



## **Parking Advisory Committee**

Date: December 20, 2021

Time: 11:30 AM – 12:30 PM

Location: Conducted via Remote Participation

### **Minutes**

In Attendance: Ali Carter, Daniel Amstutz, Adam Chapdelaine, Leland Stein, Mike Rademacher, Melissa Laube, Corey Rateau, Julia Mirak.

#### **1. Greetings and introductions, notice regarding online meetings.**

Daniel Amstutz explained that the Committee is holding a virtual meeting as allowed by state law to continue to mitigate the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Governor Baker had signed an Executive Order in response to the COVID-19 pandemic allowing virtual meetings, which suspended the usual Open Meeting Law requirement that a quorum of committee members be physically present in order to hold an official committee meeting. The provisions of this Executive Order have been extended by the Legislature. Amstutz confirmed the committee members in attendance for the meeting.

#### **2. Approval of the minutes for the November 19, 2021 meeting.**

Meeting minutes were approved.

#### **3. Treasurer's Office updates:**

Amstutz noted that the Treasurer was not able to make the meeting so this section would be skipped until later. Adam Chapdelaine asked to have the parking revenue information from the previous meeting available for the FY2023 discussions. Julia Mirak asked to have financial information sent around ahead of the next meeting.

#### **4. FY 2023 PBD geographic area and funds discussion.**

Amstutz shared a presentation to start discussion on the following topics:

##### **a. Proposed update to PBD geographic area.**

Amstutz explained that the current boundaries of the Parking

Benefits District (PBD) does not include areas of Arlington Center that are of interest to the committee for making improvements with PBD funds. It seems reasonable to expand the PBD area to cover these important sections. The Select Board would need to approve these changes. The expansion proposal includes expanding the district to the following locations:

- i. Both sides of Mystic Street from Mass Ave to Chestnut Street
- ii. Both sides of Chestnut Street from Mystic Street to Medford Street
- iii. Franklin Street from Mass Ave to Broadway
- iv. Broadway from Franklin Street to Webster Street
- v. Include any intersections with the above locations

Chestnut Street has come up as a significant safety concern for pedestrians over the last couple years. The committee has discussed improving the medians on Mystic Street. Broadway from Franklin Street to Webster Street now has parking meters. This proposal was brought to the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) and they supported this change. Amstutz showed a map with the expansion locations and asked if there were any questions or concerns.

Mike Rademacher asked if the expansion of the district means that any on-street parking should be metered within the district. Amstutz said he was not aware of any requirement, and the designation of the district was a Board decision. Chapdelaine said the state statute enabling the PBD does not specify that spaces must be metered. The general principal is that you reinvest parking meter revenue where the revenue is generated. He also noted that accessing the Center by any mode is a defensible logic for making the map expansions. He noted that there may be some requests to expand the map to Pleasant Street in the future since it was an important part of the 2014 parking study. Mirak said it is an improvement and allows the Town to spend money in these areas that need them. Leland said he supports adding the Broadway section due to its nature as a historic district as well to help make improvements there. Amstutz said he will put these map changes on the agenda for the next meeting as a voting item.

**b. Overview of PBD fund uses.**

Amstutz briefly discussed the allowed uses of PBD funds based on state law and how they have been used in the past. MGL Chapter 40, Section 22A ½ says that parking revenue collected in a parking benefits district may be “designated in whole or in part

for use in that district through a dedicated fund in accordance with the purposes and uses listed in Section 22A.” MGL Chapter 40, Section 22A says that “The revenue therefrom may be used for acquisition, installation, maintenance and operation of parking meters and other parking payment and enforcement technology, the regulation of parking, salaries of parking management personnel, improvements to the public realm, and transportation improvements, including, but not limited to, the operations of mass transit and facilities for biking and walking...” Amstutz noted that last part about improvements to the public realm and transportation improvements as being the main ones we would plan to use the district funds for. The PBD funds have been used for parking administration, enforcement, meter repairs and upgrades, supporting the Arlington Center Sidewalk Project, a study of the Russell Common Lot, implementation of PayByPhone, and seasonal plantings.

**c. Connections to town-wide plans.**

Amstutz discussed the intent of the PBD based on the original formation of the PBD and town-wide plans. In 2017 the Master Plan Implementation Committee and Board of Selectmen report suggested the PBD funds could be used for meter maintenance, street sweeping & snow removal, beautification, lighting & roadway improvements, sidewalk repair, street trees, benches, bike racks, and upgrades to Russell Common Lot and Broadway Plaza. Public outreach conducted in 2017 covered many of the same subjects, including lighting, snow removal, improving Broadway Plaza, and beautification & cleanliness of the Center. The Master Plan discusses needed improvements to walkability, connectivity and access, multi-modal accessibility, wayfinding, lighting, and better pedestrian crossings. Amstutz noted strategies of the Connect Arlington Sustainable Transportation Plan that PBD funds could support, including:

- i. A.3 - Prioritize investments that improve safety at intersections and along road segments with the greatest pedestrian and bicyclist conflicts)
- ii. A.9 – Advance plans to enhance safety and reduce user conflicts along Mass Ave in Arlington Center
- iii. B.5 – Increase access to bike share throughout Arlington
- iv. C.4 – Enhance pedestrian safety through design improvements at intersections and crossings
- v. D.1 – Prioritize new bicycle facilities along corridors currently designated as Arlington’s “lane-sharing network” (also D.4 – bike parking – and D.5 redesign of major intersections)

- vi. G.1 – Ensure Arlington’s roadways and off-street parking are maintained to support local business activity and resident quality of life

d. **Funds available and project ideas.**

Amstutz said that although parking revenues have fluctuated significantly over the last two years due to COVID-19, \$200,000 is available for programming in Town FY2023, above and beyond fixed expenses and other operating expenses. Existing discrete projects that are expected to continue are the seasonal plantings for the Center, budgeted at \$20,000, and sidewalk snow clearance around parking meters, budgeted at \$10,000. There is also a need to upgrade the parking meter modems for next year which may need \$50,000. Project ideas that could be funded include:

- i. Advance Chestnut Street pedestrian safety and complete streets improvements (requires map change by Select Board) – supported by TAC
- ii. Additional public space improvements including Russell Common Lot (i.e., lighting, landscaping, beautification)
- iii. Continue needed sidewalk repair and replacement
- iv. Better off-street location for Railroad Lot Bluebikes station

The exact scope and project funding for each project still needs to be determined. The Chestnut Street project would address safety issues raised up as a result of a pedestrian fatality there two years ago. Russell Common Lot upgrades continues to be a concern. More sidewalk improvements need to be made on Mass Ave and in other parts of the Center. The Railroad Lot Bluebikes station is one of the most popular in the Arlington system and it’s important to keep it functional year-round. Amstutz went through several maps showing the locations of the proposed projects. He noted that next month the committee would be asked to make project recommendations once more specific expenditures for projects was determined.

Chapdelaine said he did not think the meter modem upgrades needed to be taken out of the \$200,000 for programming because that is treated as an operating and maintenance expense. Up to \$170,000 should be available for programming, including the existing projects for seasonal plantings and snow clearance. Rademacher noted that DPW has not had to use the \$10,000 for snow clearance, they have just built the snow clearance in commercial areas into their regular snow removal budget. Mirak asked if there were any estimates available for beautification elements that the Chamber of Commerce has asked about.

Chapdelaine said he did not have those numbers and asked to see the list from the Chamber. Mirak noted she would like to see improvements to the median strips on Mass Ave by Broadway Plaza so address landscaping issues. Corey Rateau added that having a flat surface there to put up APD's variable message board would be better instead of cobble stones. Amstutz asked if there was a timeline for paving this section of Mass Ave between Medford Street and Pond Lane. Rademacher said he did not have that information at the time and would need to check on it. Mirak asked about a third-party landscaper for the Center. Rademacher said he could look into this more. The committee discussed watering, landscaping, and other public space improvements, as well as prioritizing different projects. Chapdelaine noted it would be useful for having the PBD funds leverage other funds such as funding for improvements to Chestnut Street and MassDOT Shared Streets and Spaces grants. Amstutz said that was part of the idea and would go along with the expansion of the PBD area. Ali Carter noted that everything on this project list was highlighted during previous public outreach in the creation of the PBD except for big belly trashcans which are needed in all the commercial areas. The committee briefly discussed rodent control with the Broadway Plaza project. Mirak asked about educational signage and storefront cleanup. Carter explained she is worked with Inspectional Services on these issues.

Amstutz said they would move forward with the proposed projects for determining amounts of expenditures for the next PAC meeting. Chapdelaine said they would need to provide information to the Finance Committee by the end of January.

**5. PaybyPhone/mobile parking payment update.**

Amstutz said he posted data from the PaybyPhone backend on month-by-month usage and revenues on the calendar page for the meeting. PaybyPhone usage peaked last month, in November. Free parking on Saturdays and the holidays is probably lowering collections at the moment.

**6. Broadway Plaza Construction Update.**

Mike Rademacher said the Massachusetts Water Resource Authority (MWRA) is expecting to start their work January 3. They will put up fencing and start securing the site. Work will be visible on and off over the course of the project as they do testing. Final completion of their work and the restoration of Broadway Plaza is expected to remain on schedule. Amstutz noted the bus stop at the Plaza will be temporarily closed and riders will be directed to the layover stop in front of Play Time

at Broadway and Franklin Street. Carter noted the taxi stand will also be suspended for the time being, and taxis can park in the Russell Common Lot. Mirak asked if the taxi stand will be returned after the project. Carter said it would unless something changes. Mirak said she would like to discuss it at a future meeting.

**7. Set next committee meeting date and time.**

Chapdelaine noted the Town Bylaws say they must submit a report to the Finance Committee by February 1. Meeting members agreed to hold the next meeting on Wednesday, January 19, at 2 pm.

**8. Any other business.**

Rateau noted there have been meters out around town and he is working on getting those fixed.

**9. Adjourn.**

The meeting was adjourned at 12:30 PM.