Public Responses to the BPA Parking Fee Proposal: Part 2 (12)

Ed Gallagher, The Bethlehem Gadfly Gadfly's posts, Parking, Serious Issues September 24, 2018

(12th in a series of posts on parking)

Bruce A. Haines and Stephen Antalics

The Gadfly will divide the responses from the public to the BPA proposal to raise parking meter rates into several posts for sharper focus, and at the end he will summarize the key points and identify the options offered to the $1.50/hr. meter rate. The Gadfly's notes on each respondent are given below, but you are encouraged to watch the videos and to take your own notes.

4) Bruce A. Haines   (see post 8 for Haines elaboration)

video 3: min. 9-12
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2s2Rpalxkx0
video 4: min. 0-7:30
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YKPHJWsCMfk

We need to rethink ourselves but not in the peer group of this study.

We need to think of ourselves in a different peer group. That of Progressive cities. Not of the old model of traditional parking logic.

".50 more an hr. to drive people to the parking garages is pretty meaningless."

"I don't really think it changes behavior to do a .50 increase in the parking meter rates."

The real reason for the rate increase is "generating more revenue." $250,000/yr. from meters expected, and fines will generate another $400,000.

"Downtown Bethlehem is a unique progressive downtown," not like cities in the study's peer group, not like Reading and Allentown, etc.

We compete with the Promenade and other life-style centers, where people park close and free.

We should be comparing ourselves to places like Sarasota, Naples, Corning, Saratoga Springs where meter rates are $0. They are not in our peer group but should be.

These are progressive cities competing with the life style centers – and thus models for us.

"We need to rethink our whole philosophy."

A fine of $25 plus free meter rates will get the desired turnover and the same revenue as the study's projection.

$0 meter rate + $25 fine will create turnover and the same equal financial bottom line as the study.

And better perception by users.

Yes, fines need to be onerous.

We should "join the progressive cities that are trying to foster their downtowns."

Harrisburg and Easton have $25 fines, so raising to that level is not out of the question for us.

He's confident in his numbers: now taking in $800,000 in fines and $500,000 in meters = 1.3 mil, you're asking for a $650,00 increase to bring revenues to 1.950 mil = will get same revenue and free parking from his plan.

This is a "complete game changer."

Also, Polk street is not in CBD, so according to BPA charter outside the CBD parking is the responsibility of the developer.

We should "look at Bethlehem as a transformational progressive city when it comes to parking."

Bottom line: his proposal = 0$ meters, $25 fine.

(If it's just about revenue generation, why not meters around City Hall?)

5) Stephen Antalics

video 4: min. 7:30-12
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YKPHJWsCMfk
video 5: 0-1:30
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wLShFEbK4uE

— Parking meters are counter- productive for increasing turnover, some areas go 4, or even 10 hrs.

All meters should be either 1-2hrs. max, forcing cars to garages.

Many people park on the street because they don't know how to use a credit card in the garages; A lot a people are not proficient in English and find it easier to use a quarter.

— Of total parking spots available for transient use, what % of those parking spots are occupied on a daily basis? [*"I don't have that number."*] How efficient is that garage?

— Bethlehem is out of line with many communities.

Meters running at 9pm is clearly a revenue-generator at the cost of the public.

Parking meters on E. 4th st., 10 blocks from the business district, till 9pm "makes no sense."

— increased rates are necessary because of poor planning.

"do you really need the 3rd Street garage?"

Gadfly23

— Sees absolutely no reason to have meters till 9pm in areas where we have no businesses.

We are "punishing residents to gain more revenue."