by the Commission, it just happened to be linked to the discussion today.

Ms. Feeney explained the graphic and information on Page 19, Pro-Forma Annual Sources and Uses is an example to show how the debt would be paid for on an ongoing basis and the benefits to the General Fund, CRA and the use of Parking Revenues for ongoing debt and maintenance. She noted the actual numbers are not known at this time.

Mr. Ironsmith noted the analysis from Walker will include what paid parking can create downtown as part of other option for the Commission to consider and give direction. He noted the Parking Management Plan does include a paid parking element.

Mr. Rice elaborated on the paid parking element:

Paid parking is the way to put the right people in the right places, put the customers where they belong and the employees where they belong.

It is a tool used nationwide and choosing not to use this tool will mean not getting to the point of the right people in the right spaces.

Discussion has been it would change the ambiance of the downtown Dunedin; however, if the CRA is to evolve, which it is with the proposed projects the City has to evolve with it.

He is an advocate for using paid parking as the tool to manage the popularity of the Downtown and he noted the Downtown has stayed very busy with regional people in the summer as well.

City Manager DiSpirito asked Mr. Rice to elaborate on the right people in the right places including employees, people parking for the Park & Ride to get on the Jolley Trolley or get on the Pinellas Trail for six hours and there is no incentive to move the car, thus those spaces are not available for merchant customers and to have some turn over.

Mr. Rice acknowledged there are those who park and go to the beach all day on the Jolley Trolley and Pinellas Trail users' park for long periods of time. He noted also employees do not always leave the best spaces for customers. The desire is to channel these people into the right places and there are many locations where people could park for those uses and it could be free.

Employees could be a little off Main Street, but not suffer in any way with a parking plan. Also, resident owners who live Downtown need a parking plan.

Mr. Ironsmith addressed the Paid Parking Myths listed on Page 21 and noted in terms of ruining business, research indicates it is the opposite because it creates more turnover and more customers.

Comments from Advisory Committee Representatives

Greg Brady made the following comments:

From the CRA perspective they created a great problem because of using lower parking restrictions as a tool to redevelop and the good news is it worked and now something has to be figured out.

In 2009, 2011 and 2013 the same solutions were used, Phase 1 was better stripe it, use what you have and find out what is out there and make it work, Phase 2 was the lease agreements, which has have been done and Phase 3 was to go vertical.

The problem with going vertical is why would a developer build a parking garage in your City and charge for it all the other parking is free.

This is the inevitability of having a successful downtown.

He was surprised the CRA Advisory Board did not meet the resistance he thought it would when paid parking was put on the agenda.

As a business person, he might have to increase his prices a little and validate their parking and since there is premium parking and less than premium parking, there is the ability to set those prices to accommodate customers; he polled his customers and they would rather pay than walk a mile to get to your shop.

Other merchants are realizing this is the inevitable solution.

He does not want to lose sight of a potential project which has just been introduced to the City with a parking structure, because they can't do it if the City's parking is free, it does not make any sense.

The CRA Advisory really came to the understanding this is the direction it needs to go. He noted the City went to the County for an extension of the CRA because there was one more job to do; parking and it has to be resolved.

The consensus of the Merchants Association is they would like to see this move forward and understand there needs to be a Parking Management Plan versus just talking about paid parking.

Hans Hess, President of the Downtown Dunedin Merchants Association, commented he does not have a business downtown; therefore, is not personally impacted by this; however, he has seen much change since 1994 and this town is very interesting, the Commissioners and everyone present is who makes it happen. He stated he learned a long time ago, every end has a new beginning and this Commission is the new beginning and he encouraged the Commission to take a leadership role and make this happen.

Mr. Ironsmith referred to Page 22 of the PowerPoint, which provides the example of Madeira Beach paid parking with a revenue of \$1,211,596 with 531 parking spaces at \$1.00 per hour; Dunedin has 1,113 parking spaces. The actual possible number will not be known until Walker finishes the plan.

Mr. Ironsmith explained staff is looking to hear direction from the Commission on (Page 23):

Move forward with the parking management plan.

Explore paid parking including development of an outreach program for education.

Determine locations of structured parking.

Continue negotiations for hotel and public/private parking garage.

Andy Chiodo provided information on the endorsements and recapped:

One of the things they tried to do was incorporate the idea of fact based comprehension in as many Dunedin residents as possible.

What makes Dunedin great are the people, it is not free parking, it is being fortunate enough to have entrepreneurs who run their own businesses, live in Dunedin, make things happen and made an investment.

Part of the process has been to try to get as many people educated on facts as possible.

They believe whatever happens there does need to be an overall parking management system plan; to make sure people can get out of their own driveways and where they want to go.

After talking with many people including from Edgewater Arms, the Dunedin Chamber of Commerce who has provided an endorsement for the process, the merchants received an endorsement from them on the process, the Marina Advisory Committee will be sending an endorsement as well on the process, which needs to move forward.

The one thing he does believe is this is an opportunity for Dunedin, which has always been forward thinking and smart about the way the City is run. They want to see everyone in the City come to understand, even if they do not agree, the need to be educated and make sure their voice is heard.

They have done everything they can to involve people.

He commends to the Commission if they decide to move forward to make sure there are as many open town meetings as possible to get everyone on board and to at least have the facts, so people do not make statements with no facts.

It has been a great opportunity to work with people who have done a lot of work in the past on the various committees. It is time to move forward and make a decision based on facts.

The desire is not to change the character of the City or the way it works, but to see it evolve.

Mr. Ironsmith commented it did take on long time for him to come on board regarding paid parking. He has been with the City over twenty years and he is certainly concerned about anything that would change the character and ambiance; however, he thinks the time is right for a parking management plan as an element.

#### Commission Discussion

Commissioner Livingston asked if there has been further exploration for remote parking for employees. Mr. Ironsmith advised it is an aspect Walker will be looking at as well as for special events.

Commissioner Kynes asked how 52 + 37 adds up to 100%. Mr. Ironsmith explained it is referencing the overall percentages with 52% being highly at risk and 37% is permanent which

comes up to 89%; the other 11% represents the 1<sup>st</sup> United Methodist Church parking lot at about 6% where the thought is it will not be going anywhere anytime soon and the other 5% is employee parking that is available after 5 p.m. at the First Baptist Church location, which will be incorporated into something with the development of that parcel

Commissioner Gracy:

Verified with Mr. Ironsmith the discussion of a paid parking management parking plan is within the CRA confines.

Referred to Page 19, the Pro-forma Annual Sources and Uses and asked if this is in reference to the potential public/private partnership discussed. Ms. Feeney explained the page has to do with the City's share of the parking structure at the hotel.

Asked Mr. Ironsmith to give highlights of his speech at the County regarding the extension of the CRA. Mr. Ironsmith explained the CRA district was sun-setting in 2018 and a request was made to the County for an extension to allow for a reasonable time to pay the debt service to pay for a parking structure and they approved the extension to 2033 with the elements of the big parking structures being critical.

City Manager DiSpirito explained the City needed the better part of 15 years of debt service and the County anticipates some large capital project in the planning in the near future.

Mayor Bujalski:

Discussed with City Manager DiSpirito assuming it is the direction given and a Parking Management Plan is completed in December it could be added as a topic of discussion for the scheduled January workshop.

Verified with Mr. Ironsmith that part of the plan would be a park & ride type lot with an extended lot time looking at alternative types of transportation to bring people into the community and the City will give a recommended guideline for the fees of paid parking, the whole spectrum will be part of the plan presented including possibly discounts for residents and visitors paying their fair share.

Mr. Rice explained:

The technology being considered is not the carry your quarters around paying, they are very advanced solar powered machines that can be removed in case of a hurricane and stored, a phone app will be available to alert people when the funds are running out and allow for adding funds. A digital license plate reader system will be there for enforcement which for Dunedin will be "ambassadors" helping people with the new machines.

Staff is not losing sight of the surrounding neighborhoods and the last thing they want to do is push this parking problem on them. There is a plan for that and a plan for employees, all to be brought back to the Commission in January.

In response to the Commissioners' inquiries he acknowledged the action plan could include the element of charging stations and there could be consideration of designated golf cart parking.

Mayor Bujalski commented it would be great to consider all forms of transportation for parking including bikes, while it might not be able to be done all at once, it would be a part of the plan. She noted also the Blue Jays season and open parking needs to be a consideration.

Mr. Ironsmith explained Walker will be providing a draft; therefore, the January 27, 2015 Commission meeting is probably more realistic for a presentation.

Public Input

Lynn Wargo, President Dunedin Chamber of Commerce commented regarding how far the City has come since she came 30 years ago and being now to the point of having a discussion for more parking. She stated the last thing the community needs is to put the City back where it was with no reason to come here because of parking. This leads to customers funding the businesses that keep the economy healthy. The parking management system is the needed next step. She represents a building that has no parking; there is an impact on the Chamber on how to compensate employees and some of the folks coming in. She advised a year ago the Chamber served just over 15,000 visitors at the center and this past year was just under 23,000 and many are surprised there is no paid parking. While that is quaint to ask visitors to pay a little to park, it is not a bad thing. She does not think there needs to be fear of that decision and that process. She supports the process and offered the support of the Chamber to the Commission in their discussions.

Jerry Rehm commented this discussion is not charting new territory, but listening to what others have done and attempt to avoid any mistakes. He recalled the past community actions to save Caladesi Island from development and related back in the day when Mr. Eckerd told him no employee parked within 100 yards of his store, a simple principle by a very successful businessman. He is impressed by the work of City staff and that is after traveling all over the country and seeing staff at work. That is what has turned things around for him and made this proposal with a parking garage come to fruition. He stated he feels good that he was instrumental with his son in bringing in a family hotel, the Stirling Center, the Victoria Place and now this hotel, but if it were not for the family it would not have happened. He stated the only property he missed on and hopes to someday put it together is the Gateway.

City Attorney Trask advised the City Commission should not hear from Mr. Brown since the issue might come back to the Commission as a quasi-judicial matter.

Wendy Barmore, owner of the Orange Blossom Creative Group and a Dunedin resident commented this will move the City forward. She is in support and all the organizations she is in support of as well.

Mayor Bujalski thanked the staffs for a great job; as well as all the boards and committees who have been working on the parking issue.

A video was presented of Peter Kreuziger who was out of the country addressing the following issues:

Spoke about how parking situations have changed over time.

When they opened their first restaurant in 1976 business was so slow he asked the car dealership on Main Street to park excess inventory in his parking lot to make it look busier.

From that point to today much good things have happened and it is at a point when parking has become a major issue to the extent that 63% of the existing parking spaces are at risk of going away which is clearly a challenge.

Stated he supports a Parking Management Program.

Stated pay stations will not hurt the downtown and will greatly improve the activity and turnover. It is a 21st Century Solution. He recalled in 1976 there were parking meters; however, there were no cars and no businesses with Main Street basically empty.

He advised he spoke to each Commissioner on the parking situation and every person he spoke with fully understood the situation and many people said this would be their number one priority; however, they did not have the answers or solutions at the time he spoke with them. He explained the intent today was not to present a solution, but to present the Commission with a palette of options to choose from, because one size does not fit all and it has to be flexible with multiple facets.

### **Commission Comments**

Commissioner Livingston stated his full support for moving forward with the action plan presented and noted the following:

Things are going in the right direction with staff research, and excellent consultant and citizen committees to provide input and information.

There has been no push back from the community in a negative sense.

Inaction is not the way Dunedin operates.

The paid parking seems to be getting clarity but many details still need worked out.

Commissioner Kynes stated her full support for the staff recommendation and noted:

She is very interested in the new technology and innovation and creativity.

Reaching out to the community for support is excellent. Dunedin has always been creative and innovative and progressive and must continue. Staff has done an excellent job.

Commissioner Tornga stated he is very supportive of moving forward and commented:

Many other details must be addressed which staff is very much aware.

He especially supports the public/private partnerships. The one discussed today was very positive and fits in with locations cited for parking. Public parking only would require the City to purchase property and possibly have a parking committee or commission.

He is comfortable right now, but there are many questions yet to be answered and some changes will have to be made as the plan progresses.

Direction of people to the ideal place to park is also an important element for the continued commitment to the CRA/Downtown.

Looking at this issue from an intra-modal transportation perspective is important and important component.

He applauds staff for moving on this and visiting other locations for research.

Mayor Bujalski stated her support for all the recommendations.

Commissioner Gracy stated her support for the staff recommendations and commented:

She liked the idea of complimentary parking and noted her question on this issue involved whether Dunedin should price parking to better reflect the true cost.

Dunedin should affect a demand rather than creating more supply which goes back to the comment of getting the right people to the right places.

She challenges staff and the Walker group in moving forward to assure the residents this will not change the ambiance and character of the City.

Mayor Bujalski clarified today no decisions are being made, it is simply about the direction the Commissioners feel things need to go and do further exploration. She noted the importance of involving residents and having them understand concepts presented. There needed to be some preliminary direction at this time in consideration of the possible public/private partnership with the proposed hotel. This is just a first step in addressing the parking issue.

Mayor Bujalski elaborated on addressing more issues the public will want to know including how much it will cost them from a building perspective and when they visit the downtown, are there discounts for residents, what it will mean to employees and other concerns.

**CONSENSUS DIRECTION:** Mayor Bujalski advised it is the consensus of the City Commission is to provide the following Commission Direction:

**1. Develop a Parking Management Plan for the City Commission's approval**

Use our task force and a consultant.

**2. Explore paid parking as the primary funding source for structured parking**

Develop an outreach program for education.

**3. Determine locations of structured parking**

Create the deal structure for each location

Prepare a funding pro forma for each location

**4. To continue negotiations for hotel and Public/Private Parking Garage.**

**3. COMMISSION DISCUSSION - None.**

**4. ADJOURNMENT**

The workshop adjourned at 10:58 a.m.

**NOTE:** The meeting was completely recorded and the recording is in the official file. This meeting was also broadcast by *Dunedin TV*.

  
Julie Ward Bujalski  
Mayor

Attest:

  
Denise M. Kirkpatrick  
City Clerk