

**TOWN OF OLD ORCHARD BEACH
TOWN COUNCIL WORKSHOP
TUESDAY, FEBURARY 15, 2011
TOWN HALL CHAMBERS**

A Town Council Workshop of the Old Orchard Beach Town Council was held on following the regular meeting of the Town Council on Tuesday, February 15, 2011. Chair Quinn opened the meeting at 7:55 p.m. The purpose of the Workshop was to discuss Parking Issues.

The following were in attendance:

**Chair Bob Quinn
Vice Chair Michael Tousignant
Councilor Robin Dayton
Councilor Sharri MacDonald
Councilor Shawn O'Neill
Town Manager Jack Turcotte
Assistant Town Manager Louise Reid
Chief Dana Kelley
Deputy Chief Keith Babin
Public Works Director Bill Robertson**

Historically, the staff has been working together to create a strategic plan for off-street parking, public restroom facilities, permits and parking meter upgrades. The primary goal of this plan was to create a comprehensive program for providing quality, clean, safe and economically practical for our residents and visitors. Currently, we have three off-street parking lots: Memorial Park, Milliken Street and Town Hall, and three public restroom facilities: Memorial Park, Milliken Street and West Grand. The Town of OOB had managed the current off-street lots with both personal attendants and "Pay & Display" machines. The "Pay to Display" machines have been serious problems functionally at both lots and discussion continued this evening on the possible use of a live attendant at the facilities, particularly Milliken Street parking lot. The Town of Old Orchard Beach has provided a public restroom facility on West Grand Avenue, FREE of charge without an attendant. In July 2005, Extreme Clean was awarded a cleaning contract for this restroom (along with other downtown cleaning duties) for a three year contract and they have provided excellent service. Town Hall Parking Lots will remain as "Town Business or Town Employee Parking Only" and all other vehicles will be ticketed. The need for continued proper signage was a consideration requested by those in attendance. Residential parking permits were created to allow residents to park at municipal, off-street lots at a lower rate than visitors; this permit is for use in the Memorial Park and Milliken Street Parking Lots.

Permits

- a. **Residential Permits – Year Round Day Use Only**
 - Currently available for any resident for \$25 per year
 - One parking permit is allowed per household.

- b. **Residential Permits – Year Round Overnight Use Only**
 - Due to the limited parking spaces on their site, many Condo Associations have expressed a need for overnight parking to accommodate their guests.
 - While increased use may occur in the summer, the need extends throughout the year; therefore, in the past staff has not recommended a separate overnight use permit for residents.
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- c. **Residential Permits – Year Round Anytime Use**
 - Projected volume and revenues are difficult to determine, staff will monitor the use of these permits and recommend any fee adjustments or limiting the number of permits, if found necessary.
- d. **Business Permits – Year Round Day Use Only**
 - Business owners have expressed a need for parking during the day to accommodate their employees.
- e. **Business Permits – Year Round Overnight Use Only**
 - Due to the limited on-site parking at many of the hotels and motels, many business owners have also expressed a need for parking overnight to accommodate their customers.

B. Revenue

The following Parking Permits were issued and Revenue made:

| | | | |
|------|-------|----------|-------------------------------------|
| 2001 | 768 | \$ 7,680 | \$10 permit Memorial Park |
| 2002 | 868 | 8,680 | \$10 permit Memorial Park |
| 2003 | 1,025 | 10,260 | \$10 permit Memorial Park |
| 2004 | 970 | 9,700 | \$10 permit Memorial Park |
| 2005 | 286 | 8,575 | \$25 permit for Milliken & Memorial |
| 2006 | 286 | 9,175 | \$25 permit for Milliken & Memorial |
| 2007 | 212 | 10,600 | \$50 permit Milliken & Memorial |
| 2008 | 190 | 9,500 | \$50 permit Milliken & Memorial |
| 2009 | 181 | 9,050 | \$50 permit Milliken & Memorial |
| 2010 | 218 | 10,900 | \$50 permit Milliken & Memorial |

Revenues:

| | Parking Meters | Parking Lots |
|--------------------------|------------------|--------------|
| May 1 - October 31, 2009 | \$ 172,428 | \$ 71,445 |
| May 1 - October 31, 2010 | 234,793 | 106,527 |
| Increase | 62,365 | 35,082 |
| TOTAL INCREASE | \$ 97,447 | |

C. Marketing

- **It was recommended during this evening's discussion that businesses need to develop marketing opportunities by providing perhaps supplements to parking fees.**

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D. Potential Partners

- **Chamber of Commerce**
- **BRASS**
- **Amtrak**
- **Seasonal Trolley/Bus**
- **Others?**

There were several parking concerns that were discussed at this meeting. The Town Manager reiterated that every year the subject of parking constraints is raised and in many of the areas it is not possible to do anything different than what is being done already. Last year the Town Council in an effort to increase revenue raised the fees for the use of its 185 parking meters from \$1 an hour to \$2 an hour. Parking meters and Town parking lots are enforced from Memorial Day through Labor Day. Since last year's change the Town has increased its parking meter revenue by about \$62,400 and its parking lot revenue by about \$35,000. The meters now only credit quarters, not dimes and nickels as before, but unfortunately it accepts the smaller coins and does not give credit for them and this is one of the major complaints of those in attendance. It is inevitable that people do not read the instructions on the meters and lose their change. Chair Quinn asked if the machines could be adjusted so that they provide the proper credit but Chief Dana Kelly said they could not. New meters would need to be purchased and the cost for new meters is enormous. Chief Kelley said that the meters housing, not the inside of the mechanisms are about eighteen years old. He said he was not sure if new mechanisms would fit inside the meter housing. A few years ago new mechanisms for the double meters cost about \$600 to \$700 per meter. Vice Chair Tousignant said the solution would be dollar meters. He said he heard from some business owners who complained that since the change, they had to frequently dole out change to tourists and that people would like change machines. The subject of destruction of the machines through vandalism was discussed by Chief Kelley. The Town Manager indicated that vandalism to the Town bathroom alone this past summer reached the amount of over \$25,000. Vice Chair Tousignant suggested the Town convert to meters that could take dollar bills and do forty meters a year which would have to be discussed at the budget season; it would not affect this season. Councilor O'Neill indicated that he did not support change machines but instead the Town should upgrade to machines that would accept credit cards and give out tickets to post on people's dashboards and which he said were being used successfully in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. He said that times are changing and the Town expected businesses to upgrade and plan for the future and the Town should as well. He indicated it is "catch-up times." He suggested that the new machines would be attractive and wouldn't require poles at each spot. He recommended that the Police Department find out the cost and the availability of such machines. Vice Chair Tousignant reminded everyone that such machines would require electricity and would be costly.

Another timely consideration during discussions at this meeting were the question of changing the times parking meters were enforced downtown, indicating that business owners had complaints for the present hours which were from 6:00 a.m. to 2:00 a.m., even though parking

enforcement officers do not come on duty till 10:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. Gina Martinez, owner of Mr. Goodbar, said that she had heard from people who park at the metered spaces, particularly those coming from Portland, that Old Orchard Beach is not a “parking friendly” community. That raised the question of whether we really have to ticket after midnight. The Chief of Police said that the parking enforcement individuals go off at 10:00 p.m. so it is probably the occasional Police recruit that ticket, but seldom. Jeannie LeChance, owner of JJ’s Eatery, said she thought the ordinance should be changed to 10:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. Vice Chair Tousignant said he felt that ordinance should be changed. It was also suggested by the business owners that in order to park and walk to any area restaurant, be seated, dine, etc., the time would be well over one hour, which means visitors as well as our own year-round residents have to pay at a minimum of \$4 for parking, simply to dine locally. They suggested the installation of change machines around Town; allowing meters to accept other coins with credit for time or disable them from taking other coins; make Old Orchard Street a time-limited parking zone (4 hour max limit); shutting down parking meters to mirror surrounding communities (i.e., Portland) who use meters from 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.; and issuing tickets for expired meters at midnight is unreasonable. They expressed their goals to be able to be friendly to residents and tourists alike and provide opportunities for them to visit our breathtaking beaches and patron our great restaurants, nightclubs, arcades, bookstores, boutiques, or simply get an ice cream.

Parking fees are \$50 for residents and \$300 for non-resident. We have not sold any of the \$300 non-resident fees. The main concern expressed from residents purchasing permits are that they are unable to park in the Memorial Park parking lot most days because it is already full. They would like to see if there may be the possibility of reserving more spaces for residents with permits, even if it were only for two-hour parking, as we have many older couples that would like to go down for a couple of hours and get pizza or fries and sit and people watch, or they would like to use the dog park or other areas of the park. Below is the present ordinance for the Milliken Street and Memorial Park parking lots:

Sec. 54-114. Milliken Street parking lot

- (a) No vehicle shall park in the Milliken Street parking lot without first obtaining a valid parking slip from a pay station or by obtaining a resident parking permit from the town clerk. The parking slip shall be displayed on the dashboard of the vehicle for the allotted time that was paid for. This section will be enforced between the Friday before Memorial Day and Labor Day.**
 - (b) No parking shall be allowed in this lot between the hours of 2:00 a.m. and 6:00 a.m.**
 - (c) Any vehicle in violation of subsection (a) of this section, the owner or operator shall be subject to a fine of \$25.00.**
 - (d) Any vehicle in violation of subsection (b) of this section, the owner or operator shall be subject to a fine of \$30.00.**
- (Ord. of 4-7-2009(2))**

Sec. 54-115. Memorial Park Parking Lot

- (a) No vehicle shall park in the Memorial Park parking lot without first obtaining a valid parking slip from a pay station or by obtaining a resident or nonresident parking permit from the town clerk. The parking slip shall be displayed on the dashboard of the vehicle for the allotted time that was paid for. This ordinance will be enforced between the Friday before Memorial Day and Labor Day.**

- (b) Memorial Park parking lot will have two designated handicap spaces.
 - (c) Memorial Park parking lot will have five free one-hour parking spaces for use of visitors to Memorial Park and the Dog Park only.
 - (d) No parking shall be allowed between the hours of 2:00 a.m. and 6:00 a.m.
 - (e) Any vehicle in violation of subsection (a) of this section, the owner or operator shall be subject to a fine of \$25.00.
 - (f) Any vehicle in violation of subsection (d) of this section, the owner or operator shall be subject to a fine of \$30.00.
 - (f) Any vehicle in violation of subsection (c) of this section, the owner or operator shall be subject to a fine of \$25.00
- (Ord. of 4-7-2009(2))

Parking Issues raised in a Report by Parking Enforcement Supervisor - Joseph Levasseur

Ticket Machines - Totally inefficient and often broken or having to be fixed; pieces for repair are no longer available; still requires assistance of a live individual to clear the machines when they are broken. Original service company is now out-of-business.

Parking Meters – Same issue of them being old and needing to be replaced. The taking of dimes and nickels is a problem because they often mess up the machines and that is why they only take quarters. It should be noted that most of the parking meters of eight or nine years old and showing wear.

Live Ticket/Money Takers – Although this might be the most efficient way the subject of accountability was raised in this area.

Milliken Street Parking Lot – the need to analyze or evaluate the construction of this parking lot is necessary. It might be helpful to find the original drawings and discuss again the entrance and exit strategies of the lot itself.

Discussion continued on which is the best way to enter to avoid piling up of number of cars waiting to get into the lot and the parking within the lot itself. The subject of overnight parking also came up but again the upsetting of neighbors in the condos and apartments and the local motel in the area has always been a negative to having overnight parking.

Memorial Parking Lot – Again the number of spaces was discussed; the ability to provide more parking to citizens rather than visitors was addressed; staffing requirements and also the machine to issue the tickets was a concern.

It should be noted that Memorial Park has a total of 59 automobile parking spaces and included in that number are two handicap spaces, at the end nearest the entrance to the Park and the dog park and five designed two hour spaces (intended to be free spaces) on the basketball court side. This leaves 52 pay or permit parking spaces. When this lot was constructed it was equipped with a parking kiosk or machine in either 2004 or 2005. The machine accepted the customer's money for a specified amount of time and issued a receipt which was then placed on the vehicle's dash. The machines were operational 24 hours per days, seven days per week. Both lots are restricted to parking from 6:00 a.m. to 2:00 a.m. This system worked fairly well until the machine broke down at the end of the 2008 season. We were unable to get someone to service or repair the machine and subsequently found out that the manufacturer went out of business. Therefore, after that, the lot was staffed by

Parking Enforcement personnel from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. After that time and during rain days the lot generates no income.

It should be noted that Milliken Street Parking Lot consists of two separate lots. The main parking lot has a total of 240 automobile spaces. Included in that number are four (4) designated handicap parking spaces at the end nearest the main entrance (near the restrooms.) This leaves 236 pay, or permit, legal parking spaces. This lot is accessed by two entrances/exits. This lot was equipped with two parking kiosks, or machines, located near the two entrances. These machines worked fairly well and operated much the same as the Memorial lot machine, meaning 24/7 but were not particularly user or maintenance friendly. All the machines accepted \$1 bills, \$5 bills, or \$10 bills and none made change. Coins were not accepted. The machines printed out a receipt which was placed on the dash of the vehicle. All machines provide instructions for their operations. These machines would frequently break down (bill jams) and required constant supervision. The Milliken machines were in operation from 2005 until 2010 season when the rates changed from \$1.00 per hour to \$2.00 per hour. The manufacturer sent a new program for the rate change but the program was defective and would not issue receipts. Consequently we removed that machine and replaced it with the second machine that was still programmed at \$1.00 per hour. We staffed Milliken Street lot with an attendant from 9:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. through the month of June then from 8:30 p.m. until 7:00 p.m. from July until Labor Day. After 7:00 p.m. the machine was turned on and the parking rate went down to \$1.00 per hour. As mentioned, the main lot at Milliken Street has two entrances/exits. During the hours that the lot was staffed one entrance, farthest away from the public restrooms was closed off with traffic cones for the purpose of access control, except for the peak times for the Fourth of July at which times both entrances were staffed.

The Milliken Street Satellite Lot has a total of 63 automobile spaces. It has only one entrance/exit and has the appearance of being a completely separate lot from the main lot. There is no parking machine nor do we provide staffing for that lot, except over the Fourth of July. This lot is frequently used by permit holders. Tour busses have an area designated n the main lot.

Recommendations for the Future of the Lots:

The entrance to the Satellite lot, from Milliken Street, should be permanently blocked preventing access from Milliken Street and a new access be cut in from the main lot. The first entrance to the main lot should be equipped with an automatic gate that allows exit only and be properly identified as such. The Milliken Lot should be equipped with a minimum of three parking kiosks or machines that are easily seen and easy to access as well lit at night. Memorial Lot should have one parking kiosk. A booth should be available to accommodate staff during peak periods. The area behind the Milliken Street rest rooms allows for unauthorized and uncontrolled access into Milliken Lot and should be blocked. Adequate signage is necessary and that are easy to read to see and be clearly legible and need to be posted at both municipal lots. The grassy knoll at the rear of the lot, Walnut Street end, is used during peak periods for overflow parking. This is at best a risky practice. The area is grassy with no defined parking lines and requires, at least, one attendance to monitor this area so that people don't get blocked in. There is a lagoon at the top of this knoll that is totally unprotected. It has a drop off of approximately ten feet into a pool of murky water of unknown depth. This is an accident waiting to happen.

Recommendations on Meters:

Our present meters have been in service for over ten years. Although the housings have not changed much over the years but the older mechanisms have become obsolete and parts are no longer available to repair them. We are looking to having to replace the older mechanisms in the near future. Vaults are starting to break down, locks are beginning to malfunction. Most of our meter housings are the older type and are heavy and cumbersome to install and remove. With the change in hourly rate from \$1.00 per hour to \$2.00 per hour requires more vigilance and requires that they be emptied daily, seven days a week. The amount of money from the meters alone is substantially more than previous years.

Other Parking Issues:

Proper signage or other markings needs to be provided on streets where parking is either restricted or prohibited. The signs must be clearly visible and legible. The 2010 parking season was successful however not without a few issues. A considerable amount of revenue was brought in for the Town of Old Orchard Beach. (Reviewed previously in Minutes.)

Discussion about parking concerns included persons who park overnight sleeping in their cars, campers, etc. and that is why the Town prohibits campers from the Milliken St. Lot. Business owners spoke about their need for more parking for visitors on a 24 hour and weekly basis and employees on a seasonal basis. Further discussions on the ability to have change available for people who wish to park on the street at the meters; the need to monitor that business owners are not parking in front of their businesses at meters and feeding the meters all day. There needs to be consideration of marking tires to show that they have moved after the two hour period permitted. The need to improve street lighting at Milliken Street parking lot is a necessity because there is definitely a safety issue here. The need to “man” that lot is another recommendation of those in attendance. Rick and Eileen Payette, owners of The Landmark Restaurant, encouraged the Council to make that lot safer for their employees who park there and must access the lot after midnight on work nights.

The Chair expressed his appreciation to the business owners who made the effort to attend this evening and provide their very helpful comments.

The meeting closed at 10:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

**V. Louise Reid
Town Council Secretary**

I, V. Louise Reid, Secretary to the Town Council of Old Orchard Beach, Maine, do hereby certify that the foregoing document consisting of seven (7) pages is a true copy of the original Minutes of the Town Council Workshop of February 15, 2011.

V. Louise Reid