

# Coming Up to Speed on the Parking Proposal (2)

Ed Gallagher, The Bethlehem Gadfly Gadfly's posts, Parking, Serious Issues September 16, 2018

*Public meeting Thursday, September 20, Town Hall, 6PM*

*(2nd in a series of posts about parking)*

BPA commissioned the wide-ranging parking study from Desman c. Sept. 2017. Their draft study is dated Feb. 6, 2018. Bad weather canceled a public meeting to discuss the report March 21. The public meeting was held April 12. Members of the BPA had all received a hard copy of the Desman report by their April 25 meeting. A Desman rep attended the May 23 BPA meeting at which the Board accepted “the Parking Study and the findings with the understanding that the recommendations will be reviewed later one by one.” No minutes of the June, July, and August meetings have been published to know what further discussion of this meeting’s topics has taken place.

Desman, Northside and Southside Downtown Parking Study, March 21, 2018. 15-page outline summary of their report prepared for the public meeting presentation. Of particular interest to the Gadfly was the Stakeholder/Meeting Notes (p. 5). The three recommendations about fees and fines can be found on p. 13 among 20 general recommendation. <https://bethpark.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Final-Report-Presentation-3.21.18.pdf>

Desman, Northside and Southside Downtown Parking Study, February 6, 2018. Here’s the complete 92-page draft report. <https://bethpark.org/wp-content/uploads/Bethlehem%20Parking%20Study%202.6.18%20FINAL%20DRAFT%20REPORT%20%28draft%29.pdf>

Here are what seem to be the pertinent sections of the Desman report:

Rates and fines (p. 48-52): “parking industry best practices dictate that the hourly cost to park at an on-street meter should be greater than the

hourly cost to park in an off-street facility. . . . It is generally accepted in the parking industry that the fine for these types of violations should equal 10-15 times the hourly rate charged for parking, with 15 times as the target. . . . Of the 13 municipalities examined, 12 charged at least as much or more per hour for on-street parking than Bethlehem's \$1.00/hour rate. . . . parking rates charged in Bethlehem are generally lower than the average rates charged in comparable municipalities. The implication is that the parking rates charged in Bethlehem are too low and an argument can be made for increasing parking rates to more closely align with the rates charged in comparable cities."

Rates and fines (p. 64): "the parking rates and fine amounts for violations in Bethlehem are below market rate."

Rate and fines (p. 72-73): "the on-street hourly parking rate has not increased since 2012. . . . At \$10 for a metered parking violation, Bethlehem is at half of the \$20 average fine imposed by comparable municipalities. . . . Based on the industry best practice that the fine for a parking meter violation should be 10-15 times the hourly rate charged, it is recommended that the fine for metered parking violations be increased from \$10 to \$15."

Walnut St. garage (p. 75): based on engineering assessment and cost, the recommendation is to "demolish and build a new one."