

**DeFuniak Springs City Council
Workshop Meeting Minutes
Council Chambers
February 24, 2025**

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Bob Campbell called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM.

Present: Mayor Bob Campbell, Mayor Pro-Tempore Todd Bierbaum (Seat 1); Councilmember Josh Sconiers (Seat 2); Councilmember Amy Heavilin (Seat 3); Councilmember Glen Harrison (Seat 4); Councilmember Anthony Vallée (Seat 5).

Absent:

Also, present were City Manager Koby Townsend, City Attorney Clay Adkinson, Interim Finance Director Daniele McDaniel, and City Clerk Rafael Ali.

2. COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY (CRA) PARKING STUDY DISCUSSION

John Forster with Fishbeck presented to the council.

He stated that they don't want parking meters.

He also stated that this is part of the success of downtown.

He mentioned that there were 108 responses to a survey.

Mr. Forster stated that 98% of people drive to downtown.

Mr. Forster also noted that ADA parking had come up as a concern.

Mr. Forster mentioned that the information has been input into ArcGIS.

Mr. Forster stated that there are 88 ADA spots.

He also mentioned that parking is limited to public on-street parking.

Mr. Forster stated that red equals 95% occupancy.

He stated that there is not a parking shortage downtown.

He added that employees and patrons are the ones parking downtown.

Mr. Forster stated that employees need predictable parking.

He mentioned that he wants to move away from parking tickets.

Mr. Forster also stated that it's difficult to differentiate between customers and employees.

He noted that there is strong growth within the county.

Mr. Forster mentioned that more buildings downtown can be filled.

Mr. Forster expressed that they don't want the hometown feel to be lost.

He mentioned that, at some point, the city would want to build a municipal parking lot.

Mr. Forster stated that parking demand should be assessed regularly.

He added that without data, it's difficult to make informed decisions.

He provided some options to solve the parking issue.

Mr. Forster explained that a patron-only sign could be used.

He discussed the zoning policy.

Mr. Forster also mentioned ways to encourage people to walk or ride bikes downtown.

He clarified that he is not recommending parking meters or pay-to-park systems.

Mr. Forster recommended forming a parking workgroup to gather information on parking and assess what is working. He suggested keeping it simple.

Mr. Forster also recommended tracking the ADA parking policy.

He stated that there should be an unloading parking space.

Mr. Forster recommended adding bike parking.

He mentioned that there is potential for parking north of 90.

Mr. Forster reiterated the importance of keeping things simple.

He asked, "What does success look like?" He defined it as 75% - 85% parking occupancy per block.

He also stated that it is important to plan ahead.

The mayor asked how much parking could fit on 12th Street.

Mr. Forster responded that you would need 65 feet to implement angled parking.

Mr. Bierbaum suggested creating a grassy area near Firestone parking.

Mr. Bierbaum stated that parking could be added in front of Fisher's Pharmacy.

Mr. Adkinson mentioned that parking could be added between 4th and 2nd Streets.

Mr. Forster explained that angled spaces take up more space.

He stated that FDOT requires a 3-foot buffer to allow people space to get out of their cars.

Mrs. Heavilin asked who owns the car parking lot in front of the gym.

Mr. Bierbaum answered that the gym owns it.

Mr. Bierbaum asked for clarification on the amount of public versus private parking.

Mr. Forster provided clarification.

He also stated that when people want to be somewhere, they will find parking.

Mr. Harrison asked about the situation on 7th and 8th Streets during peak times.

Mr. Forster replied that parking occupancy is between 60% and 90%, depending on the time.

He noted that there is always a parking space to find.

Mr. Forster mentioned that having a mix of businesses is beneficial.

He also mentioned having a heat map showing how busy the area is.

Mrs. Heavilin asked if he could share the heat map. _____

Mr. Ervin stated that it is available on the website.

Mr. Forster stated that a brewery would make downtown busier.

Mayor Campbell thanked Mr. Forster for attending.

Mr. Townsend asked the council who they would like to designate as the liaison.

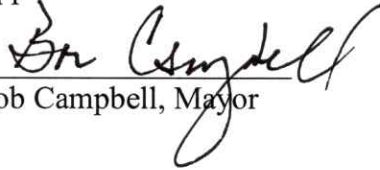
Mr. Sconiers suggested having a workshop.

Mr. Ervin stated that they will be coming back to the council with the full study.

4. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting Adjourned 5:00 PM.

Approved:


Bob Campbell, Mayor

ATTEST:



Minutes taken by Rafael Ali
City Clerk
Proper notice having been duly given

