

March 8, 2011

Re: Downtown Parking Meters

Dear Mayor, City Councilors, City Manager and Parking Commission:

I had the opportunity to speak before the City Council on Wednesday, February 23rd, 2011. The City Council meeting occurred one day after our meeting at Café on the Corner on February 22nd, 2011 with regard to the downtown parking meters.

Would you be so kind as to consider the following changes which I believe would be helpful with implementing this system that has been adopted by the Parking Commission and City Council?

- A. Subsidize the cost of transponders so that the cost to purchase them is minimal to the automobile owner. I believe this would help to resolve the problem of more senior people attempting to find the parking meters while retaining their footing during winter periods and would encourage parents of younger children to come downtown and use on street parking while they shop. It is difficult to keep an eye on the children especially in a high traffic area.
- B. Make transponders available to the public through perhaps 20-30 locations. I believe that many of the merchants would make them available for sale at their place of business. Many people do not know that they are available at the Chamber of Commerce and at the Police Department. Having them available and easy to purchase would be of great benefit.
- C. Presently the parking meter registers a minimum of \$.75 on a credit card transaction. It is my understanding that we could reduce this to \$.25 so that people who are going in to purchase a card at Nicole's and would only be there for 10-15 minutes, would be able to get in and out at a cost that is reasonable. Same with Café on the Corner. Presently we have tokens at the \$.25 level and it would be good if we could have credit cards available at that level as well.
- D. Allow discounted tokens to be sold at the same locations where transponders are being sold.
- E. Every tenth space being a thirty minute free space.

These days, it appears that there is an inherent distrust of how government functions at almost every level of government. Many citizens do not know who serves upon the City Council and within the Parking Commission. Many do not understand that people serving in these capacities are their next door neighbor. I would hope that these changes might allow people to understand that the parking meter system can be improved and redirected over time.

I would hope to think that within the next several weeks, we would be able to make changes that might greatly improve parking opportunities and convenience of parking in downtown Dover.

I do feel that input from within the merchant community is helpful inasmuch as they work very hard and on street parking is much of their bread and butter. In some cases, lack of street parking can severely affect people's decision to visit a store. I want to thank you for the efforts that each of you has made when tackling this issue.

I would recommend that a formal statement from the Parking Commission be printed within Foster's Daily Democrat and on the website stating how decisions were made during the gestation process through this date. It would help merchants and residents within the community come to understand the thought process experienced by the Parking Commission and the City Council as information came before them. By providing a rationale which has given rise to the meters, the commission and the City Council would help all residents understand the logic of the process. Many people may continue to disagree with the decision making process and the conclusions that resulted, however, they would know that their concerns were considered by the commission and by the City Council, that their opinions shall be considered in the future and that the original reason for the meters was to provide for more parking downtown.

It is important for everyone to know that the parking system is a process that is ever evolving. If it can be improved then it shall be improved.

I feel fortunate to have the merchants that I have in our buildings. We feel that each of our merchants adds something to the downtown core and that they have become part of the mosaic that helps to make Dover's downtown one of the most beautiful and enjoyable places to be within New England.

I know that many of our merchants might have additional ideas for your consideration. Thank you for considering these recommendations.

Very truly yours,

David K. Bamford
Dover, New Hampshire