JIM THORPE BOROUGH COUNCIL WORK SESSION
March 14, 2023
MINUTES

Meeting called to order at 4:02 p.m. by President Gregory Strubinger with the pledge of allegiance and a moment of silence for the armed forces, first responders, and their families, as well as former water plant operator Kenny McArdle and his family.

Roll Call of Members

Gregory Strubinger	Joanne Klitsch	Jay Miller- absent
Michael Yeastedt	Bob Schaninger	Jessica Crowley
Michael Rivkin	Mayor Sofranko- absent	Solicitor Nanovic-absent
Police Chief Schatz	Borough Mgr. Sterner	
Borough Engineer- absent	Secretary Brooke Klotz	

Public Comment

Joan Morykin- She has no issue with a certain level of permit parking for residents and agrees it's needed to some degree. She said Council should open up the spaces on upper West Broadway. The rest of the Borough residents who aren't eligible for parking permits cannot use these parking spaces. She said Council needs to come up with a better balance for residents and business owners.

Victor Stabin- He claims permit parking is crippling his business. There are many spots open on upper West Broadway and High Street. He claims the current parking permits signage deters people from coming to his business.

Margaret White- She said permit parking is great for residents being able to park near their homes, but it's not great for the businesses along Broadway and West Broadway. Workers of the businesses along Broadway and West Broadway are struggling to find parking. She thinks the signage should be changed and should not include violators will be prosecuted. She said there are many open spaces on High Street and upper West Broadway. She suggested that Council hold a "lottery" for those open spaces for business owners.

Mary Shorten- She said permit parking is not good for businesses and is causing them lost revenue.

Brian Evans- He produced a survey from the local businesses on how permit parking has affected them. He recommended that Council change the hours of permit parking Mondays through Thursdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and keep weekends the same. He also explained that guest passes are hard to get because people have to come get them when the Borough Office is open. He recommended that residents eligible for parking permits get a certain amount distributed to them at the beginning of every year to give to their guests while visiting. He also recommended that the verbiage and aesthetics of the signage be changed.

Trish Spillman- She believes the signage should stay, but change the verbiage. She also thinks the timeframe of permit parking should change to allow residents to park from 8 p.m. to 7 a.m. This will allow businesses to conduct their business and allow their clients to park by or near those businesses. She thinks that permit parking is not needed on upper West Broadway.

Steve Ambrose- He agrees with the others thoughts: there should be timed permit parking and upper West Broadway and High Street should be excluded from permit parking. He said guest passes are a hassle to get. He thinks the Borough should give a certain amount out per year to permit parking residents.

James Dougher- He spoke from a short-term rental owner's perspective. He's afraid if permit parking is laxed, then the short-term rental owners would tell their guests to park along West Broadway. He thinks that the Borough should provide a certain number of passes to businesses for their employees.

Alex Lukowski- He thinks that permit parking should stay the way it currently is.

Chris Gehres- He said that he knew that when permit parking started there would be hiccups. Residents like the permit parking the way it is. He's concerned about people trying to park on the corner by the Opera House. He wishes that there was more enforcement. Chief Schatz said that the police are not ignoring the calls, but they are also not knocking on the resident's door who made the complaint to let them know it's been addressed. Chris also thinks the timeframe should not change for permit parking, but agrees that it isn't needed on upper West Broadway and High Street. He thinks the walk from the spaces available on High Street to Broadway and West Broadway is too far. He thinks that there should be a certain amount of guest and businesses passes handed out.

Jim Gilmore- He said that there are 148 permit parking spots and 250 permits issued; that's more passes than spots available. The County lot has 450+ spots. Businesses should not supersede the resident's needs. Permit parking is currently working for residents.

Judy Umlas- She asked if there was any way to buy guest passes online. Currently no. She wants to see the businesses supported.

Alex Lukowski- He forgot to mention the first time he spoke that safety issues, like cars sticking out, are concerning. He also recommended Council think about the future, especially since more people are using electric vehicles. Where will these people be able to park and charge their cars?

Greg Strubinger asked if the fine price is capped. Chief Schatz said that it is a $50.00 state statute. Bob Schaninger said he thinks that permit parking should be tweaked. Victor Stabin said driveway cutouts should be allowed to be used for loading and unloading.

Permit Parking

Council discussed guest parking passes and figuring out a way to make it more accommodating for residents to purchase. It was suggested to look into being able to purchase them online or have parking permit residents get a permanent guest pass that is returned at the end of the year and renewed at the beginning of the next.

Council then discussed the open spaces on upper West Broadway and High Street. The thought was if those spots were to be opened up, the Borough could utilize it for kiosk parking or have a "lottery" for the businesses to utilize those spots.

The topic of the time frame of permit parking being utilized was addressed. It was recommended to leave Broadway and lower West Broadway the way it is.

Bob Schaninger would like to see guest passes be available to purchase online for residents. He suggested that once the Movie Hill parking lot is completed, to use half the spaces for residents and the other half for businesses. He would also like to see permit parking removed from upper West Broadway.

Manager Sterner explained that it would be very hard to track and keep records of guest passes if they were to be available to be purchased online.

Jessica Crowley recommended that Council look to see what other municipalities are doing that also have a similar permit parking ordinance. She asked if residents on Broadway can get passes too. They can.

Michael Rivkin asked if the flow bird app can be used for guest passes. Chief Schatz explained that it would be a significant cost to add and that the officers would have to check every vehicle to verify if they paid for a guest pass using a handheld device.

Joanne Klitsch thanked the residents for coming out and speaking at the meeting. She addressed the concerns about enforcement taking place. The Borough tried to hire a parking meter attendant, but no one showed up for the interviews.

Mike Yeastedt explained the reason for permit parking was because residents came to Borough Council requesting permit parking. This was something that Council did not come up with on their own. He does agree that permit parking needs to be tweaked.

Jessica Crowley asked if Council would consider rewording the signs. Chief Schatz explained that it needs to be kept that way for enforcement purposes.

Joan Morykin asked how many violators were ticketed last year. Chief Schatz said there were 350 tickets issued last year.

Greg Strubinger said there would be further discussions with Borough Council and office staff to make practical changes to the permit parking ordinance.

Adjourn

MOTION by Mike Yeastedt, second by Joanne Klitsch to **adjourn the meeting**. There were no comments. Motion carries 6-0. The meeting ended at 5:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brooke Klotz
Borough Secretary