

City of Folsom
Historic District Parking Solutions Ad Hoc Committee

MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, October 3, 2019

6:30 P.M.

Public Works Conference Room, First Floor

Folsom City Hall

50 Natoma Street, Folsom, CA 95630

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:31 p.m. by Chair Steve Heard.

II. ROLL CALL

Members Present:

Kenton Ashworth

Steve Heard

Karen Holmes

Charles Knuth

Kyle Middleton

Cindy Pharis

Jim Snook

Murray Weaver

Members Absent:

Shannon Brenkwitz

Paul Keast

Phil Rotheram

Staff Present:

Dave Nugen, Folsom Public Works Director

Mark Rackovan, Folsom Engineering Manager

Pam Johns, Folsom Community Development Director

Steve Banks, City of Folsom Principal Planner

Stephanie Campbell, Kearns & West

III. BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR

- a. Mike Brenkwitz, Folsom resident, made remarks on the importance of the parking garage. He noted there are 315 spaces in the existing parking garage, but a 2018 traffic report showed a need for over 1,000 spaces. He stated that Historic Folsom is in need of over 500 spaces to accommodate the Historic District's parking needs and that there is no space to find these in the residential area adjacent to the commercial area of the Historic District. With this in mind, he stated that something must be done to accommodate the increasing demand for parking in downtown Historic Folsom.
- b. Ernie Sheldon Jr. brought up his concerns regarding Airbnb's impact on the Historic District and what that will do to impact parking. He is interested in what the regulations are in Folsom overall and in the Historic District in particular for rentals like Airbnb. He stated that business owners should be more forceful in finding funding sources to fix the parking issue.
- c. Ben Fuentes stated that he has seen substantial conversation regarding the parking issue but has not seen enough action to address the issue with solutions. He stated that there is a need to have an ongoing parking assessment of the Historic District. He remarked that business owners and others should dedicate a portion of their profits to fund a parking garage. He stated that no one uses the existing garage because it is too inconvenient. A possible solution could be to use golf carts to shuttle people to garage, particularly women who do not like to walk alone at night. He implored the committee to take action to accomplish workable solutions, with the understanding that not all parking can be on the streets.
- d. Adena Blair of 607 Figueoia Street remarked that the need for parking is great. A garage would help to alleviate the parking issue but if there is no money, creative solutions can be pursued. She stated that in her neighborhood walks, she has noticed many people use the city's easement area to put fences and other structures out to the street, creating a narrow area for cars to move through. She believes this becomes an issue when there are larger events because if there is an emergency, it will be difficult to find roads with enough space for fire trucks to move through or for emergency rerouting to take place. She stated that a possible solution could be for the city to spray paint or use flags to make enough room in the road is left for vehicles to move through. She implored the committee and staff to walk the neighborhood during heavy events to view this issue for themselves. Her final point was regarding a large lot behind the Folsom Hotel which she believes would be great for a parking lot and would not be hiding the steakhouse behind a parking garage.
- e. Loretta Hettinger referred to her pledge at the last meeting to write up a document on the background of Folsom's parking issues and make recommendations for committee's discussion. She then submitted a handout to the committee.
- f. Jerry Bernau referred to his comments regarding the Historic District parking lot at the last meeting. As a follow-up he brought the cost of the parking garage from 2007 study to submit to the committee. He stated that the parking garage was built in part to satisfy parking needs.

IV. APPROVE MINUTES

- a. Nora De Cuir stated that the committee will be approving minutes every meeting from the previous meeting. Issues with the meeting summaries should be brought up and the committee will address each individually to review before final approval.
- b. Regarding the August 8, 2019 meeting summary, no changes were suggested.
- c. Regarding the September 5, 2019, Jim Snook believed that an item on page 5, bullet 3 was misattributed and requested it be corrected. Additionally, Karen Holmes was absent not present for this meeting, while the summary originally listed her as both absent and present.
- d. Murray Weaver motioned for these items to be altered and then the minute approved. Charlie Knuth seconded the motion. All members agreed by stating “aye” in a roll call given by Nora De Cuir.

V. DISCUSSION ITEMS

- a. Nora De Cuir clarified that questions will be taken after each item during the discussion item section of the meeting agenda.
- b. The meeting then moved on to the staff presentation and committee discussion of background information regarding Historic District parking.
 - i. Mark Rackovan provided background information on Historic District parking issues. Specifically, he addressed potential parking garage sites, employee data submitted by merchants, and the current case study locations being reviewed.
 - ii. Then launching into parking garage costs and location, Rackovan stated that there were 5 locations in particular which were identified for potential development. These locations are the Gold Lake Center, Trader Lane, Riley/Scott, Folsom Hotel, and the Moose/Eagle Lodge. He stated that a consultant had previously completed a qualitative study of the tradeoffs for these sites based on how well each site addresses 5 separate criteria. Rackovan stated that overall the consultant found Trader Lane and Moose/Eagle Lodge to be the best sites.
 - iii. Rackovan stated that the consultant, Kim, Lee, Horn, provided parking garage cost estimates, noting the substantial environmental analysis and other preparation involved as well as the land acquisition potentially involved. He stated the railroad parking garage was estimated to cost about \$42,000 per stall with an overall cost of \$14 million. Additionally there are existing issues with drift mines which do not provide a stable foundation, thus necessitating a unique design to accommodate this issue. A geological study would be needed to determine the soil conditions on other sites. Rackovan stated that good planning level cost estimates are that it would cost around \$10-16 million to implement any of these structures.
- c. The committee then moved on to discussion and questions from members.
 - i. Steve Heard asked if the Moose/Eagle Lodge property is under private ownership. Mark Rackovan responded that he believes so but does not know cost estimates.
 - ii. Kenton Ashworth asked if the city would still have free parking in garage if another garage were to be built. Mark Rackovan responded that he is not sure at this time. He also mentioned that the committee could recommend if city

would charge for garage parking in the future. Kenton Ashworth followed up by asking if the city could have more parking spaces than Rackovan had previously stated. Rackovan responded that the number was not a maximum by any stretch, only a first cut at an estimate.

- iii. Kenton Ashworth mentioned that the city needs to ensure the garage is aesthetically pleasing but also cost effective. Rackovan responded that if there is no first-floor retail, then more parking stalls can be accommodated.
- iv. Kyle Middleton remarked that it seems that the numbers on the slides are not adding up and asked why this is. Mark Rackovan responded that he would have to ask consultant exactly why this is. He added that the numbers seen were his math using current numbers given. Rackovan can find out if the consultant has documentation for this. Middleton responded that the numbers reached seemed subjective so he felt he should inquire. Rackovan responded that he could have missed something.
- v. Karen Holmes remarked that this was her first time figuring out that Gold Lake Drive is the perfect spot for a new parking garage. She mentioned that in order to preserve the Historic District's charm, and not become more high-rises, having a parking garage with potential similar to the Lakes Center, which is level with Leidesdorff, could have design elements that retain charm while giving Folsom residents a workable parking solution.
- vi. Kyle Middleton asked if this study occurred in 2008. He also confirmed that aesthetic was not taken into consideration. Mark Rackovan responded that this is correct.
- vii. Steve Heard asked if since the current garage is considered inconvenient and not located well, then will a garage in the Gold Lake site have same issue? Charlie Knuth asked if, indeed, the Gold Lake site is located too close to existing structure. Steve Heard added that women who work in the Historic District already do not want to use the existing garage for safety reasons.
- viii. Karen Holmes stated that we are creating a tiny downtown –a fact which may be a separate issue but is still a reality. She stated that any parking garage will require users be retrained to understand that walking 3 blocks is not a big deal. Although, many people are used to easy parking elsewhere, the Historic District is not like this. She remarked that perhaps parking is relatively inconvenient, but the Historic District's charm outweighs easy, front-row parking. Holmes expressed that the solution must include retraining people.
- ix. Nora De Cuir expressed that she was hearing Holmes say she would like this issue included as additional criteria outside of 2008 study. Holmes responded that she was not sure about what exactly the original criteria included, but that she did not want the Historic District to be defined by parking garages. She further explained that something could be built which is cantilevered off a street, extending below street-level at the back. Nora De Cuir brought the conversation back to discussing the decision-making process by explaining that Holmes was starting to think about tradeoffs. De Cuir offered that tradeoffs might best be addressed in later meetings because the committee is still in an

- early phase of the process denoted by exploring solutions. She recommended the group proceed by hearing the rest of the city's presentation.
- d. Mark Rackovan then moved on to discussing the employee parking data.
 - i. Mark Rackovan shared that most commercial locations in the Historic District have provided employee parking data, although the city was still waiting on information from the Folsom Hotel, Fat Rabbit, and Hacienda.
 - ii. In response to committee members straining to see the small typeface on the presentation slides, Nora De Cuir offered that the information will also be provided online so the information can be enlarged as needed.
 - iii. Kyle Middleton added that Lake Natoma Inn could be included in the list.
 - iv. Mark Rackovan showed a graph with vertical bars at every hour over a 24-hour period starting at midnight. Each day of the week was represented by different color bar. The graph illustrated employee parking peaking on Fridays between with 300-350 vehicles, although this will likely be pushing just under 350 when additional data from the other businesses comes in. Rackovan added that weekends are surprisingly lower from an employee parking standpoint. He offered that once all data is collected, the city can format the data however the committee sees fit. The data can be broken down by block to see where employee vehicles are located by hour by block.
 - v. Charlie Knuth presented Q'bole as a business which could be added to the list for data gathering.
 - e. Moving on to case study locations the city is researching, Mark Rackovan clarified that he is still pinpointing communities in California that would serve as appropriate case studies with enough similarities to Folsom to be useful. The cities he listed in the presentation have a combination of parking structures, meters, residential parking permit programs, websites for how to park within district, and transportation demand management strategies (i.e., strategies to incentivize employees to find other parking or give transit discount to free up parking). He stated that he is working to create information from these case studies to foster discussion on Folsom-specific options.
 - i. Rackovan remarked that Palo Alto is an interesting study because their solutions were so well developed that Mountain View followed suit. He pointed out a Green Caltrain article he found to be an interesting read. He continued, Palo Alto has no metered parking downtown, a free garage parking with a 2 hr limit, residential permit parking, and a variety of transportation demand management strategies. Rackovan pointed out that a combination of strategies could be used to encourage people to use certain solutions, much like Loretta Hettinger's proffered recommendations.
 - ii. Next, Rackovan highlighted San Luis Obispo's parking solutions including metered parking, a parking garage, and a residential permit parking program. He clarified that there is a cost associated with the parking permits as well as a restriction on the amount of permits given to a property. He also expounded upon the importance of having a certain amount of community buy-in needed for any given program for it to see success.

- f. Nora De Cuir clarified that the city was at this point looking for the committee's feedback on what mix of parking solutions they would like studied in similar communities.
 - i. Mark Rackovan stated that he and Steve Banks need to deep dive on in-lieu parking fees for development because this information is not readily available online. He stated he is planning on calling to figure out what the cities' fees are and what their associated criteria might be.
 - ii. Kyle Middleton expressed his approval at the work the city is doing to find appropriate case study cities. He continued that in looking at the list, Historic Folsom stands out as so different from the offered examples. He was not sure how applicable parking fees in a place like Palo Alto are to Folsom as parking in Palo Alto is understood to be exorbitantly expensive, while Folsom parking is expected to be easy and available for little to no money.
 - iii. Steve Heard remarked that he has been to many of the case study locations, nothing that all communities listed have residential tied in closely with the commercial district and thus may be seeing many of the same issues. Mark Rackovan agreed that the proximity of residential and commercial districts was one of the main filters for showing the listed examples. Kyle Middleton added that many of the examples are super high rent districts, but in Folsom some commercial spaces are more hobby than business.
 - iv. Nora De Cuir mentioned that the committee can bring up other locations for Mark Rackovan to research and he will continue to look into the case study issue. Mark Rackovan added that if the committee members are considering a recommendation, please email and let him know.
 - v. Cindy Pharis asked about time limit parking in the case studies. Mark Rackovan stated that he tried to find where this information was available. He found that some areas do have this and associated robust enforcement.
 - vi. Nora De Cuir wrapped up the agenda item by tying the discussion to the next item: agenda items for next meeting. She underlined the good questions in a variety of categories generated by the committee.
- g. The committee then moved to establishing the agenda for the next meeting.
 - i. Nora De Cuir showed the group a timeline of the committee's process, further stating that proposed solutions are needed in March. She explained that the group is in the discovery phase of the process, with only one more meeting focused on looking at study options. Then the group will need to look for viable solutions and what criteria is needed to evaluate the proposed options by. The goal is to finalize a report out from the committee in the February-March timeframe. She recommended the city staff bring back further case study information in November, but also the group would now move to discuss other significant agenda items to discuss in November.
 - ii. Cindy Pharis asserted that she would like the group to think outside the box. She agreed on the need for a parking garage but felt there were other options available regarding how to accommodate more cars. She challenged the group to think about how to squeeze more cars in to the existing street parking. Pharis

suggested making Sutter to Leidesdorff a one-way street, getting rid of the dividers, and making those spaces diagonal to accommodate more cars. She added that it is necessary to incentivize people to use public transportation, walk, and bicycle. A solution could be for businesses to provide discounts as an incentive, by asking people how they traveled, rewarding them with a discount if it was not by car, and, additionally, asking where they parked as a survey to see if people are using garage. Pharis also stated that she went out to the parking garage during the homecoming parade recently, where she saw at 5pm that there were still 78 spaces available, but out in front of her home the street was covered with cars. Her takeaway from this was that people would rather park in the residential area instead of garage. She implored the committee to think about what can be done to incentivize people to not park in residential area, instead steering them into the commercial area.

- iii. Nora De Cuir interjected on the topic of incentives, that Mark Rackovan could look into what is seen across the case studies. Regarding the other part of Pharis comment, she asked the group what creative engineering to change parking space distribution could be looked into or already exists?
- iv. Mark Rackovan responded that the creative engineering space distribution would be new. He added that the city would need to look at the cost and how many spaces could be created.
- v. Dave Nugen suggested the group consider how this type of action would change the appearance of the Historic District—more cars would be visible.
- vi. Murray Weaver showed the group a sign he brought from an Historic District merchant which illustrated other parking options. He added that if all merchants do this, this could help in the interim.
- vii. Steve Holmes remarked that considering the special occasion Pharis was referring to was the homecoming parade, that was still a lot of people using the garage. He found this as evidence of incremental change.
- viii. Jim Snook stated that after the last meeting where the group spoke about getting rid of orange cones, he bought an example of a “resident parking only” sign which cost \$47. He believed it would be a better solution than orange cones as residential district homes could put the signs out to deter parking. He saw this as a workable interim solution until a parking garage is built.
- ix. Steve Heard responded that in addition to orange cones, some residents do have signs. He inquired to city staff if there are legal issues with putting out deterrents.
- x. Cindy Pharis stated that many residents are putting out cones because Folsom’s last mayor advised residents put cones out as a parking deterrent.
- xi. Mark Rackovan offered that there would be no enforceability with the type of signs Snook suggested.
- xii. Jim Snook suggested that there could also be a “Folsom resident” sticker to be put on resident vehicles.
- xiii. Nora De Cuir interjected to clarify that she heard a desire for more case study information. She remarked that Rackovan will continue to research. She

mentioned the many creative solutions offered by the committee such as incentive programs. She suggested perhaps getting staff opinions on committee-offered solutions.

- xiv. Pam Johns responded that the staff can talk to the city manager the following day and get back to group with their thoughts.
- xv. Steve Heard requested that the committee would like to have a discussion regarding what are the hotspots and times are, what might be driving these pressure points (e.g., events), which people are effected, and then drill into solutions.
- xvi. Nor De Cuir asked if a map which could be viewed together to help foster discussion would be helpful? The committee nodded their heads unanimously in agreement.
- xvii. Steve Heard stated that the same discussions have been rehashed over many years with certain groups who take reliably same positions. He questioned what the real issues are for residents that the committee can address.
- xviii. Mark Rackovan asked if the committee suggested a poll from the public.
- xix. Steve Heard responded by asking how residents could be polled?
- xx. Cindy Pharis stated that the number and scale of events has compounded the parking issues two-fold. Sutter street was nothing when she first moved to Folsom and now the events are bigger all the time and are happening constantly every weekend (e.g., art fair, bike races) constant with no parking accommodations.
- xxi. Nora De Cuir asked if Steve Banks' special events information would be something Pharis would like to look at more? Pharis agreed she would.
- xxii. Murray Weaver asked if Snook's suggestion was to place the unenforceable signs are everywhere so they look official? Snook agreed this was the suggestion. Weaver clarified that this was bluffing and asked it if was effective when Snook saw it in action. Snook responded that he was not sure if it works for everyone, but it worked for he and his wife. He added that the example sign he brought looks very tasteful for an historic area and that it could be posted at regular intervals along the street.
- xxiii. Steve Heard asked if churches impact street parking issues? Cindy Pharis responded that Episcopal church Sunday service not an issue, but it was AA and other daily meetings that were causing issues. Charlie Knuth clarified that his church has problems with parking on Sundays but is working with the city on it.
- xxiv. Nora De Cuir wrapped up the discussion by remarking that everyone has good input. She added that more case studies were to come and that the group could further create a creative programmatic list of options, clarifying that tradeoff considerations would be left to future meetings.

VI. COMMITTEE COMMENTS AND INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

- a. Nora De Cuir stated that Phil Rotheram was not able to attend the meeting but wanted two items to be shared on his behalf. Rotheram asked if the Historic District residents have issue parking at home or if other people are causing issues parking in their area. He

also suggested that Historic District resident stickers could be used to indicate the ability to park in the residential area.

- b. Jerry Bernau stated that he has come to Historic District meetings for over 15 years and has seen many great consultants. He remarked that although merchants can identify issues, but, regarding solutions, no parking consultants have ever been hired. He stated that consultants have the tools to do this well, and as such, is surprised this has never been done. He remarked that although city staff and residents can come up with ideas, the issue can be addressed professionally by hiring a consultant. He stated that he believes it is a tool at the disposal of the city and this is a level of science needed at this point in time.
- c. Pam Johns responded that the city can add Bernau's recommendation as a question to ask when reaching out to other cities for case study information regarding who they used as a consultant and how they felt about the result.
- d. Mike Brenkwitz remarked that he loves the sign idea brought up by Jim Snook but, without enforcement, believes it will be hard to see results. He then asked city staff how will the city pay for this and if there is a reserve account. Dave Nugen responded that yes, reserve funds exist, but this is a capital improvement project. Reserve funds are for emergencies. The city could look a TOD grants, but the existing garage is from redevelopment funds. He stated that unfortunately, this funding stream was cut before other garages could be built.

VII. NEXT MEETING DATE

- a. Chair Steve Heard confirmed the next meeting date as November 7, Thursday, at 6:30 p.m.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

- a. The meeting is adjourned at 8:04 p.m. by Chair Steve Heard.