

**CITY OF MANHATTAN BEACH PARKING AND PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS COMMISSION
MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING
MARCH 26, 2009**

A. CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Parking and Public Improvements Commission of the City of Manhattan Beach, California, was held on the 26th day of March 2009, at the hour of 6:30 p.m., in the City Council Chambers of City Hall, 1400 Highland Avenue, in said City.

B. ROLL CALL

Present: Adami, Vigon, Stabile, Silverman and Chairman Gross.
Absent: None.
Staff Present: Danna, Zandvliet.
Clerk: Weeks.

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

03/26/09-1 February 26, 2009

A motion was MADE and SECONDED (Stabile/Silverman) to approve the minutes of February 26, 2009 as written.

D. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

None.

E. GENERAL BUSINESS

Agenda Item No. 2 was considered out of order:

03/26/09-2 North Manhattan Beach Valet Parking Program

Assistant Planner Danna restated the staff recommendation that the Commission conduct a public hearing and make a recommendation to the City Council regarding the North Manhattan Beach Valet Parking Program. He advised that this item was continued from the last meeting and that staff is seeking direction from the Commission as a result of changes to the proposal as follows:

- Revised vehicle drop off and pick up sites to 3516 Highland Avenue (northbound) with use of three metered parking spaces and 3515 Highland Avenue (southbound) with the use of two metered spaces;
- North End Business Improvement District (NEBID) to reimburse the City for the metered spaces;

- Cost to patrons would be between \$5.00 and \$10.00 per car for two hours, with hourly parking of \$10.00 per hour thereafter;
- Hours of operation for a six-month trial period and review after three months: 6:00 p.m. to 2:00 a.m. Thursdays and Fridays; 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 a.m. Saturdays; and 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 a.m. Sundays;
- Route used by valet company for drop off and pick up and storage sites shall be Highland Avenue, Rosecrans Avenue and Bell Avenue only, with no driving through residential streets, and a smart car or similar to shuttle employees between the drop off and pick up locations and the Public Works yard; and
- Agreement between the NEBID and the City shall include a limited time use of five on-street parking spaces and the Public Works yard, at a cost of \$300 per month.

Mr. Danna verified that property owners and residents within 300 feet of the drop off and pick up sites, as well as those along the route, were notified of this public hearing, and that a notice of the hearing was placed in the Beach Reporter. He noted a letter signed by approximately 18 residents concerned over the potential for increased congestion, noise and traffic, the substantial changes to the proposal since the last meeting (particularly the drop off and pick up sites), and the hours of operation. Mr. Danna explained that the revised proposal is broader than the original and staff is uncomfortable supporting it without analysis by the City's Traffic Engineer. He said the Commission could either recommend approval as proposed with the caveat that the Program be analyzed by the City's Traffic Engineer, recommend approval with modifications or return the item back to the NEBID.

The Commission discussed the following: that further approval delays could result in the trial period missing the summer months; that Traffic Engineer Zandvliet participated in the Commission's consideration of the Program at the last meeting, but he has not yet analyzed it; whether it would be necessary for the smart car used to transport customers and the need to make a U turn at some point; that the previous proposal was modified quite a bit and the revised path would be much longer; that they may be possible route deviations; that requirements for a route could be included in the contract with the NEBID; that the cost of the valet parking could be validated by NE businesses; that parking spaces in front of Veranda on Rosecrans Avenue could be used instead of spaces at the Public Works yard; that the amount charged for parking could be limited; that an increase in the cost of parking after two hours was proposed to help discourage beach goers' use of the valet parking; and that the safety of small children in the neighborhood is of concern; and that it is not the Commission's job to develop the Valet Parking Program.

Commissioner Vigon voiced his impression that the proposal generally coincides with the recommendations made by the Commission at the last meeting and he supported forwarding it to the Council.

Traffic Engineer Zandvliet advised that, should an approval not be severely delayed, the trial period could occur during summer months; that, according to the proposed path of travel for the smart car, a U turn would be necessary at some point; and that, due to Coastal Commission requirements, there cannot be a differential in cost for valet parking, but a flat rate can be charged for businesses after 6:00 p.m., which are the type of issues that are unanswered at this point.

Audience Participation

Chairman Gross opened the public hearing at 6:53 p.m.

Francey Seckinger, 1467 Manhattan Beach Boulevard, #2, resident and member of the NEBID, related her understanding of the proposed travel path for the smart car, which was to be worked out with the City, and she voiced her hope that this would not delay the Commission's forwarding of this item to the Council.

John Griggs, 324 – 36th Street, said that he did not receive a notice from the City about this meeting. He related his opposition to the proposal and suggested that a traffic study be performed; that signalized intersections should be utilized; that drop off and pick up locations should not be in the middle of a block; and that the proposed travel path for the smart car would be unrealistic.

Bill Schmor, 3509 Crest Drive, expressed concern over safety in the neighborhood if the valet drivers are reckless, particularly since many residents are outside on the weekends, and he asked that safety aspects be considered.

John Wilcox, 462 Rosecrans Avenue, presented a petition signed by approximately 27 residents opposed to the proposal due to concerns over additional traffic, noise, pollution and loss in property values and on-street parking. He voiced concern over the potential for the valet drivers to make U turns and entertained the idea of parking cars in the Veranda lot, which is empty a majority of the time.

Chris Davis, 3601 Crest Drive, voiced his appreciation that the Upper Manhattan Restaurant and Lounge is an improvement over the previous establishment; but, with regard to the Valet Parking Program, he is concerned over the proposed hours of operation, patrons congregating at 35th Street and Highland Avenue and utilizing parking spaces on Highland Avenue. He agreed with the general concept of valet parking if these problems could be avoided.

Bob Perkins, 4420 The Strand, related his understanding that at least two of the signatories on the petition are NE business owners who feel they will be negatively impacted by this proposal.

Mike Quagletti, Owner of Upper Manhattan Restaurant and Lounge, 3600 Highland Avenue, contended that valet parking is needed due to the excessive amount of traffic in the area, particularly after 12:00 a.m. He shared information on his unsuccessful efforts to discuss various parking ideas with other businesses in the area; the inevitability of the smart car making U turns; the hours during which his business has the greatest number of customers; and the negative impact insufficient parking has on his business.

Alison Volk, 220 3rd, Owner of a Business Adjacent to Upper Manhattan Restaurant and Lounge, emphasized the importance of improving the parking situation and increasing foot traffic in the NE to help improve patronage. She voiced her agreement with valet parking, especially on the weekends.

Todd Mannix, Owner of Krise's of Manhattan Hair Salon, 3515 Highland Avenue, felt that valet parking would help create business. He highlighted the importance of a community atmosphere and, noting the importance of compromise, recommended that valet parking begin after 9:00 p.m.

Chairman Gross closed the public hearing at 7:45 p.m.

Commission Discussion

Commissioner Stabile discussed the importance of a vibrant business community, the Commission's commitment to helping businesses and the continued problems associated with parking in the NE. Commissioner Stabile noted the significant elements of monitoring, compliance and enforcement and he voiced concern about the smart car route and the probability of U turns. He supported the idea of valet parking in principle; however, some details of the proposal need to be worked out, the smart car and the use of the Armory parking spaces should be further examined and a traffic survey to quantify the impact on residential areas/traffic should be prepared.

Commissioner Adami commented on the need to create a Valet Parking Program that works for both residents and businesses. He questioned if a \$10.00 parking fee would be affordable; noted that the City does not greatly benefit financially from the five parking meters which would be used; voiced concern over the proposed hours of operation; related his desire for more detailed information, including the smart car route, a traffic survey and analysis by the City's Traffic Engineer; and recommended that the trial period include peak summer months.

Commissioner Silverman pointed out that property and business owners who moved into the neighborhood were aware of the parking and traffic problems when they purchased their properties. It was his opinion that the potential increase in noise is speculative; that safety, particularly for children playing outside, is a number one concern, but an unsafe condition is also created by drivers going through the neighborhood looking for parking, and a valet parking program might not create a less safe condition; that the smart car route should be further examined; and that there is a need for compromise. He suggested that staff, business owners and residents meet to further discuss the Program; disagreed with a traffic survey because the trial program would provide this type of information; and entertained the idea of using cones to block off one lane of westbound Rosecrans for parking.

Commissioner Vigon noted that an approval this evening would be for a trial period, and not a permanent decision, during which the program could be further reviewed/refined, a traffic survey could be performed, the route of smart car be assessed, the hours fine be tuned and the net impact of the smart car trips be compared to the many drivers wandering through the neighborhood looking for parking examined. He urged the Council to forward the Valet Parking Program to the City Council tonight.

Chairman Gross related his surprise with how many residents opposed to this proposal provided input this evening and he voiced his concern that, with the number opposed to the Program at this time, it would not be possible to forward a fair and complete recommendation to the Council tonight. It was Chairman Gross' opinion that further study of the Program is necessary, and should include problems with the use of parking spaces at Sand Dune Park. He pointed out that discussions about parking at the Armory will take a significant amount of time and that a solution will be found, but not this evening.

Commissioner Silverman expressed his agreement with Chairman Gross that a recommendation should not be forwarded to the Council at this time.

Traffic Engineer Zandvliet explained the options available to the Commission. He affirmed that the portion of Rosecrans Avenue referred to above by Commissioner Silverman is owned by the City of El Segundo; that a traffic survey could be performed and the results provided to the Commission at the next meeting; that a smaller Program with fewer hours, fewer days and fewer parking spaces would be easier to implement, especially at the beginning; that routes with violation penalties could be implemented; that staff is concerned with this proposal, but has not had time to meet with anyone about it; that the new proposal would include the use of five parking spaces; that Pancho's has the right to exclusively use the loading zone in front of their building; that the trial period would be for a maximum of six months with interim reviews; and that an agreement with the Armory could not be completed prior to beginning the trial period. Mr. Zandvliet voiced staff's concern that the business in front of which the valet service would be located has not been present at meetings about the valet parking program.

Assistant Planner Danna advised that Coastal Commission issues related to a Valet Parking Program are yet to be worked out and that, since it is in a non-appealable area, the Coastal Permit is to be administered by the City Council (and not the State).

Chairman Gross called attention to the City's desire to avoid any conflict with the Coastal Commission, if at all possible.

MOTION: Chairman Gross moved to direct staff to work with the North End Business Improvement District and residents to refine the proposed Valet Parking Program based on the City's Traffic Engineer's conclusions regarding the least amount of impact and return the revised proposal to the Commission for further consideration at the next meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Stabile and passed by a majority roll call vote as reflected below:

Ayes:	Adami, Stabile, Silverman and Chairman Gross.
Noes:	Vigon.
Abstain:	None.
Absent:	None.

Commissioner Vigon explained his dissenting vote due to his feeling that the Valet Parking Program could be fine tuned enough to make a recommendation and begin the trial period, during which it could be further refined. He observed that his fellow Commissioners appear to feel there is great dissent to the Program, when few residents have actually voiced their opposition/signed a petition.

RECESS AND RECONVENE

At 8:23 p.m., there was a recess until 8:35 p.m., when the meeting reconvened in regular agenda order with all Commissioners present.

03/26/09-3 North Manhattan Beach Neighborhood Traffic Management Program (NTMP) Survey Results and Initial Measures

Traffic Consultant Ruth Smith presented background information on the selection of North Manhattan Beach for the Neighborhood Traffic Management Program (NTMP) process. She reviewed the existing traffic calming measures in the area and advised that North Manhattan Beach is at Step 5 of the 6 steps developed to evaluate neighborhoods. Ms. Smith provided information on the traffic calming measures shown below, which she recommended be forwarded for the Council's consideration:

- Maintain the current turn restrictions and barricades at the intersection of Ocean Drive and 40th Street from 3:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. on weekdays. Improve signs to clearly indicate turn restrictions and construct swinging barricades to replace the temporary ones for better driver compliance.
- Reconstruct the existing speed humps on Ocean Drive north of 38th Street and north of 42nd Street to meet current specifications;
- Replace all speed limit signs on Ocean Drive with high-reflectivity signs.
- Paint a "Keep Clear" legend and post related signs on Highland Avenue at 40th Street for southbound lanes
- Install stop signs on the fourth (eastbound) legs of the intersections at Ocean Drive and 38th Street, 39th Street, 41st Street, 42nd Street, 43rd Street, 44th Street and Rosecrans Avenue to match existing opposing stop signs on the westbound legs.
- Paint white edge lines on 38th Street, 39th Street, 40th Street, 41st Street, 42nd Street and 43rd Street like the ones on 44th Street to delineate allowable parking zones. Repaint the edge lines on 44th Street and initiate a program to repaint the lines every year.
- Install or replace one-way signs and speed limit signs on streets east of Highland Avenue where appropriate to clearly indicate traffic requirements.
- Paint all striping and markings on an annual basis to improve driver awareness of traffic control devices.
- Increase enforcement of speeding and other moving violations on a regular basis.

Traffic Engineer Zandvliet and Traffic Consultant Smith provided extensive information on the results of the North Manhattan Beach Traffic Survey, as included in the agenda packet. They clarified that the proposed traffic calming measures were based on many things, and not solely on the results of the Survey.

In answer to questions from the Commission, Traffic Engineer Zandvliet and Traffic Consultant Smith clarified the following: that east/west streets are typically alleys; where parking is prohibited or allowed on narrow streets; that red curbing assists with visibility at intersections and provides additional space for driving access; that many stop signs in the area were installed many years ago primarily for right of way purposes; that three-way stop signs can be added at four-way intersections if visibility is poor; and that the property on Crest Drive north of Chevron Drive is not within the City's purview.

Audience Participation

Chairman Gross opened the public hearing at 9:15 p.m.

Michelle Murphy, 4420 The Strand, requested input about a swinging gate at 40th Street; related her impression of the Commission's over responsiveness; stated her opposition to making northbound Ocean Drive a one-way street, installing permanent diverters at Ocean Drive and 40th Street and installing stop signs at the short ends of Ocean Drive; maintained that drivers should be able to either go straight or turn left out of the parking lot at Ocean Drive and 40th Street and the "severe tire damage" grates in the lot should be reinstalled; and that Police Department enforcement in the area should be increased.

Crystal Skinner, 121 – 39th Street, related her general agreement with the proposed traffic calming measures, with the exception that she supported removing the temporary barricade on 40th Street at Ocean Drive, and entertained the idea of initially implementing only a portion of the measures. She felt that the painting/re-painting white edge lines should be done progressively; that parking in North Manhattan Beach should be further examined separately; and that, for liability purposes, a stop sign should be installed at Rosecrans Avenue and Ocean Drive, but it is difficult to know where it should be located.

Bill Housch, 3704 The Strand, also generally agreed with the proposed traffic calming measures, with the exception that he supported removing the temporary barricade on 40th Street at Ocean Drive and leaving the barricades/restrictions at Ocean Drive as they are. It was his viewpoint that additional stop signs are generally not necessary, but one at Rosecrans Avenue and Ocean Drive would make the most sense, even though he would not know where to put it.

Tana Housch, 3704 The Strand, thanked City staff for the traffic survey and encouraged residents to respond to it. She contended that a recommendation regarding Kelp Street should be included in a recommendation to the Council; and that residents and property owners should be notified of an existing provision for overnight parking permits and this should be well advertised.

Bob Perkins, 4420 The Strand, commented on safety concerns; voiced his feeling that drivers should exit the parking lot onto 40th Street; and questioned if various traffic calming measures were added after the Traffic Survey was distributed. He felt there was no need for additional stop signs.

Ed Skebe, 210 Kelp Street, presented a petition signed by 16 residents; related concerns over traffic safety in the area; and stated his understanding that many residents who are opposed to maintaining the current turning restrictions and barricades at the intersection of Ocean Drive and 40th Street support other alternatives, such as 1b and 1f.

Mike Davis, 227 – 43rd Street, discussed the history of parking on Chevron Land; opposed white edge lines; noted the difficult traffic/parking situation created by the very narrow streets in North Manhattan Beach, including cars projecting into the street; and suggested increased Police Department enforcement.

Elise Cripe, No Address Provided, felt that the recommended traffic calming measures would not make the situation better.

Chairman Gross closed the public hearing at 10:55 p.m.

Traffic Engineer Zandvliet described how a swinging gate at 40th Street would function. He clarified that traffic calming measures installed would be reviewed in six months after installation.

Commission Discussion

Chairman Gross noted that any measures implemented would be for a trial period.

Commissioner Stabile stated his opinion that information obtained through the Traffic Survey is more than adequate for the purpose for which it was created. He agreed with the majority of the recommended traffic calming measures; supported allowing through traffic on upper 40th Street and a swinging barricade; indicated that the absence of stop signs on the eastbound legs of streets would present liabilities; highlighted the importance of access for Police and Fire Department vehicles; and favored edgeline striping as recommended by staff.

Commissioner Silverman supported allowing through traffic on 40th Street, painting/re-painting white edge lines, and installing stop signs on the fourth legs of various intersections. He noted the difficulties associated with emergency vehicles accessing the narrow streets.

Commissioner Adami related his agreement with the proposed traffic calming measures does not support removing the temporary barricade on 40th Street at Ocean Drive, which would allow vehicles exiting beach parking to continue straight onto 40th Street to Highland Avenue.

Commissioner Vigon generally agreed with the recommended measures, except supported allowing vehicles exiting beach parking to continue straight onto 40th Street. He felt that white edge lines would be unsightly and commented that North Manhattan Beach is a very unique area.

Chairman Gross explained his general agreement with the proposed traffic calming measures. He related his understanding that white edge lines provide better emergency vehicle access. He suggested that "No Right Turn" signs could be posted along Ocean Drive to reduce impacts north of 40th Street.

Fire Inspector Brian Yount discussed the difficulty of Fire Department vehicles navigating the narrow streets in North Manhattan Beach, including that the white edge lines would assist in street access.

MOTION: Commissioner Stabile moved to adopt the staff recommendations, except to delete the first recommendation and substitute No. 1b (Remove the temporary barricade on 40th Street at Ocean Drive, allowing vehicles exiting beach parking to continue straight on 40th Street to Highland Avenue); and recommending a swinging gate barricade at 40th Street. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Vigon and passed by unanimous roll call vote as shown below:

Ayes:	Adami, Vigon, Stabile, Silverman and Chairman Gross.
Noes:	None.
Abstain:	None.
Absent:	None.

Traffic Engineer Zandvliet advised that the Commission's recommendation will be forwarded to the City Council at the meeting on April 21st and that property owners will be notified.

G. COMMISSION ITEMS

03/26/09.4 Parking Meter Revenues and Traffic Violations Report

The Commissioners voiced their appreciation of the parking meter revenue information provided.

Chairman Gross observed that the parking meter revenue appears to be quite low.

Input in this regard was provided by Lt. Andy Harrod. He advised that the parking meters are filling up quickly; that the cost of citations and meter rates have increased; and that the Police Department has been diligent in issuing more parking tickets. Lt. Harrod shared information about the new tire chalking system.

03/26/09.5 Chairman Gross Re Parking Fine Meeting

Chairman Gross offered information about the first Downtown Manhattan Beach Parking Fine Task Force meeting, which he and Commissioner Adami attended.

Traffic Engineer Zandvliet. He indicated that information about the installation of signs showing parking locations etc. will be provided at the next meeting and that input on parking meters that use credit cards will be provided to the Commission in the near future.

Chairman Gross noted the goal to install some of the parking signs prior to the peak summer months.

03/26/09 Commissioner Silverman Re Increase in Parking Rates

Commissioner Silverman related his receipt of communications received from residents concerned about an increase in parking meter rates, especially with the poor economical situation.

H. STAFF ITEMS

None.

I. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10:40 p.m.