

Panel: Free evening parking needs better signage

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — The city's Parking Advisory Committee is investigating new signage designed to inform visitors that free parking is available on Beach Avenue after 5 p.m. from Philadelphia Avenue eastward toward Poverty Beach, with

jitney service to downtown. At a Feb. 10 meeting, Committee co-chair Bonnie Cassells said the committee has previously discussed painting the meters in the evening free parking zone the same green color as the jitney.

Deputy Mayor Patricia Hendricks said Public Works Superintendent Joe Picard has proposed infor-

mational signs for the free parking outside of the Beach Avenue such as on Lafayette Street. He also proposed directional signs posted on Broadway, Ocean, Madison, Pittsburgh and Beach avenues, according to Cassells.

Committee member Bob Elwell suggested informational signs for the free parking should include a di-

rectional arrow to the zone. "A lot of our tourists that come into town, they don't know where Trenton Avenue is, they don't know where these streets are, if there was an arrow that would help direct them," he said.

Hendricks suggested a photo of the Jitney on directional signs. Elwell sug-

gested a large informational sign at Philadelphia Avenue behind the wooden bulkhead. He said the current sign at that location was confusing.

"The words 'free Jitney, park and ride,' is the message," Hendricks said.

Elwell asked if meter posts or heads were painted green to indicate free park-

ing after 5 p.m., could that be included on the informational signs.

Cassells said she would not recommend putting the Jitney phone app logo on signs since problems occurred with it last summer. The committee is suggesting informational signs measuring at least 4-feet by 6-feet in size.

Committee wants to spruce up Bank Street parking lot



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

The Municipal Buildings and Properties Advisory Committee suggested improving the appearance of the parking lot at Bank Street to make it more attractive.

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — The city's Bank Street parking lot needs some cleaning up

and sprucing up, according to the Municipal Buildings and Properties Advisory Committee.

At a Feb. 4 meeting, Chairman Bob Elwell said

the lot needed some care to make it look more respectable to the people who use the lot and live in the neighborhood.

"It just needs a good

cleanup. I think it needs some plantings in the center. I don't know if we can get a few shade trees to grow there," he said.

Elwell said installing more bumpers at the lower end of the lot could create 10 to 12 additional spaces. He said the committee was interested in working with the Parking Advisory Committee to turn the Bank Street lot into a viable parking area.

Cars could be parked in the lot for special events during the off season which would require signage to inform the public, Elwell said. It has been suggested installing bollard lights to illuminate the sidewalk along Bank Street from the mall area to the parking lot, he said.

Elwell, a former law enforcement officer, said lighting was "101 as far as stopping crime in any city, big or small."

Bank Street resident Terri Diubaldi said an area of trees at the lot acted as a

bathroom for construction workers in the area. She said there is a concrete pad behind the lot, where railroad tracks were once located, which would make a great spot for birdwatchers.

Diubaldi said she liked the idea of an area of vegetation in the middle of the lot.

"I can tell you that cedar trees are probably about the only thing that will grow,"

she said. Bank Street floods and brine water comes up from Cape Island Creek onto lawns along the street, Diubaldi said.

"Nothing will grow except for red cedars," she said.

Elwell said Public Works had plans to spread more stones on the parking lot. He said he also like to see light landscaping from Public Works.

Rehoboth

Continued from Page A1

in \$880,000 more in meter revenue from the rate change.

Rehoboth Beach uses kiosk meters and, like Cape May, accepts payment through ParkMobile. Also like Cape May, beachgoers hauling chairs, umbrellas and coolers in Rehoboth Beach want to park close to the beach, she said, adding that the location of the proposed parking garage was three blocks from the beach.

Other forms of transportation are available such as the Jolly Trolley shuttle and DART, which provides bus service from a lot about a half-mile from downtown. She said parking in the DART lot will be free this season. Discounted bus fares are available to workers in Rehoboth Beach.

Land is not available to create parking since the town is built out.

"We have more and more people coming here every year," Johnson said.

She said the city was thinking beyond the next tourist season, into the future of mobility, such as electric and self-driving vehicles. Like Cape May, large trucks delivering food to restaurants is an issue in Rehoboth Beach, tying up traffic.

Johnson said employee parking areas are nonexistent in Rehoboth Beach, so workers parking in metered spaces downtown is an issue, again like Cape May.

Parking spaces are metered in the downtown business district but for the rest of the city, parking permits are required daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. in all nonmetered spaces. Parking permits are in effect from the Friday immediately preceding Memorial Day through the second Sunday following Labor Day.

A transferable seasonal parking permit costs \$250. A weekly parking permit, eight consecutive days, is priced at \$90. A one-day parking permit costs \$20 on the weekend and \$15 on weekdays.

"If you own a property here, the city gives you two parking passes for your property and you can purchase more if you like, but also anyone can buy a parking permit and park anywhere in the city," Johnson said. "We don't have reserved parking on public space in front of your property, you can park there certainly but anyone can park there as long as they have a parking permit."

She said every street that does not have metered parking is parking by permit.

Johnson said many businesses in Rehoboth are staying open year-round and a building boom is taking place in Sussex County.

Rehoboth Beach's demographic is aging largely because the high price of homes, she said.

"We're one square mile, we're very expensive and

it's a lot of investment properties," Johnson said.

She said 80 percent of Rehoboth Beach property owners are not full-time residents. Older beach cottages are being demolished to make way for million-dollar homes, Johnson said.

One factor that sets Rehoboth Beach apart from Cape May is a lack of historic homes. She said Rehoboth Beach has one historic home, the Anna Hazzard Museum.

"We had the most demolitions in the history of Rehoboth Beach this year," Johnson said.

While jitney service is

popular in Cape May, a proposal from Jolly Trolley to run a circulating bus service that included residential areas went over like a hurricane on Labor Day weekend. The service would cost Rehoboth Beach \$1,000 per day and riders would have to pay a fare, Johnson said.

"And then they mentioned doing a narrated tour; that infuriated the people that live here," she said. "They do not want any narrated tour in front of their house, they do not want more people to visit here, they do not want the city to fund anything."

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