

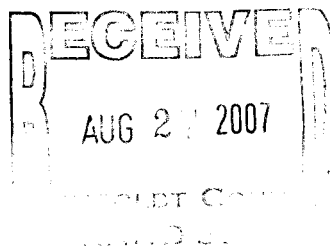


CITY OF EUREKA

531 K Street • Eureka, California 95501-1146 • (707) 441-4200

MAYOR

August 22, 2007



Honorable John T. Feeney, Presiding Judge
Superior Court of California
County of Humboldt
825 5th Street
Eureka, CA 95501

Dear Judge Feeney:

The 2006-07 Humboldt County Grand Jury Report addressed two subject areas within the City of Eureka.

At the Eureka City Council meeting on August 21, 2007, the City Council discussed the Grand Jury findings, conclusions, and recommendations. As directed, the City Council provides their response for the 2006-07 Grand Jury's Report.

Sincerely,

Virginia Bass
Mayor
City of Eureka

Cc: Jim Snow, Foreperson, 2006-07 Grand Jury
County Administrative Office

**City of Eureka Engineering Department
Response to the Grand Jury
August 15, 2007**

Finding 1:

The Grand Jury finds that the desirable parking places are often occupied by employees or residents of the Old Town and the public is unaware of adequate parking within a reasonable distance.

Recommendation 1:

The Grand Jury recommends that the Parking Place Commission work with employers and businesses in the Old Town area to increase awareness of available parking. Appropriate signage directing citizens to parking areas a short distance from their destination may be helpful.

Partially Disagree

The City of Eureka agrees that employees and residents of the Old Town do park in “desirable parking spaces;” however, numerous parking surveys over the years indicate that the typical motorist defines “desirable parking place” as directly in front of the business they wish to visit. The coinciding surveys of on-street and off-street parking shows ample available even two blocks away. These surveys also indicate those motorists are generally aware of these alternative parking locations; however, they do not find them to be “desirable.”

1. The City of Eureka agrees that motorists often do not know where to find additional parking in the Old Town area.

The recommendation in regards to the Parking Place Commission requires further analysis.

1. The Parking Place Commission powers and duties are to serve in an advisory manner to the City Council and does not currently have the authority to act in the recommended proactive manner. The Commission responds to requests by the public and Council and does not work independently of the City Council. The Commission did discuss this issue and the minutes from their July 12, 2007 meeting are attached.
2. City staff is currently given those proactive tasks and duties through the direction of the City Manager.

The recommendation to provide directional signage has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future.

1. City staff has been working with Eureka Main Street to develop, design and implement directional signage to be placed in City off-street parking lots to help citizens locate additional parking areas.
2. Budgeting and logistical obstacles have hampered installation of the signage; however, City staff is working to remove those obstacles in the near future.
3. City staff continues to research and implement other methods to better utilize underutilized parking areas within the Old Town area.

**PARKING PLACE COMMISSION
MINUTES OF July 12, 2007
Council Chambers, EUREKA CITY HALL**

<u>Present</u>	<u>Absent</u>	<u>Staff</u>	<u>Guests</u>
Rahi Miraie Carole Beaton Travis Schneider Rod Sandretto Robert Jones	Bill Enos	Gary Boughton Tiffany Peerson	Kenneth Hall

I. Call To Order

The meeting was called to order at 4:33 p.m. in the Council Chambers by Commission Chair Robert Jones.

II. Roll Call

Roll call was conducted.

III. Approval of Minutes of June 14, 2007

Minutes approved with no changes; 5 ayes, 0 noes.

IV. Public Comment

None.

V. Old Business

- 1. Request for 22' green zone on the west side of "F" Street in front of 3500 "F" Street (Handee Market) by Paul Fishel, soon to be property owner. See attached.**

Applicant not present; staff reports that current property owner is ok with the zone and that normally for market/business of this nature staff would take the stance of approval. Commissioner Sandretto notes that normally with a request of this nature we table it until the applicant can be present to answer questions. Commissioner Schneider agrees and notes that since the requester is still in the process of going through escrow that makes him even more reluctant. Again Commissioner Sandretto recommends tabling the item until Mr. Fishel can be present; Commissioner Schneider seconds. Motion passes unanimously 5 ayes; 0 noes.

VI. New Business

1. Request for 22' green zone on the west side of "F" Street in front of 604 "F" Street (Eureka Old Glass House & Antiques) by Kenneth Hall, property owner. See attached.

Commissioner Jones opens with reciting request and asking if applicant is present. Mr. Hall is and briefly describes why he is requesting a different color zone than what is currently present. He feels that traffic is too fast in that area to create for a safe parking space and believes it would be much better utilized as a green loading zone. He has had his building hit and does not want to see anyone get hurt. Mr. Hall has spoken to surrounding businesses and they all agreed that it would be fine to change it to green.

Commissioner Schneider wants to know if the yellow zone is utilized at this time. Per Mr. Hall the zone is not being utilized at this time. Commissioner Schneider is also interested in finding out from staff if there are any other yellow zones in the area. The closest is on 6th & F. Commissioner Schneider clarifies request by stating that Mr. Hall would like us to remove the existing yellow zone and replace it with a green zone. Mr. Hall concurs and would be very appreciative.

Commissioner Schneider inquires in regards to a survey of the surrounding businesses. Letters went out on July 10th and no response came in regarding concerns. Commissioner Sandretto moves for approval of removal of yellow zone and applying a green zone in front of 604 F, seconded by Commissioner Schneider. Motion passes unanimously 5 ayes; 0 noes.

2. Grand Jury Report #2007-AF-18 "Parking with the City of Eureka". See attached.

Commissioner Jones opens by stating request for recommendation of the Grand Jury Report. Staff reads from page VI 2.c – "The Grand Jury recommends that the Parking Place Commission work with employers and businesses in the Old Town area to increase awareness of available parking. Appropriate signage directing citizens to parking areas a short distance from their destination may be helpful." Staff has been trying to appropriate funds to better highlight the existing parking signs. Staff has also spoken to 'Main Street' in regards to a "YOU ARE HERE" along with signs showing where other parking is.

Commissioner Schneider is not of the opinion that we have a true parking problem in Old Town. He feels there are periods of time where it might be more difficult to find parking but in general if people are willing to walk a couple of blocks then there is ample parking.

Commissioner Schneider is interested in seeing if any studies have been done to indicate how far on any given day and time someone would have to walk to get to their chosen destination. Staff agrees that employees and employers are not usually willing to walk the couple of blocks from their car to work. Staff gives a brief history of the studies that were conducted in 1979, 1987, 1988, 1989, and 1998.

Commissioner Sandretto asked a question in regards to the 1989 Blue Ribbon Parking Committee and if it was linked to the County? Staff says yes. Commissioner Sandretto elaborates to the effect of having many years of experience of having to do sweeps and

reminding both County and City employees that it was a State parking lot and that they could be towed at their own expense. He had many file folders full of parking citations. Point being that there is now a temporary lot there and if and when the County gets the money to build the new court house then the parking lot will go away. He feels someone at the right level should be negotiating with the County to make sure additional parking will be considered and created when the new court house is built or we are going to have a serious parking problem which would hopefully help create some exchange between the Board of Supervisors and the City Council.

Staff comments back by stating how far people are willing to park out at the Bay Shore Mall and then walk the inside of the mall a couple of times. Imperial evidence would say that employees are the ones who usually park in front of the business. It is a natural course of events that could be reversed by education.

Commissioner Sandretto says that if the County could find a way to create a parking structure in this area then it would be a great benefit. Commissioner Sandretto had passed information to Dan Moody in regards to how Roseburg, OR will ticket employees that park in the downtown area due to the fact that they have a parking structure for them.

Staff informs the Commission that the County is looking forward to receiving funds to create the new courthouse which in turn will dissolve the temporary parking lot on K between 4th and 5th. The County is planning on having a single level low grade restricted parking lot for the court. Based on the EIR that the County approved Jail 1, Jail 2, and the proposed court house some six hundred spaces within a three City block radius could be handled. Within the EIR they did evaluate creating a parking structure where the Public Health building is located. However it will cost 20 million plus. The County has the right to not comply with the City ordinances. The rumor is that the County may be getting the monies for the court house sooner rather than later and then the parking problems will be exasperated.

Commissioner Schneider feels that part of the answer to the problem would be to implant some kind of fee structure. The fees would help us to fund a potential structure for the future. Commissioner Sandretto thinks that the feeling is not the same on a whole because the monies that are created by the meters are not due to be appropriated for parking issues. He feels the parking problem is not severe and that if people were willing to go a little out of their way then there would be no issue at all. The lot next to the Sea Grill is a perfect example of enough parking.

Commissioner Mirahi agrees with Commissioner Schneider on creating some kind of fee structure and adds how great public transportation is in other areas. He feels too that the problem is a combination of people who don't want to make the effort to walk and those who are not willing to pay to park closer.

Commissioner Jones feels this is an issue that needs to be discussed and that we should express to Commissioner Schneider to take to the Task Force and the Council members what the feeling is from the Parking Place Commission on a parking problem. Commissioner Schneider is happy to take what he can to the Task Force but feels it might have a little more of impact to maybe agendaize the issue and have others present. Commissioner Jones agrees but feels there should be a little more discussion amongst the Commission first and this is a great opportunity to do so. He feels this is what they are here for. Investing time and being proactive for the

community. Commissioner Beaton agrees. She references something that she has witnessed within LA County for big events and how public transportation or shuttles would work to get people from one location that would be far from the event and then bus people to the event that would be occurring miles away and would save people with finding a parking place or paying outrageous amounts to park.

Commissioner Schneider notes that he frequents the Old Town area and cannot remember an event he has been to and had to walk more than two blocks and that people should be willing to walk more.

Commissioner Beaton agrees and feels that there is not a parking problem either if people are willing to walk a little. She feels that shuttles would be a good alternative if people are unable to walk or would not want to in the rain, especially during a major production or event.

Commissioner Jones references the study done by Blue Ribbon in '89 and a note there about the City establishing and working towards a parking goal. He feels that is what the Commission is trying to do at this time. Commissioner Schneider agrees and feels that the general consensus among the group is to devise a goal given the opportunity. He makes a note on how long it has taken to get new parking meters in place. He feels it is frustrating because comments or notes seem to fall on deaf ears. Commissioner Jones agrees that it can be frustrating, and here an opportunity comes before us and someone with some power comes before us asking for some input and feels that they are grappling for a response to the question. He would like the group to have a driving message.

Commissioner Beaton's answer is to walk. Get a little more exercise.

Staff goes back to the item and says that it was more informational. Recommends to the group that they can itemize an agenda item and discuss whatever they would like. If they would staff to supply certain information they can. Commissioner Jones would like to set that up. He likes that idea.

Commissioner Schneider notes that the agenda of the Task Force is that goal. One of the first items is to expand the district but beyond that there are many other items. Commissioner Schneider would be happy to take whatever items to the Task Force that the group would like him to.

Commissioner Jones hears what the Task Force is doing and would like to know what the direction of the Task Force is. Commissioner Schneider elaborates that the Task Force is assessing the current parking situation and forecasting the measures that need to be taken to improve or cut off problems before they happen. He feels this is the objective of the Task Force from his eyes and optimistic that the group is about getting things in place and being effective. Commissioner Sandretto is interested in finding out if the Task Force feels there are any parking problems within the City. Commissioner Schneider says he could not say one way or another because he thinks it could be agreed that at peak hours it could be seen that there is a parking problem but more than that it is a perception problem.

Commissioner Sandretto agrees that it is more of a perception problem and that education and signage usage is a great way to help change perception. He is frustrated that there is no plan out there for future parking or for the impact that the developers bring about who are hoping to build up the City. Commissioner Schneider feels that the ultimate problem is that there is nothing effective in place that has the money from the district going back to the district, besides

the Assessment District which is just a boundary at this time. Commissioner Sandretto feels that the Assessment District is more than a boundary and that it does hinder developmental parking. He feels that it is a free pass to developers. Commissioner Schneider feels that the district will more than likely be enlarged and fees it will be assessed again because of the reasons Commissioner Sandretto stated.

Commissioner Sandretto takes us back to the Grand Jury item. He makes comments on how the Commission has worked with Old Town/Down Town merchants and has passed along recommendations to City Council in the past. He asks specifically about diagonal parking that was part of the parking solution in the past. 5th & 6th Street is still waiting to be completed. He feels a year or two is like doing nothing. He feels that the Task Force is going to come up with some strong recommendations that the Commission is just going to simply adopt. He feels the Commission should be proactive and move in a direction.

Commissioner Schneider feels that the Task Force will probably come up with some very definitive recommendations that will be brought before the Commission. Along the same lines he believes that is one of the reasons why he was voted into the Task Force group due to all the time that it does require.

Commissioner Sandretto's point is that the Commission, and in turn the City, is going to adopt what the Task Force comes up with and wants to make sure that his point is being known and heard by the Task Force. Commissioner Schneider is doing his best to take the consensus of the group that there is not a parking problem now but there is a strong belief that we will have a parking problem, given the future development.

Commissioner Beaton feels that one of the greatest answers to the parking problem would be to have one structure and a shuttle that stops at many places to allow people to ride instead of walking and still be able to shop where they choose.

Commissioner Sandretto notes that in the Spectrum report done in '98 they note the creation of a short term parking zone in high turnover areas.

Commissioner Schneider feels part of the problem with the Grand Jury's request is that since he has been part of the Parking Place Commission the job of the group has been to approve zones and not be as proactive as they are asking for.

Commissioner Beaton asks for information on education. She would like to be able to know more and be more effective to both the City and group. She would be happy to visit other Cities that have created a better moving community, which is her goal.

Commissioner Jones for the most part agrees with Commissioner Schneider in that the Task Force is probably the better venue to find and establish solutions. He would also like to echo what Commissioner Sandretto's concerns are that the Commission should be able to come across as one voice to the Task Force. He feels these discussions are important for both the group and to help Commissioner Schneider know what the stance of everyone from the Commission is to the Task Force. Commissioner Jones basically agrees that there is not a parking problem and that there are hot spots. His concerns are how to address this for the long term planning. He feels that Portland does not have high fees for parking like San Francisco due to good planning and would like to see more of a situation like Portland than San Francisco but that will take good planning. Expanding the Assessment District to include the developments on the Waterfront would exclude them from the existing off street parking. That

would probably work for the first few developments but then as the density grows the burden will come on the next developer. If there is a parking problem that will come out of all of these developments it will be felt ten years down the road and be a lot harder to reverse or fix. He does not want to put undue burden on developers but is concerned that if we bend over backwards for development we will end up with a problem that we will not be able to accommodate. The other problem will be the County Court House and if all the development comes about in the next five years then the parking problem will be felt. Commissioner Jones feels planning is the big issue and just wants to make sure that the perceived parking problem does not turn into a real one.

Commissioner Schneider gives a little detail from the Task Force that more than likely the Assessment District will be extended in every direction and that an assessment will be put in place. The Task Force is also looking at the zoning of properties and how the change in the area will change parking needs.

Staff comments that he believes everyone's comments have been heard by Commissioner Schneider to be shared with the Task Force. Staff goes on to make a couple of points; Bay Front One received approximately six or seven parking space variance. Vallintini/Ash Project/Eureka Pier received approximately sixteen in lieu fees and a variance for about thirty-six spaces, all together. They received permission to use twenty spaces at First and C Streets. They also had to pay in lieu fees for some additional parking that they are not providing. The Glen Goldan Project/Sea Port Village was proposing to meet all City required parking for both residential and business. At this time it has not been approved. Eureka Pier has been approved. Down Town businesses perceive some what of a parking problem, which is clear by demolition of old buildings to create parking for their businesses. A lot of businesses perceive that they need parking right adjacent to their business.

Commissioner Schneider feels that adding Task Force minutes to the next agenda and staff concurs with doing the opposite for the Task Force meeting with the Parking Place Commission minutes.

VII. Announcements and Reports

None.

VIII. Adjourn

Chair Jones adjourned meeting at 5:47.