

Wed, Dec 07, 2022 7:00PM

**22-1500 Approve Department of Public Works 2023 Fee Schedules**

**22-1447 Action Item: Approve the Public Facility Needs Assessment**

**Common Council**

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**Mayor Jake Woodford 10:34**

All right, come now to time of public participation. And we have one member of the public who signed up to speak. So, we'll ask you to step on up to the podium. Your name and association for the record. Welcome, Jennifer.

**Jennifer Stephany (Appleton Downtown Incorporated) 10:47**

Thank you. I'm Jennifer Stephany. I'm the executive director with Appleton Downtown Incorporated. And I appreciate the opportunity tonight to share a comment in as it really relates to the increase in the downtown parking ramp permits. While I do realize that these rates have been predetermined at the budget deliberation, I would like to share our concerns that we've heard from our business improvement district members and how it relates to the amount of vacant office space within those BID buildings.

As we've come now, to the close of 2022, we're starting to feel the effects of COVID impacts on employee counts employee numbers in our downtown. This year, we've lost significant employees—Salelytics, Principal Financial, and many others that are now working from home. They're not leaving downtown because they don't like it. The employees are working from home. But behind it leaves this week of empty office space within our downtown.

Obviously parking rates play a significant role in business recruitment downtown. I ran a calculation this week, taking a look at our catalyst access on our website to see what the vacant properties downtown are tallying in at. We tallied a total of 378,872 square feet. That's a lot of vacant office space. And I gathered a little bit more information for you. I asked NAI Pfefferle to run a report on vacant office space. This is specifically office space now available in the full city of Appleton. And according to costar, the current vacancy rate of office space in Appleton is now sitting at 10.7%, which is compared to just 9.4% a year ago, just a year ago, definitely on the rise. While leasing activity has remained somewhat steady—definitely compared to other larger markets—filling those larger office tenants is very difficult and is going to remain a challenge for some time.

Naturally, an increase in parking meter rates—parking permit rates, excuse me—will be another barrier to attracting and retaining businesses within the downtown. I ask you to please keep this top of mind as you're making decisions on permit rates that will impact the entire downtown. Thank you.

**Mayor Jake Woodford 13:20**

Is there anyone else who wishes to speak? All right, hearing none we'll close public participation and move on now to public hearings. We have one public hearing this evening. This is item 22-1443 public hearing for proposed public needs assessment amendment. This is a public hearing is there anyone who wishes to speak? This is a public hearing is there anyone who wishes to speak? This is a public hearing is there anyone who wishes to speak? Hearing none I declare that public hearing closed.

**Mayor Jake Woodford 13:59**

We have no special resolutions so we'll establish the order the day. Looks like the buttons are maybe coming back to life. Okay just that one alright. Alder Hartzheim.

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**Alderson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 14:13**

Thank you chair. from Parks and Recreation 22-1447 The public facility needs assessment.

**Mayor Jake Woodford 14:33**

Alder Doran.

**Alderson Chad Doran (District 15) 14:36**

Thank you. From Municipal Services 22-1500 the Public Works fee schedule.

**Mayor Jake Woodford 14:52**

Any others? Okay, hearing none, we'll first pick up the item from Municipal Services. Okay, item 22-1500 to approve Department of Public Works 2023 fee schedules. We have a motion and a second to approve. Open the floor for discussion. Alder Doran.

**Alderson Chad Doran (District 15) 15:24**

Thank you. Just because we have a guest here for this, I thought it's worth separating out. But also, just to kind of make all of our colleagues aware, having been on the Municipal Services Committee for the past few years now, this is something we've kind of been watching and seeing. I think we're all pretty well aware of how much we've had to backfill the parking utility in recent years, and how much we've been setting some projects off into future years, because of kind of the lack of revenue.

**Alderson Chad Doran (District 15) 15:55**

As you heard tonight, this is a complicated issue. And every action we take has some potential consequences. Just want to make our colleagues aware, and this is something that we really need to be kind of watching carefully and seeing as kind of the year ahead comes and you know how the impact of fewer businesses downtown may impact our parking utility and revenue and how that affects kind of the work that we do here as well. I think, you know, just given what we've seen over the last couple of years, we're trending in a troublesome direction here. So just want to make everyone aware that's something I think that bears watching for us.

**Mayor Jake Woodford 16:38**

Alder Fenton.

**Alderson Denise Fenton (District 6) 16:39**

Thank you, Your Honor. I just—if I might, ask the Public Works Director to speak on the relative elasticity of demand for those monthly permits. I mean, what, like, do we have an estimate of the effect that raising the price of the permit \$5 is going to have on the number of permits that we sell?

**Mayor Jake Woodford 17:03**

Director Block. Oh, we'll get you a microphone. Thank you. Director Harkness. Okay. Director Block.

**Director Danielle Block (Department Of Public Works) 17:15**

Thank you. In terms of, I guess, a sensitivity analysis related to the monthly parking fees—er permits—and what we could experience with a rate increase of \$5, I do not have a sensitivity analysis or, you know, estimated number on what that may or may not impact.

**Mayor Jake Woodford 17:42**

Any further discussion? Alder Schultz.

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**Aldersperson Alex Schultz (District 9) 17:47**

Thank you, Mayor. Just a related question. Do we have a sense of the value of that increase of \$5? How many permits do we allocate annually and what does that dollar figure amount to?

**Mayor Jake Woodford 18:03**

Director Block?

**Director Danielle Block (Department Of Public Works) 18:04**

Thank you. Yes. Included in the budget on page 352, the estimated revenue is \$76,560. I would have to do a back calculation on how many estimated permits versus this year but the delta there is \$76,560.

**Mayor Jake Woodford 18:25**

Any further discussion? Just to check in, do you have voting buttons? I can't see your button. So okay. So, we have a motion and a second to approve. All those in favor, please signify by saying Aye. Any opposed? Okay, we'll mark Alders Del Toro and Meltzer as voting "nay". Oh, uh Fenton also. Okay. Schultz is also opposed? Okay. Otherwise, we'll have everyone else marked as voting "yes". Motion passes 10 to four with alders Meltzer, Del Toro, Fenton, and Schultz opposed.

**Mayor Jake Woodford 19:24**

Okay, we'll move on now to the item from Parks and Recreation. This is item 22-1447. Approve the public facility needs assessment. We have a motion. We have a motion and a second for approval. All right. We'll open the floor for discussion. Alder Hartzheim.

**Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 19:59**

Thank you, Chair. Way back on November 7, if anyone can remember that back that far, we talked about this at Parks and Rec. When it was brought forward to us, the memo that you see attached to the agenda gives a little bit more information that is really being voted on tonight. What we're talking about tonight is approving the assessment, not the fee schedule. The fee schedule is yet to be determined between the Parks and Rec Department, and community and economic development, etc. So, they're still—that's still in discussion and is not a part of what you would be approving tonight. And I just wanted to make that clear, because that was a question that I had for Director Gazza at the time. Thank you.

**Mayor Jake Woodford 20:47**

Any further discussion? Hearing none, we have a motion and a second to approve. All those in favor, please signify by saying aye. Any opposed? Hearing none, the motion passes.