

Item 24-1268: Request from Appleton Downtown Inc. for free ramp and meter parking on Small Business Saturday, November 30, 2024

Municipal Services Committee

Wed, Oct 02, 2024 6:45PM

Alderson Denise Fenton (District 6) 00:53

We have—all right, we have no minutes to approve from a previous meeting, so—and no public hearings or appearances. So, we will move straight to our action item, which is 24-1268 request from Appleton Downtown Inc for free ramp and meter parking on Small Business Saturday, November 30, 2024. Can I get a motion?

Alderson Vered Meltzer (District 2) 01:19

Move to approve.

Alderson William Siebers (District 1) 01:22

Second.

Alderson Denise Fenton (District 6) 01:23

All right, so we have a motion and a second. Miss Stephany, do you want to speak on this or...?

Jennifer Stephany (Appleton Downtown Incorporated) 01:34

Thank you. Jennifer Stephany, Executive Director, Appleton Downtown Incorporated. Thank you for the opportunity. We appreciate you hosting a special meeting to help us keep on track here. We brought this to your committee just like we have in past years.

Jennifer Stephany (Appleton Downtown Incorporated) 01:53

Small Business Saturday is a special day for shopping, not just in downtown, but certainly throughout our entire community. Downtown is built on the small businesses that really make it something special. November 30 is a special day throughout our country, really, that helps to celebrate small businesses and shopping local and supporting and expanding our local economy. So, this is an opportunity for us to remove barriers, to extend that stay, to extend that exploration and support for our downtown businesses.

Jennifer Stephany (Appleton Downtown Incorporated) 02:30

We know there are some challenges with ramp management and turnover. It is why we always ask for both so we can reduce the pressure on turnover and make that access both to the ramps and to the meters accessible on that day. But we know that there are some challenges, and we're open to that discussion and appreciate your consideration.

Alderson Denise Fenton (District 6) 02:55

Thank you. All right, I will bring it back up here. Alder Meltzer.

Alderson Vered Meltzer (District 2) 03:00

Thank you. So, I know that when this came before us last year, I really wanted to approve the whole thing, but there were some logistical issues with the parking ramp and with whether people might potentially get stuck in the parking ramp and face a fine. I'm curious, have we had any suggestions or any proposals for how we would address that issue?

Alderson Denise Fenton (District 6) 03:29

Are you directing that staff?

Alderson Vered Meltzer (District 2) 03:31

To the chair or staff or—

Alderson Denise Fenton (District 6) 03:34

All right, Deputy Director Neuberger is going to speak. Thank you.

Deputy Director Pete Neuberger (Public Works) 03:41

Thank you. Chair at this time, DPW has not received any proposals for addressing this—the logistic issue of potential ramp customers being trapped in the ramp based on a protocol that would involve raising the ramps to allow free passage into the ramps with the presumption that at some point those ramp gates need to be closed. And depending on when the folks who entered the ramp, when the gates were up, when they're trying to get out, if they try to get out after the gates are down, they will—they will not have a ticket, and therefore will not have any way to get out of the ramp under normal circumstances without hitting the call button, having Parker Service address the issue, and being charged a \$50 no ticket fee.

Alderson Denise Fenton (District 6) 04:34

Alder Meltzer, again.

Alderson Vered Meltzer (District 2) 04:36

I move to make an amendment to strike the word "ramp and"—the two—those two words. So that that leaves it request for free meter parking. And I guess I'm looking for a second, but I'd also point out to the chair that there are audience comments, and I'm curious to see if they have some new information to share.

Alderson Denise Fenton (District 6) 05:12

Go ahead.

Jennifer Stephany (Appleton Downtown Incorporated) 05:13

So, we have seen this function in a couple of different ways, I'm guessing, but we have seen the past where the ramp remains down, the patron still takes a ticket, and then the ramp is up on exit. Is that possible? So that they would have a ticket?

Alderson Denise Fenton (District 6) 05:32

I'm going to go back to Deputy Director Neuberger on that one.

Deputy Director Pete Neuberger (Public Works) 05:35

I don't know if the system is capable of functioning that way. So rather than commit to saying that we can do that, I can only say, I don't know that we can commit to that at this time.

Alderson Denise Fenton (District 6) 05:45

Okay, thank you.

Alderson Vered Meltzer (District 2) 05:49

Just directly to that. I would hope that before this comes around next year, we will have thoroughly explored that that functionality.

Jennifer Stephany (Appleton Downtown Incorporated) 06:00

I think it was that way during Octoberfest. Was it not?

Deputy Director Pete Neuberger (Public Works) 06:05

We had for Octoberfest, it was an event that qualified for a special event parking, and we had staff taking cash and with credit card readers at the event.

Jennifer Stephany (Appleton Downtown Incorporated) 06:16

Oh, I see. Okay.

Aldersperson Denise Fenton (District 6) 06:18

Alder Hartzheim.

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 06:23

Thank you, Chair. My concern about that particular thing, should it work out would be that not everyone's going to know to take a ticket, and then they could still end up in that same \$50 fine issue. Thank you.

Aldersperson Denise Fenton (District 6) 06:34

Thank you. So, we have a motion, but we don't have a second for the amendment. Is that correct?

Jennifer Stephany (Appleton Downtown Incorporated) 06:44

The gate doesn't open unless you take a ticket.

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 06:47

I meant if it was open and stayed open.

Jennifer Stephany (Appleton Downtown Incorporated) 06:49

The exit open. The exit would be open, so the entry would be the arm would be down to have to take a ticket for the arm to go up. So, everybody would have a ticket and then the exit ramp—or, excuse me, exit arm is up so they don't have to feed it in.

Aldersperson Denise Fenton (District 6) 07:10

Thank you. I'm going to take the word of staff on this. So, we have, we have a motion and no second to amend it, so that means the item stays as is. That motion fails for lack of a second. So is there any other discussion on the item as—Alder Siebers.

Aldersperson William Siebers (District 1) 07:31

Well, the big question is, what is the revenue cost to the city?

Aldersperson Denise Fenton (District 6) 07:36

Can someone from staff answer that? I recall that last year when we asked that question, it was like \$38 for an average Saturday—\$3800 for an average Saturday. But Deputy Director Neuberger.

Deputy Director Pete Neuberger (Public Works) 07:48

Thank you. Chair, the last data that we compiled on this was from 2022. Average November Saturday in 2022 was \$3,100 in ramp revenue and \$700 in downtown meter revenue.

Alderson Denise Fenton (District 6) 08:04

Okay, thank you. So somewhere in the \$3800. Mayor, what mic do you have?

Mayor Jake Woodford 08:12

I'd just point out to the committee that that captures an average November Saturday and not a not a Saturday where there's significant promotion going on around shopping downtown like there would be with Small Business Saturday. So, I'd just asked the committee to take that into consideration that what's what we've got is data for an average Saturday. And as we heard from the presenter, this is not an average Saturday. Thank you.

Alderson Denise Fenton (District 6) 08:43

So, I am reluctant to vote to approve this, especially as not amended, because we know—all of us know the challenges we've had with the parking utility, and to give that revenue up for—I mean, I am a supporter of Small Business Saturday. I spend an inordinate amount of money that day. But in terms of where we are with the parking utility, I'm not sure it's fiscally prudent to do this. Alder Firkus.

Alderson Brad Firkus (District 3) 09:23

Thank you, Chair. I'm inclined to not support this. I—again, it's a great event. We have great shops downtown, but at the same time, this is infrastructure that supports everyone, and it needs to be funded, and this is how we fund our parking infrastructures, through parking fees. So, I would be inclined to vote against this.

Alderson Denise Fenton (District 6) 09:45

I—we saw Alder Alfheim.

Alderson Kristin Alfheim (District 11) 09:46

Thank you, Chair. The only input I would offer on this is the number one complaint we get is lack of parking. And the reality is, we know we have plenty of parking. It exists in the ramps. So, to me, offering something like this is an investment to help the outside realize that there is ample parking at all times downtown, and if we can get people into a parking ramp, they'll see the value of it. Stay downtown, spend more town money downtown, and come back downtown. I do understand the loss of revenue. But reality is we need to increase the usage of the ramps, and the only way to do that is to have new people try it and see that they like it. So, I would ask that we consider that—the investment today in the repeat usage in the long run, and will that actually come back in a profitable way?

Alderson Denise Fenton (District 6) 10:42

Anyone else? Are we ready to vote? All right, so on the request from Appleton Downtown Inc for free ramp and meter parking.

Alderson Vered Meltzer (District 2) 10:53

I think Jen wanted to—

Alderson Denise Fenton (District 6) 10:55

Miss Stephany, you get one more time.

Jennifer Stephany (Appleton Downtown Incorporated) 11:00

If there's an option to do just the meters and not scrap this all together, is that still a consideration that the committee would discuss?

Aldersperson Denise Fenton (District 6) 11:09

We had a motion to make that amendment, and that motion filled, for lack of a second.

Aldersperson William Siebers (District 1) 11:15

I don't—I'm sorry. Was that your motion?

Aldersperson Vered Meltzer (District 2) 11:19

Yep, my motion was to get rid of the ramp part of it, but leave the meter.

Aldersperson William Siebers (District 1) 11:27

I apologize.

Aldersperson Vered Meltzer (District 2) 11:29

Is that motion still dangling out there? Can we take your second now?

Aldersperson William Siebers (District 1) 11:33

You can take my second now.

Aldersperson Denise Fenton (District 6) 11:34

Attorney Behrens? We hadn't voted.

Attorney Christopher Behrens 11:38

The motion needs to be remade because the first time around didn't get a second.

Aldersperson Denise Fenton (District 6) 11:41

Okay.

Aldersperson Vered Meltzer (District 2) 11:42

All right, I'll remake the motion. I'll remake the motion.

Aldersperson William Siebers (District 1) 11:46

Second.

Aldersperson Denise Fenton (District 6) 11:47

Okay. All right, we have a motion and a second to amend. All in favor?

Alderspersons Siebers and Meltzer 11:52

Aye.

Aldersperson Denise Fenton (District 6) 11:53

All opposed?

Alderspersons Firkus, Fenton, and Doran 11:54

Nay.

Aldersperson Denise Fenton (District 6) 11:55

All right, so that motion fails two to three.

Alderson Denise Fenton (District 6) 11:59

All right, so we it remains as written. Are we ready to vote on that? All right, all in favor. Please signify by saying aye.

Aldersons Siebers and Meltzer 12:07

Aye.

Alderson Denise Fenton (District 6) 12:08

All right. All opposed?

Aldersons Firkus, Fenton, and Doran 12:09

Nay.

Alderson Denise Fenton (District 6) 12:10

That fails, three to two. We have no information items—

Attorney Christopher Behrens 12:16

[His microphone didn't pick up all of his words. He basically said because the motion failed, they had to make another motion to be approved.]

Alderson Denise Fenton (District 6) 12:21

Okay.

Alderson Brad Firkus (District 3) 12:23

I'll make that motion a recommendation to deny the request.

Alderson Denise Fenton (District 6) 12:26

Second.

Alderson Denise Fenton (District 6) 12:28

All right, so we have a motion to deny the request and a second. All in favor?

Alderson Denise Fenton (District 6) 12:33

Aye.

Alderson Denise Fenton (District 6) 12:34

Opposed?

Aldersons Siebers and Meltzer 12:35

Nay.

Alderson Denise Fenton (District 6) 12:36

All right, that passes three to two. Thank you, Attorney Behrens.