

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC SAFETY

SEPTEMBER 26, 1994

Committee Members Present:

James Hayes, Michael Pollock, Marya Ryan, Clifford Singer (Chairman), John Taylor (arrived at 7:35 p.m.), and Joseph Whelan (arrived at 7:35 p.m.)

Committee Members Absent:

Esther Patt

Staff Members Present:

Bruce Walden, Charles Gordon, Jack Waaler, April Getchius, Joe Smith, Phyllis Clark, and Mayor Satterthwaite

Others Present:

Earl O'Shea, Members of the Media

Meeting Location:

Urbana City Council Chambers

There being a quorum, Chairman Singer called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Additions to the Agenda and Staff Report

Mayor Satterthwaite made reference to an article in the newspaper regarding the trailer park, and reminded Council Members that the discussion on relocation costs wasn't in open session and that staff comments were public information that were used in the article.

Mr. Pollock moved to put item 6, Goal Setting, as the last item of the agenda. The motion was seconded by Mr. Hayes and failed by voice vote.

Mr. Singer moved to approve the orders of the day. The motion was seconded by Ms. Ryan and carried by a show of hands vote.

Mr. Taylor and Mr. Whelan arrived.

Mr. Singer stated that the orders of the days had just

been adopted and that it would be appropriate to reconsider them at this time.

Mr. Pollock reintroduced the motion to switch the order of item 6, Goal Setting, and item 8, Mathews Street Vacation Ordinance. The motion was seconded by Mr. Whelan. Following debate, the motion carried by a voice vote.

Minutes of Previous Meeting

Mr. Pollock moved to approve the minutes of the August 22, 1994 regular meeting. The motion was seconded by Ms. Ryan and carried by a voice vote.

Petitions and Communications

Earl O'Shea, 606A South Glover, addressed the Committee on the topic of better government.

Clark/Coler On-Street Parking Survey

Assistant City Engineer Joe Smith discussed the Clark/Coler On-Street Parking Study which covered the area bounded by the Conrail tracks on the north, Coler Street on the east, Main Street on the south, and Lincoln Avenue on the west. The method of study was a vehicle license plate survey at various times throughout a typical week day.

From the results of this data it is obvious that this area is heavily used for parking during the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The percentages are well over 90% during this time period. Overnight, the percentage of cars parked versus spaces available is around 30-35%. We assume these are residents parking overnight. Percentages over 100% were not uncommon as vehicles are parking illegally in yellow zones and in areas where signs clearly state "No Parking Anytime."

During this study, private apartment parking lots on Clark, between Busey and Coler were also observed. Those rates were typically 70-75% for the entire day, which indicates there is sufficient capacity for residents in the apartment parking lots.

The Length of Time Survey of the 79 spaces available produced the following results:

- 14 vehicles were never moved for the entire study (6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.)
- 41 vehicles arrived between 7-8:00 a.m. and parked all day long 10+ hours (mostly Carle employees and construction workers)
- 29 vehicles parked for no longer than four hours (some were Carle employees going to lunch and parking in a different space when they returned)

If the 14 spaces with vehicles that were never moved and the 41 vehicles that were parked for 10+ hours are removed, there are 24 spaces plus the 3-4 illegal parked spaces for remaining vehicles to use during the day. Those 27 plus/minus spaces were used by 80 different vehicles, or three per space with an average stay of approximately three hours.

Staff recommends trying a phased parking meter installation approach. The first phase recommended would be to install ten-hour limit, 25 cents/hour meters along the south side of Clark between Busey and Coler, and the west side of Coler from Clark to the alley south of Clark. This would be 13 meters on Clark and 2 on Coler. Staff would continue to monitor this action for possible future refinements.

Boneyard Creek Commissioner

Mayor Satterthwaite stated that at the last Council meeting this item was deferred to the next Council meeting. He requested that it be put on this agenda in case any Council Member wanted more discussion before it came up again at Council.

There were no questions or comments.

Taxicab Provisional License

An Ordinance Providing For Provisional Taxicab Drivers License was in the packet for Committee consideration.

Mr. Pollock discussed a letter he received from a constituent which raises the question of provisional license along with a number of other questions concerning the ordinance

governing the licenses. The letter indicated a considerable difference between the requirements and costs imposed between the cities of Champaign and Urbana.

Mr. Pollock further stated that Assistant City Attorney Tom Lindsey has a number of letters from the operator and owner of the Yellow Cab company with questions about requirements concerning posting of the driver's picture, name, etc. The drivers have a concern that they are jeopardizing their risks by having that information available. The drivers would also like the mandatory State Police check reviewed and the cost of that.

Mr. Pollock suggested that the Committee agree to have the Legal staff take a look at these requirements to see if it can be equalized with what is done in Champaign.

Mr. Hayes questioned the meaning of "moral turpitude" in paragraph 2 under section 26.45 where it states "The issuing authority making this determination shall consider any conviction of a felony or misdemeanor involving moral turpitude, if relevant to the license, the recency of such conviction, and the applicants demeanor and conduct subsequent to the conviction."

City Attorney Jack Waaler stated that the best illustrations of moral turpitude are theft, murder, rape; maybe a definition would be almost anything that anyone would concede as obviously wrong and showing moral depravity, as opposed to running a stop.

Mr. Taylor stated that it was his understanding that because taxicab drivers are drivers of common carriers, when people use that vehicle they assume there has been some cursory background check of the driver. The person riding in the cab entrusts their safety to that driver. That makes it distinguishable from the licensing of a bingo game or a tavern.

In response to Mr. Taylor's question regarding whether the City is under any statutory obligation to license taxicab drivers, Mr. Waaler stated there is no obligation, just an option and privilege.

Responding to Mr. Taylor's question whether it is necessary for protection of the people in Urbana that the City license tax drivers and conduct background searches, Acting Chief

of Police Charles Gordon stated that the City has previously had applicants for licenses that have been convicted of murder, drug charges, armed robberies and various other charges. In considering those applicants, the time past since that

conviction, satisfactory completion, and a clean record since the time of conviction are considered.

Mayor Satterthwaite stated that taxicab license is significantly different than a juke box owners license because the driver does have control of your life while you are in the vehicle. The City does background checks and licensing because of the nature of the taxicab driver and the passenger.

The revision in this ordinance is due to the fact that the City can no longer use the avenue to do background checks that it has used in the past. The only way the check can be done now is through the State of Illinois which involves a ten dollar fee. The reason for the provisional license is the time it takes to receive the background check. After the background check is completed, the decision can be made whether or not to issue a permanent license.

Mr. Pollock speculated that there was not much objection for allowing provisional licenses to be issued so that people can go to work. He questioned whether the Committee wants to investigate whether there is a need for a State Police check.

In response to Mr. Pollock's question if the City has any additional liability if it goes through the State Police check and a crime has been committed and not reported, Mr. Waaler stated that there would be none if the State Police missed a crime. If the City misread a report there probably would be some additional liability.

Ms. Ryan stated that the issues raised by the owner of Yellow Cab are good ones and maybe the Committee should take a more comprehensive look at the method the City uses to issue taxicab licenses.

Mr. Pollock stated that he feels local checks are advisable, a valid Illinois drivers license is required, the vehicle should be licensed and in good repair. There needs to be an answer for the problem of what the Illinois State background

check might miss, and the differential between Champaign and Urbana. If these are balanced are we giving up safety in terms of the riding public.

Mr. Whelan stated that a large number of people in prison are repeat offenders. If the situation is reviewed carefully, the driver is the person who has more strangers coming to him. The provisional license is a chance to give a person a chance to work even though they may have had a problem in the past. The local check is important and the State of Illinois check is important. Mr. Whelan stated that he is in favor of sending the ordinance to Council for approval.

Mr. Whelan moved to forward An Ordinance Providing For a Provisional Taxicab Drivers License to Council for approval. The motion was seconded by Mr. Taylor and carried by a voice vote.

Mathews Street Vacation Ordinance

Ms. Ryan moved to send An Ordinance Vacating A Portion Of Mathews Avenue And Park Street to Council. The motion was seconded by Mr. Whelan and carried by a voice.

Goal Setting

Mr. Singer explained that there was a difference of opinion as to whether a second Goal Setting session set and his recollection was that there was not another session set.

Mayor Satterthwaite recalled that there is another Goal Setting session set for October 11, 1994.

Mr. Singer expressed his preference to discuss the issue of goal setting on Committee floor. He requested that Goal Setting be put on the agenda of the next meeting.

Mr. Singer recounted that the discussion left off last week with Ms. Patt's comment that an University of Illinois education would be useful to anyone who needs affordable housing.

Mr. Singer related that while most would not disagree with Ms. Patt's statement, a lot of households manage to keep a roof over their heads without a university degree.

Mr. Singer stated that it is possible to have a good life on a substantially lower than average income with a functional education system, a stable home, and hope for a better future.

Mr. Singer said that there are 1900 families in Urbana who are in housing stress and have extremely low income and discussed what can be done about the problem.

A reasonable goal is to try to take about 2 percent of those 1900 families and get them out of the category of extremely low income households. That is a total of 38 households a year. This is a reasonable target. Given a chance people will work themselves out of this situation.

Mr. Hayes stated that while it is true that stable neighborhoods contribute to the growth and development of our young people, one of the things that have to deal with is getting people to deal with diverse cultures and how to create those stable neighborhoods.

Ms. Ryan stated that the economy is different than it was in the past which, unfortunately, doesn't offer much hope unless you are in one percent that owns more wealth than the bottom 90 percent.

Mr. Singer commented that the policies that have driven the extremely low income have robbed them of 15 percent of their fractional share of total wealth, have been arrested. Maybe they are not getting better; but they are not getting worse.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Committee, Chairman Singer declared the meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Elaine Taylor

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Recording Secretary

**This meeting was broadcast on cable television.