

DOWNTOWN GRAND JUNCTION BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT
BOARD MINUTES
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2013
248 SOUTH 4TH STREET
8:15 A.M.

PRESENT: Jodi Coleman-Niernberg, Les Miller, Stephan Schweissing, Kirk Granum, Shane Allerheiligen, Martin Chazen

ABSENT: Kevin Reimer, PJ McGovern, Jason Farrington

STAFF: Harry Weiss, Aaron Hoffman

GUESTS: John Shaver, Rich Englehart, Bennett Boeschstein

CALL TO ORDER: Jodi called the meeting to order at 8:32 a.m.

FREE HOLIDAY PARKING: Harry explained that free Holiday parking has been in effect from Thanksgiving to New Years in the past. All meters are bagged with "Free Holiday Parking" signs (except for those around City Hall, County Courthouse, Federal Building and Post Office). Parking enforcement is suspended except in loading zones and no parking zones. The problem is that downtown workers take advantage of this program. People who actually have leases in parking deck are not using them because they can park for free in front of their building. Harry has drafted a proposal for council to consider. It would alter the program to bag all 4 hour meters as "free 2 hour parking"; leave 10 hour meters alone; offer those who have monthly parking permits a "two for one" plan (buy November get December free). We need to get ahead of this since so many people are used to free all-day parking.

Shane suggested instead of bags, using stickers to change what people are used to. Marty asked where the concern is coming from. Harry explained it's always been frustrating that the free parking is intended for visitors and shoppers, but downtown workers use it for long-term parking for convenience, thereby reducing turnover in parking spots. Shane added that at every Downtowner meeting parking concerns have been raised. Kirk explained that many merchants don't like it but don't want to totally get rid of it.

Harry suggested the following options: 1. Leave it alone for this year 2. Reach out to businesses to not allow employees to park all day there. 3. Change up the program to 2-hour enforcement, 4. Eliminate free holiday park because it doesn't work how it's intended to (many cities are in fact terminating free holiday parking, but typically those are communities with sustained high parking demand unlike Grand Junction).

If we enforce 2 hours, it puts Council in the crosshairs since they will be the ones receiving the angry phone calls.. Rich thought that giving coins out to businesses to give to customers might be a solution. John suggested another option may be to limit free parking to specific times, such as Wednesdays. Marty said we should warn everyone that this is the last year of free holiday

parking, and return to paid parking next year. Stephan thought there would be enough blowback on no parking on Main Street for Parade of Lights to not undertake changes to holiday parking as well. Warn people that next year there will be a change.

Harry suggested going in small digestible pieces so that there's not a call for a big "parking conference". Kirk and Shane thought that free holiday parking with a two hour limit was reasonable. It was suggested to change the parking rules but not enforce it this year (deliver warnings). Rich said that if we get a single person who is angry, a downtown boycott could start. Bennett said we need to look at competition like Mesa Mall and big box stores, whose lots are free for Black Friday. Free holiday parking is a good program if it's used correctly.

The board agreed that we should leave the parking issue alone this year. Push for education of downtown long-term parkers this year because of the short time frame (Thanksgiving is November 28). Marty doesn't want to impede any economic activity and is reluctant to change anything.

UPDATES:

Harry is studying ways to close Ute Avenue and start using Whitman Park for events. The Symphony Executive Director was interested in possibility of doing an outdoor concert; CMU is exploring using it for their criterium; and MOG Fest may be interested in it also. Chief Watkins liked the idea of an outdoor training area for firefighters and looking at ways to park a truck there.

Aaron is working with a graphic designer on a new BID logo. He is also in conversations with companies for media buying for the BID, as well as strategic goals on media buying.

ADJOURN: Les moved to adjourn, Marty seconded at 8:58 a.m.