

The Issue of Parking Fees and Fines Now before the Mayor and Council: Part 1 (23)

The Bethlehem Gadfly Gadfly's posts, Parking, Serious Issues October 1, 2018
(23rd in a series of posts on parking)

Gadfly says it's time to perk up in regard to the issue of proposed increases in parking fees and fines. (Ha! though we've had 20-some posts so far.)

The Mayor rules on fees, Council on fines. Gadfly is puzzled on that interesting division of responsibility and will want to research that some time. But perhaps there's a wise head in our group who can enlighten us. The BPA commissioned Desman Design to do a wide study of parking in town. The fees and fines are but part. Lots and lots more there. Interesting report. Data. Maps.

On the basis of the Desman report, the BPA has already requested the Mayor to increase meter rates from \$1/hr to \$1.50/hr, and the fine part of their proposal gets introduced at Council tomorrow Oct. 2. The increase in fines for a meter violation, for instance, would go from \$10 to \$15.

Desman says fines are usually based proportionately on fees, so perhaps these decisions will be yoked together time-wise. Sounds like they have to be.

The increased fees and fines are proposed to go into effect January 1. The Mayor asked the BPA to hold a public meeting on the fee part Sept 20 (see previous posts for reports). As mentioned, the fines part is just now being introduced.

[The Desman final report dated June 15, 2018](#), is now available online from the BPA web site. There was a draft report dated February 6 that was the basis for a public meeting April 12. Gadfly sees no difference

between the draft and the final report EXCEPT 25 or so bullets of questions from the public generated at that April 12 meeting (77-78). Gadfly is a bit mystified at the addition of that record of public commentary, since denial that such a document existed got his Irish up a bit at the Sept 20 meeting. Gadfly wanted to see if the April 12 public commentary on the draft report occasioned any changes in the final report, but obviously it didn't.

The Desman final report was accepted unanimously by the BPA Board at the May meeting "with the understanding that the recommendations will be reviewed later one by one."

Desman representative Tim Tracy discussed fees and fines at the July meeting of the BPA (though the discussion seems to have been solely on fees). The proposal to increase the fees to \$1.50/hr passed unanimously, though the minutes do not reveal the nature of any questions or comments by Board members.

A Desman memo presented at the meeting gave 3 reasons so justify the increase: "1) Market value, 2) to provide a better tool to manage parking infrastructure, and 3) After working with the Authority's Financial Advisors, it was determined that the increases were necessary to cover their costs through user fees." This memo was presumably presented to the Mayor.

At the time of the Sept 20 public meeting run by BPA to give feedback to the Mayor, the final report was not available for the public to see. Which was awkward. There was a meeting on the final report without the final report. It was understandably not officially "final" till the minutes of the July meeting were approved at the BPA Board meeting Sept. 26. At which time it was published online.

There's another awkwardness. The public commentary for the Mayor's consideration on Sept 20 is not included in the final report. The Mayor was taking notes, but it did not appear that BPA/Desman were. So Gadfly is not sure that commentary will get into a report. Gadfly gathers the commentary was simply meant for the Mayor's ears. Never fear, though, all is not lost, see posts 11-14 and 16-17 in this series for Gadfly's

summary and for a full Gadfly grandchild Owen Gallagher video (oops, sorry Al Wurth, we lost you).

Chew on this for a while.

Gadfly's set up for thinking about this parking issue will continue shortly.