

# Parking & Transportation Advisory Committee Meeting

Tuesday January 26, 2016

2:00 pm, OM 340

## MEETING NOTES

**Present:** Lea Aune, Rick Benner, Greg Hough, Bernie Housen, April Markiewicz, Bob Putich, Darin Rasmussen, Stephanie Scott, Brian Sullivan, Kurt Willis, and Ethan Wise. *Ex officio:* Carol Berry, Paul Mueller, and Donnell Tanksley.

### 1. Welcome and Introductions

The committee welcomed new members Lea Aune, HR representative, Bob Putich, Student Business Office representative, Ethan Wise, AS Alternative Transportation Committee representative, and Donnell Tanksley, Assistant Director of Public Safety, as an *ex officio* member.

### 2. Approval of Draft May 8, 2015 Meeting Notes

Rasmussen **Moved** and Willis **Seconded** the Motion to approve the May 8, 2015 Meeting Notes as amended. The proposed change was as follows:

Page 1, Item 2, third paragraph, second sentence “*Willis stated that university fees...*” change to “*Willis stated that many fees...*”

The **Motion** was **Approved** as amended.

### 3. Results of Parking Services Operational Review

Rasmussen provided a synopsis of changes that have recently been implemented as a result of an internal review of Parking Services operations over the last two years. The primary goal has been to find efficiencies and embrace the use of technology to eliminate paper forms and manual data entry.

In brief, most permit sales and collections will be conducted by the Student Business Office. Parking Services will still handle sales of special permits, visitor functions (e.g., directions, amenities, tourist information), administrative functions (e.g., records, policies, rules, Master Plan), appeals, enforcement, and event functions.

Willis asked whether there had been any reduction or increase in FTE employees. Rasmussen stated that four FTE positions have eliminated. The affected employees in those positions have been assigned duties elsewhere on campus or assigned positions of limited duration to complete specific tasks. The duties and responsibilities of many of the remaining staff have also been modified. Details of the personnel changes were communicated university-wide earlier in the month via Western Today.

Rasmussen stated that with all the changes, both Parking Services and the Student Business Office are still in transition, but their goal is to have everything in place by March 1<sup>st</sup>.

#### **4. Status of PTAC Recommendations on Fees and Fines**

Rasmussen reported that the PTAC's recommendations on parking permit fees and fines for violations were taken to each of the unions and negotiated. The proposed fines were accepted without change by the unions, however rate increases for permits had to be adjusted down. This reduction may affect implementation of the parking maintenance plan as originally scheduled.

Willis inquired whether the PTAC will be reviewing the maintenance and financial plans periodically. Markiewicz affirmed that the charge of the PTAC is to review Parking Services' financial pro formas annually and the maintenance plans every two years. The two are integrally linked and reviews, as well as recommendations by PTAC are required to ensure that revenues are sufficient to support costs for business operations and lot maintenance, repair, and replacement. Sullivan stated that \$16 million dollars in lot improvements are planned over the next 5 years and that decreases in revenues or increases in maintenance/construction costs have the potential to increase time frames for future planned improvements to be completed.

#### **5. Parking Improvements and Maintenance Plan Update**

Benner reported that in accordance with the Parking Improvements and Maintenance Plan approved by PTAC last spring, 4 lots (11G, 17G, and smaller areas around Edens and Nash) had cracks repaired, a sealant coat applied over the entire lot, and restriped. The university was also able to get an additional 4 lots (33G, 20R, the VU SRV, and 6V) completed last summer due to lower than expected bids for the projects. As a result, the four lots were completed at 10% under budget.

This summer work will begin on repairing, resurfacing, and restriping 19G, 7G, and 3R. Moreover, three of the 5 gravel lots at the south end of campus will be paved. The Maintenance Plan identified the lots along Bill McDonald Parkway for paving this summer, followed by paving the other lots on both sides of South College Drive next summer. The city of Bellingham, however, will be paving Bill McDonald Parkway this summer that would result in conflicts with paving the lots. As a result, the South College Drive lots will be paved this summer. The university has also designated stormwater capital budget funds that will help with project costs.

Markiewicz asked whether conversations had started with those colleges, departments, and students that will be displaced during the paving of the gravel lots. Tanksley replied that some affected parties have been contacted, however efforts are still in the beginning phase. Specifically, academic departments still need to be notified.

Benner stated that construction costs have increased faster than the estimated 3% rate, however the much cheaper cost of petroleum products, e.g., asphalt, has kept paving costs in check, if not cheaper than originally budgeted. Obviously, this situation will change in the future.

## 6. **Parking Meters, Pay Stations, and Billing – Darin Rasmussen**

**Pay Stations:** Rasmussen reported that Parking Services has moved to a cashless pay station model for temporary parking. It is installing 10 new LUKE Parking Pay Stations on campus of which 7 are solar powered and 3 are powered from existing power lines. The pay stations do not require the driver to return to her/his car once the permit is purchased.

Parking Services will also be reducing the number of pay stations in 17G, 14G, 19G, and at the 32<sup>nd</sup> Street lot to one in each and locating it in an area of the lot that is the most accessible. The pay station in 11G has to be relocated because it is not ADA compliant. In lots 19G and at 32<sup>nd</sup> Street, the change will be made once the ability for people to pay for their permit by phone is in place.

Pay stations will be also be added to C lots, Campus Services, and the Lincoln Creek Transportation Center. The bases are already installed. Facilities Management will be installing the pay stations.

Willis asked how much the new pay stations cost. Sullivan reported that preliminary cost estimates from the bids received totaled approximately \$16,000. After negotiations, the cost is now \$7,000. Once purchased and installed, maintenance costs are expected to be lower.

**Parking Meters:** Rasmussen also reported that Parking Services is trying to go cashless with its parking meters. It has 24 meters on campus, however it costs more money to collect, count, handle, and audit the cash and coins than the revenue the meters generate. It is proposing to remove all meters and use pay stations. Wise was asked whether he thought this move would adversely impact students. He thought not, but will double check. Rasmussen stated the only other constituency group that may be affected by the change is visitors, however that might be addressed with communication tools.

Rasmussen stated people can use their phones using an App they can download or go online to pay for parking. The App can also provide reminders and be used to add more time. Housen stated that some students do not have the economic wherewithal to have a smart phone. Rasmussen stated that a smart phone is not needed to use the pay stations. Moreover, in September 2015, Parking Services went cashless at all pay stations and expected complaints, but neither it nor the Student Business Office received any.

Mueller asked whether Parking Services has seen a decline in meter use. Rasmussen replied there had not, but the meters are old, the batteries are old and don't retain their charge as much, and it's been difficult getting replacement parts. It is more cost effective to use pay stations. Since purchases can be made via phone or online, purchases can be made at any time, day or night, as needed.

Hough stated that the campus maps are all GIS based and could potentially be used for locating lots and parking spaces in those lots. Rasmussen agreed it was something to investigate. The city of Bellingham uses the same vendor for the software and could be collaborated with, along with the vendor, to identify greater functionalities and resources provided by the software.

**Billing:** Rasmussen reported that departments are allowed to reserve lots for their events down to quarter hour increments. Parking Services would like to use whole hour increments to save staff time that have to manually calculate quarter hour rates and enter charges into the billing system. The new T2 system has an Event Module that Parking Services would like to use to increase efficiencies in managing and billing events, but it is based on the full hour rate.

Last year there were 57 events: 21 reserved by the hour, 19 by the half-hour, and the remainder (17) by the quarter hour or three-quarter hour. Parking Services has not done a full analysis of potential impacts this change might cause, but wanted to bring its proposal to the PTAC first. Athletics, the President's office, Alumni office, the Western Gallery, and Fine Arts have the most events and Parking Services will work them to make the transition if PTAC supports the proposal. Parking Services would phase in the change and review feedback along the way to determine whether it was creating more issues than it was intended to solve. The consensus of the PTAC members was that the change makes sense and to proceed with engaging the stakeholders in making the change.

#### **7. Review 2016 PTAC Charge**

Markiewicz briefly summarized the PTAC's 2016 charge to review the financial pro formas that Sullivan will be providing at the next PTAC meeting on February 8<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 am in OM 340. It will also be reviewing fees and fines, policies, and working on developing a robust communication plan. She also noted that membership on the PTAC has been altered slightly in response to its changing focus and that term limits have been defined.

#### **8. Items from the Floor**

Rasmussen reported that the University had received state "seed" money to install one or two passenger vehicle recharging stations on campus. He is currently working with Benner and Furman to identify potential locations for them.

On the 28<sup>th</sup> the new Parking Portal will come online. It will have a different look, is mobile device friendly, and has a better interface. It will still have much of the same functionality.

"Parking lot" item for later discussion: evening parking in the C lots is free. Is this cost effective? Any data on student use at night would help in determining a fee structure.

Hough Moved to adjourn the meeting and Rasmussen Seconded the Motion. Motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 3:00 pm.

*Approved February 8, 2016.*