

**Montpelier Planning Commission**  
**May 12, 2003**  
**City Council Chambers, City Hall**

***Subject to Review and Approval***

**Present:** Chair David Borgendale, Members Bryan Mitofsky, Anne Campbell, Irene Facciolo, Curt McCormack, Carolyn Grodinsky, Sara Teachout, Planning Director Valerie Capels, Planner Stephanie Smith, Administrative Officer Kenneth Sweetser.

**Call to Order**

Mr. Borgendale called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m.

**Review of Agenda**

Mr. Borgendale gave opening remarks about the Master Planning process and the duties of the Planning Commission and the public.

**Comments from the Chair**

Mr. Borgendale stated that a major task of the Planning Commission is to update the Master Plan of the City of Montpelier. This public forum is the first of many forums which will address the various issues related to the master planning process. This forum will focus on the issue of parking.

**Carr Lot**

The Chair turned over the meeting to Bryan Mitofsky who in turn introduced Jon Anderson who was present to discuss the progress of the Carr Lot Committee.

Mr. Anderson reviewed the program for the Carr Lot parcel, which is bound by Taylor Street on the west, the North Branch River on the east, the Winooski River on the south and Capitol Plaza and a church to the north.

The project includes 5,000 sq. ft. of transit/welcome center space, a small park, a portion of the bike path between Taylor and Main Streets, a parking facility on an adjacent lot, and 5,000-10,000 sq. ft. of commercial or residential space above the transit center. They expect the project to be in the design phase in approximately one year.

A member of the Commission was concerned with circulation/ traffic on and off the lot. Mr. Anderson said that this would be reviewed as part of the development of the parcel. Currently, the Regional Planning Commission is looking at traffic in Montpelier and assembling a traffic model for downtown that could assess impacts due to development within the city and other changes that might increase traffic.

A member of the Commission commented that a larger garage, replacement parking plus some, would be more attractive to local businesses. Mr. Anderson said that there were concerns about what the federal money would actual fund. However the City will address the need for parking in addition to replacement parking, with the additional parking at the cost to the city.

Ms. Grodinsky asked why parking could not be outside the downtown. Mr. Anderson said that the feasibility study would look at many locations within the downtown, but the federal dollars must be spent on replacing the parking lost to development of the Carr Lot site and that parking outside the downtown would not be comparable to the loss.

Ms. Campbell asked if affordable housing is being looked at for the upper floors. Mr. Anderson said that they did not know the afford-ability of constructing affordable housing on the site, but that it is an option.

**Public Forum - Parking**

Mr. Mitofsky began to discuss the how the issue of parking has been around for a long time. Parking was raised at the Town Meeting, it was mentioned in the Cityscape document from 1976, and in 1986 with a proposal to build a lot off Court Street.

Mr. Mitofsky went on to say that parking is not an issue alone and that all master planning topics are interrelated and cannot be addressed independent of each other.

Mr. Mitofsky introduced Jim Sheridan, Councilman and Chair of the Parking Committee, to discuss the accomplishments and future goals for the Parking Committee. Some of the accomplishments to date are: the report to the City Council in 2001, creation of uniform meter rates, and North Branch parking lot reconfiguration and lighting. Some of the new projects are the rear lot study, reevaluate meter fees, move long term parking to the outskirts allowing for turnover of meters in the city for shoppers, and determine streets where fee parking should be established. The major goal of the Parking Committee is to make parking safe and attractive.

Ms. Grodinsky asked about incentives for car pooling and using alternative transportation. Mr. Sheridan said that there is a question of how the city could enforce the use of alternative transportation methods and car pooling once the incentive was paid out. However, the Parking Committee will continue to look at these options

Mr. Sweetser got up and discussed parking related to the zoning regulations. The city has parking requirements based on land use. The City has relaxed their standards with respect to residential land use to encourage infill development in downtown. If a project cannot meet the parking requirements there is a \$1,000 replacement parking impact fee assessed for each space not supplied.

Police Chief Hoyt gave a short presentation on enforcement issues related to parking and commented on residential permit parking. The request for neighborhood parking restrictions is initiated by a concerned neighborhood.

City Manager Bill Fraser discussed parking cost and revenues. He felt that fee parking should be self sufficient, but in reality it is not. The income potential is fixed unless the number of spaces increase or the parking rates increase, so the cost of leasing, employing people to deal with enforcement issues and maintenance are subsidized by the General Fund- taxes.

Mr. Mitofsky asked what the Planning Commission could do to guide decisions with respect to parking. It was suggested that they set short term and long term goals.

Valerie Capels discussed the Rear Lot Feasibility Study. A public meeting is scheduled in the near future to discuss the work done to date and to gather input from the committee and the public concerning structured parking on the Pitkin and Blanchard lots. The study should be complete in late August.

Dot Heling and Janice Aver spoke up to express their concern with the proposal for locating parking in the rear lot as their property abuts the lot. Both look forward to attending the public forum in June to comment.

### **Stakeholders**

Mary Hooper, Director MDCA, provided background information for studies performed in the past and projected parking needs for the next 5 years. She stated that the City would need 600 additional spaces assuming full build-out, including the loss of the Carr Lot for parking and the state lots due to increase security.

There is a need for dedicated employee parking and residential permit parking, including changes that would maintain and/ or encourage residential development in the downtown. She also briefly addressed the seasonal issues of parking (snow emergency parking).

Ms. Hooper also stated that eliminating the need for parking by looking at other methods of transportation – public transportation systems, car pooling, etc... is equal to the need for creating new parking spaces.

Tom Torti from the City State Commission reported to the Commission that their parking needs will increase over the next 5- 10 years to accommodate the build out of 133 State Street and the State

House addition. Proposals with respect to structured parking proposals of the recent past have not been successful. One of the major issues in their failure being the number of players. Mr. Mitofsky asked Mr. Torti if the state intended to create a parking authority. The state has no plans for creating a parking authority. However the state will start to regulate parking on their lots with gates and attendants.

Steve Gladzcuk, Central Vermont Regional Planning, said that growth in Montpelier is not related specifically to parking. It might be helpful for the Commission to identify areas of potential growth and then move backwards to address the relevant issues.

The CVRPC has begun an RFP process for a consultant to develop a traffic model for downtown Montpelier. This would allow for development and alternative transportation concepts, new street networks, and other projects to be analyzed with respect to traffic.

Mr. Gladzcuk also briefly commented on public transportation, management of that entity, and possible new routes to down Rte. 2.

Ms. Hooper asked to be heard again on the issue of parking as a resident of Montpelier. She thought the Commission should look outside the downtown and address parking and transportation and other issues as a whole and not address any one item alone. She felt that there were a number of committees who looked at parking but none that looked at transit and development and promotion of transit options. She thanked the commission for their time and attention to this matter.

The Commission at the conclusion of the Parking Forum began discussion of the next agenda which should include the following items.

Sabin's Pasture- reconsideration of the vote and how to proceed.

Rules of Procedure- Address operating rules for public meetings.

Certified Local Government

### **Adjournment**

Mr. Mitofsky made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Grodinsky seconded the motion and it carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 9:50 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Stephanie Smith, Planner

*These minutes are subject to approval by the Planning Commission. Changes, if any, will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting at which they were acted upon.*