



Allentown

435 Hamilton Street
Allentown, Pa. 18101

Minutes - Final

City Council

Wednesday, January 15, 2025

6:00 PM

Council Chambers

APA Update

Roll Call

Present: 6 - Cynthia Mota, Daryl Hendricks, Ed Zucal, Natalie Santos, Ce-Ce Gerlach, and Santo Napoli

Absent: 1 - Candida Affa

Allentown Parking Authority Update: Meter study and payment plan.

Dr. Cynthia Mota stated good evening. They have the Allentown Parking Authority who will be giving Council an update about the Meter Study and payment plan. She stated that now they have here, Mr. Jon Haney from the Parking Authority.

Mr. Jon Haney thanked Ms. Mota for the time and stated good evening everyone. He stated that this should be fairly short and quick he hopes. He stated as they all recall, back in June 2024, this body passed Bill #40 which is a parking fine increase and as part of that, you will ask that the Parking Authority conduct a Meter Study as well as implement a payment plan. Council also at that time asked for a six month Progress Report. He stated that this is the closest that he can get to a six month progress report. As far as the payment plan goes, to let them all know that he has been working closely with the software provider who has been in touch with their counterparts at the administrative office of the Pennsylvania Courts. The purpose of that is to make sure that the software that they are looking to build will be complimentary to what the courts use. In other words, to make sure that the information is going to them and flowing out to the MDJs that everything is speaking the same language. They had numerous phone calls with those folks there as well as a couple of meetings just to make sure all Xs are crossed and Ts are crossed and Is are dotted. He stated those kinds of things. During that time as well, the APA board worked with him to set some perimeters that also been shared with the software companies. Simple thing like what kinds of frequency the payments will be expected. What amounts are going to be acceptable. What is the maximum term of the payment plan. The data has been fed to the software company to implement into the new Code that they are writing. Presently, the software vendor has all of those and are beginning to write the new

Code. Their target date was to begin the first quarter of 2025 and that is right where we are at. As far as scheduling wise, they are right on time. The completion of the new Code is expected to be done by the end of the first quarter which will deliver to them a beta version for testing. They want to get their hands on it once they test to find out if there are any glitches or bugs and work all of them out before the eventual program is released to the public to take advantage of. That is expected to be completed by mid to late quarter of the second quarter of 2025 so probably by the end of April somewhere around May they will get that beta version and they can test it and be ready to go. He stated may be mid May or late May somewhere in there. At present, that is the current progress of the payment plan and it move along. He asked if anybody had any questions about that.

Dr. Cynthia Mota asked if there were any comments and stated go ahead.

Ms. Ce Ce Gerlach stated that she is assuming that there must have been a vote by the board to choose a particular software company. She stated so this software company that you are working with was voted on by the board. It is official. They are hired. They are doing the work. They are not just seeing what might could happen. They are doing the work that would then be immediately applied to APA.

Mr. Jon Haney stated that there was no vote. He stated that this is their current vendor that they were already using for their ticket managed system. It was simply a request to them to add this functionality in. He stated again, he has been working with them and there is a frequency to make changes here and there. They are more than capable and hey are on it.

Ms. Ce Ce Gerlach asked will she guesses people who received a ticket save this after the beta time period is finished with and all the troubleshooting happens. She stated say this happens officially, and stated that she doesn't know. She stated in July and asked will people who receive parking tickets prior to the official roll out of this, they will not be able to enter into the payment plan. It will be any tickets after.

Mr. Jon Haney stated yes ma'am and stated that would be the target. He stated hopefully, not July. Hopefully, May or June.

Ms. Ce Ce Gerlach stated ok, thank you.

Mr. Jon Haney stated ok and asked if there were any other questions. He stated that he will move on to the second Progressive Report which is the Meter Study. Shortly after, Bill 40 was passed, the Allentown Parking Authority and its board put together a Request for Proposals which was

sent out to solicit bids for qualified, reputable companies to build on. The RFP was posted in October 2024 with a due date of early November, the Authority received two bids from two very well known and highly qualified consultant agencies. At its November board meeting, the APA board selected THA as the winning bidder. THA is not a company that is unfamiliar to the APA. He stated that they actually work with them several times over the years. They had a lot of input in the design consultant for some of the parking decks and are even working with them with some deck remediation on the 94 Linden Deck. They are more than capable and well known in the industry. He stated that the APA engineer and he have been working with them so far to give them all the needed information. They are asking for materials such as maps, current ordinances, historical data, some space counts as they know them and other items related to the Meter Study. In addition to those items, THA was also asked to consider loading zones as part of the Meter Study. The reason for that is while they are here is to take a look at the current loading zone layout in the city and see if they can't offer some recommendations for a layout or deployment of loading zones who better suit small businesses who has needs for delivery as well as regular consumers and citizens to order from Amazon, FedEx and have those folks bring the items. He stated they will get some recommendations as well on that. THA has all that information. They are currently being slated to be on site in Allentown later this month in about a week and a half with the purpose to conduct some on-site surveying. Do some observation of some current meter use and things like that around town. He stated of course he will be with them to answer any questions or give them any directions that they need. The Meter Study is scheduled to be completed by the end of the first quarter, 2025 which at that time the APA will have to coordinate with this body to review the recommendations THA has made to them. The APA board will also be reviewing that and have their own set of recommendations and will have to come together and take a look at those corporately and decide what implementation makes sense, what this body might want to move forward with regards to those recommendations. It just won't end with the study being done. There is going to be some further collaboration needed between the APA and Council as to what they do and what they act on as far as those recommendations. Again, they are also right on schedule what is to be completed in the first quarter and beginning in the second quarter according to their proposals. He stated that is what he had for them. He asked if there are any questions on that.

Dr. Cynthia Mota asked if there were any questions or any comments from the dais.

Mr. Ed Zucal stated that he has a question and it is not really related to that. He stated all of a sudden and he is sure it was a vote by your board, but you started instituting 24 hour enforcement again. He stated that seems to

be drawing a lot of criticism and complaints obviously. He asked Mr. Haney if he can tell them a little bit why that started again.

Mr. Jon Haney stated absolutely. The APA board did consider this and voted to reinstitute the overnight enforcement beginning he thinks January 6th. He stated that the reason for that revolves around safety. As part of that re-initiation and of the overnight enforcement, the scope of what the APA is out there actively patrolling has been rolled back quite a bit. In fact, they are only issuing for safety violations which would be parked in a no parking zone or blocking a fire hydrant, double parking, parking in a no parking street. He stated those kinds of things. That is basically why it was done to meet the safety needs and to continue to provide that service to the citizens of Allentown. The APA dispatch line still remains open. They can still respond to any calls there that come in for any type of enforcement request. He stated so far, it seems to be going ok.

Mr. Ed Zucal thanked Mr. Haney.

Mr. Haney stated you are welcome, sir.

Dr. Cynthia Mota thanked Mr. Haney.

Ms. Ce Ce Gerlach stated sorry, something did come up. She stated with the payment plan and stated sorry to go back to the payment plan, the payment plan would be available to someone immediately upon getting a ticket and/or once they were to be in the court system. She stated that she heard him say that the software company has to make sure that everything is meshing with the courts system. She stated that she is wondering why the court system will be involved at all.

Mr. Jon Haney stated that for a lack of a better way to explain it, it is a jurisdiction thing. Once a parking ticket is issued, it exist as a ticket first for a certain period of time and then it is handed out by the courts either by request of the person who received it or through a natural course of the life cycle of that ticket. Once it gets to court, it is out of the APA's hands. They said they can't do anything with it. Now the Magisterial District Justices have the ability to offer payment plans as well. What they are looking to do is to make that available to folks before it goes to court. He stated for those first 50 days of the life cycle of the ticket, people who receive one would be able to sign up for the payment plan and at least have that amount of time to try to take care of their ticket rather than having to pay it in one bulk amount. They will be able to spread it out some in a few weeks before it will be turned over to the courts.

Ms. Ce Ce Gerlach asked if there are any ideas or conversations with the

vendor as to what if any the penalty or like the interest might be. How much more would someone might pay for not having the money. There will be no. The simple fine that is owed on the ticket spread out over the timeframe is there. There will be no addition costs to someone.

Mr. Santo Napoli stated to Mr. Haney that there is no escalation either. The parking ticket usually escalates every 10 days. It will be frozen at the initial amount and they will have the payment plan on that amount, not on the higher amount. It is definitely advantageous.

Ms. Ce Ce Gerlach stated not to get to granular, procedural wise, someone could appeal a ticket potentially and stated that she guesses now they have this internal never benefitted from it. She stated that it exists on paper. An internal appeal process and if they were to lose that appeal process, they would still be able to apply to the payment plan. She stated that since you are here and only came here to answer questions concerning those two items. She stated feel free to say no, you are not here for that. She stated that it is always great to get a conversation with the APA.

Mr. Jon Haney thanked Ms. Gerlach for that. He stated that he is here and fire away.

Ms. Ce Ce Gerlach stated that her question is that one of the reason why you came to us to raise parking tickets is because you all are in debt and broke. She asked how is that going? Are you still broke? Did you break even? She asked what's up?

Mr. Jon Haney stated that he would say probably at a break even point. The fine increases definitely did help them with their finances. He stated that they are not like way ahead anymore, but they are definitely at a point where they are treading water and able to sustain themselves and their operations.

Ms. Ce Ce Gerlach stated ok, so the increase, the fine increases for people in Allentown or wherever getting parking tickets is making the Parking Authority more solvent.

Mr. Jon Haney stated that it is certainly help them become more solvent. He also seen a decrease in the tickets too. It was slight, but ticketing did go down after July 1st of last year.

Ms. Ce Ce Gerlach stated that she thinks that was and Mr. Zucal asked about the 24 hour thing. She stated that is all she's got. She thanked Mr. Haney.

Mr. Jon Haney stated you're welcome.

Dr. Cynthia Mota asked if there were any other comments from the dais.
She stated thank you so much Mr. Haney.

Mr. John Haney thanked Council for their time and stated it is nice to see
you all again. He stated have a good evening.

ADJOURNED: 6:14 PM