

# PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

April 2, 2003

7:30 PM

**Jamestown Library**

## Planning Commission Work Session

### I. Downtown Parking Workshop

With

Chamber of Commerce

Harbor Management Commission

Parking Committee

Buildings and Facilities Committee

Planning Commissioner Chair Gary Girard called the workshop to order at 7:50 p.m. Commissioner Girard informed the participants and audience that the goal of this workshop is not to produce solutions but to identify the parking issues in the downtown commercial districts and if they impact the business, the residents or even the visitors in the downtown area. This workshop will enable the Planning Commission and the other groups involved to collect the data and review it. This is not the end all of issue identification but gives the Planning Commission important information on parking issues from the boards and commissions who have a stake and have some responsibility for insuring adequate parking in the downtown area. Commissioner Girard introduced Mr. Robert Leaver of Organizational Futures who will be the Facilitator of the meeting. Commissioner Girard also thanked the Chamber of Commerce, and all of the Committees and Commissions for coming to the workshop.

Mr. Robert Leaver explained how the evening would work. He asked the question Does Jamestown have a severe parking problem? He then asked all the participants to place their dots (different colors were distributed for each different committee represented) on a corresponding answer. The following were the choices:

++	+	-	--
severe	sometimes severe	generally not severe but minor, needs more study	none
1	6	20	3

Mr. Leaver asked the participants to explain their answers and for an explanation of what the individuals might think an issue is.

Harry Wright – Moderate problem in the summer

Sterling Graham – Some people want to park right in the front of the store

Dan Lilly – A little bit of a problem but not that bad

Sue Barker – it's a matter of perception

Gary Girard – think about how far away you park at an airport

Guy Settupane – Mostly a summer problem that affects boaters and residents and stated it is more than just downtown

Barry Holland – Small problem, long term off street parking, inconveniences some neighborhoods

Richard Eannarino – the problem is complying with the ordinance, relax the ordinance

Mike Swistak – agrees with Richard Eannarino, relief from an ordinance that's 25 years old

Matt Clarke – impact is most drastic to retail impulse sales

Darcy Magratten – placed the only dot on severe parking problem, no one is relying less on cars, Jamestown is not less desirable

Victor Calabretta – Nobody has mentioned Boat trailer parking. Is it an issue?

Mr. Leaver put 12 different issues on the boards and had the participants place their dots on the issues they felt were the most important, out of the 12 issues the ones with the most dots were the following seven issues:

Cars with boat trailers

Parking in Village for more than 2 hours

Parking Plan – Lack of one

Businesses and buildings that cannot comply with ordinance

Discrepancy in Proper Town Record keeping – Grandfathering

Impact on nearby residents

Adequate size and signage of handicap spaces

Mr. Leaver then asked the participants to break out into seven groups to discuss the scope and detail of the issue and the impact. After about 20-25 minutes the participants were then asked to share with the group what was discussed.

**Cars with boats and trailers** – Victor Calabretta stated that his group was not sure this is an issue, that it may be working now because people are always at the boatramp and the trailers go somewhere. He then questioned if it is impacting usage. There are facilities for Marina customers at Taylor Point. The impact is trailer parking occupies more spaces. If we provide more spaces will there be more people using them? That was described as the “build it and they will come” scenario.

**Buildings that Cannot Comply with Ordinance** – Matt Clarke stated that there is limited commercial space in the downtown and Narragansett Ave was built before vehicles were around. The impact is delay and expense for property owner due to unattainable regulations.

**Parking in Village for more than 2 hours** – Joan Goldstein stated that employees have no long term parking and have to keep moving their cars during the summer. Boaters have limited long term parking. The impact is that customers do not have a place to park, parking tickets are received and the parking overflows into the residential neighborhoods because the side streets are not time limited.

**Handicap Spaces not adequate size and signage** – Dave Pritchard stated that the handicap spaces are not to ADA specifications and the signs are not in clear view. The impact is that it eliminates access for those needing an adequate space to park specially equipped vehicles.

**Spillover into Residential neighborhoods** – Betty Hubbard stated that her group is concerned that safety is an issue and there are not enough spaces for the residents to park when the visitors are parking in the residential neighborhoods. It is mostly a concern in areas where there is no on site parking for homes and they have to park on the street (east ferry side streets).

**Lack of a Parking Plan** – this group stated that there is no comprehensive parking plan in effect, so therefore no solution, no changes in site, and lots of studies have been done. There are competing solutions. Mr. DiGiando asked if there is another town that does not have a parking plan and that parking is not an issue? So far the studies done have been by groups that are independent of each other.

**Discrepancy of Proper Record Keeping** – Darcy Magratten stated that the zoning office needs to have an inventory of the records with regard to parking. It is impossible to make a decision without it. It would also be helpful to research other town's processes.

Mr. Robert Leaver again asked the audience to put a dot on the top three of the seven issues. The top three votes went to the following issues:

**Lack of a Parking Plan**

**Parking in Village for more than 2 hours**

**Buildings that Cannot Comply with Ordinance**

Mr. Leaver closed the meeting by making an observation and stated that this is a systems problem that needs more thinking and study with the groups coming together and working as one instead of independently.

Commissioner Girard thanked Mr. Robert Leaver for doing such a wonderful job and also thanked all of the participants.

A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Calabretta and seconded by Commissioner Girard at 9:35 p.m. So unanimously voted.

Attest:

Cynthia L. Reppe

*This meeting was recorded on 1 micro-cassette*