CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CBDAC)

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, May 8, 2025, 8:30 – 10:00 a.m.
Village Hall, Courtroom -- in person

Members Present: Pamela Peron (Village Council liaison), Steve DelPercio (Chair), Stacey Tsapatsaris (Vice Chair), David Rosen (CSAC liaison), Don Axelband (business owner), Glenn Carlough (business owner), Police   Chief Lyons, Niena Jerdee (Guild liaison), Miranda Soffian

Speakers: Bob Rooney, Village CFO, Ana Crysthanopoulos, ParkMobile Account Manager

Village Staff Present: Keith Kazmark, Village Manager, Heather Mailander, Village Clerk, Captain Glenn Ender, Officer Ray Torino, Carol Bialkowski, Communications Director

Guests: Gary Kolesaire, Tom Hillmann, Nina Milanos, Joan Groome, Paul Vagianos, Jeff LNU

Administration: Approved CBDAC Meeting Minutes for April 10, 2025.

DISCUSSION POINTS

1. Parking Budget and Revenue Structure

The parking budget is comprised of two funds: (1) a utility/operating fund for the annual budget, and (2) a capital fund for the structure of the garage, financing, and other capital expenses.

There is a receivable due from the capital fund to the operating fund.

All collected parking revenue, including from ParkMobile (PM), comes to the Village. PM charges its fees directly to the consumer. E.g., a "Click and Park" transaction of $14, ParkMobile receives $2, and the Village receives $12.

Heartland is the merchant service account for kiosk credit card transactions. When a user pays with a credit card at a kiosk, the money is transferred to Heartland, which then remits it to the Village after deducting fees.

Currently, ParkMobile does not own the kiosks. The kiosks accept cash or credit cards directly. Daily passes are available only through the Village's website.

2. Parking Data and Permit Revenue

A question was raised regarding the delta in premium permit revenue between non-residents (204 premium permits for $55k) and residents (206 permits for $214K). There is a similar discrepancy between the non-premium permits (both resident and non-residents sold 62 but there's a large income difference). Bob Rooney will investigate.

The data show zero ParkMobile usage in certain zones, such as Walnut Street. This was strange because PM is available in all zones. Bob Rooney will investigate.

3. ParkMobile (PM) Operations and Agreement

ParkMobile transaction fees for users are:

$0.30 per transaction for users with a prepaid wallet account.

$0.50 per transaction for users who pay per transaction without a wallet.

The Village's agreement with ParkMobile runs until 2026, with an option to renew to 2027.

Fines do not go to the parking fund; per state law, they go through the municipal court, which then remits the Village's share.

4. Parking Experience and Enforcement

An attendee raised concerns that the ticketing situation is a significant issue that causes people to choose other towns over Ridgewood. A grace period on tickets was suggested. Tom noted that the term "parking enforcement" is detrimental and requested it be removed from the side of vehicles.

Chief Lyons stated that officers assigned to parking are used for parking-related duties about 95% of the time, which includes handling parking complaints and occasionally assisting with tasks like school crossing or putting up temporary no-parking signs. The purpose of flashing lights on vehicles is to be visible and not to be "sneaking up" on people, but this can be changed if it is found to be off-putting. The system can see how long a meter has been expired, and longer grace periods can be implemented, though they can be harder to enact.

5. Kiosk and Technology Modernization

An attendee stated that the current kiosks are great but can be difficult for older people to use.

The Village has a $57,000 surplus, so the Village did not implement a $0.25 rate increase that Walker Associates had recommended.

There is a plan to engage the Walker study consultants again to assess the current situation and plan for the replacement of approximately 100 kiosks with more modern ones. The current "Cale" kiosks cannot be updated. The assessment will also include a review of signage to help people better navigate to the garage and understand street directions (one-way vs. two-way). A proposal will be put through to the Village Council for approval in the next few months.

As of the new year, ParkMobile has acquired Flowbird. The Village is in touch with a Flowbird representative about their product roadmap, which includes data aggregation. Cale and Flowbird systems are considered interchangeable.

6. ParkMobile Features and Retailer Support

The ParkMobile account manager described common themes in towns like Ridgewood, including structuring street parking in a way to increase turnover, for foot traffic, and reallocating parking to less desirable areas like a garage.

PM is focused on providing more visibility through dynamic data and is exploring dynamic pricing.

To better support dining and retail, PM is rolling out new technology in the app this summer, specifically validation codes.

A driver starts a parking session, visits a store or restaurant, and receives a discount code (e.g., on a receipt). The user inputs the code into the app while the session is live to receive a discount or free parking.

PM would still collect its $0.30 transaction fee. The cost of the discounted parking is typically taken on by the store/restaurant owner, though sometimes the municipality covers it. This feature would need to be zone-related to drive people to the garage.

A Chamber representative noted that it would be hard to ask stores to pay for the parking validations and that the code system sounds confusing.

Another option discussed was a reservation product, but it is difficult to implement for on-street parking.

Regarding a 15-minute quick stop option, the PM representative noted that in Norwalk, CT, the recommendation was to offer 15 minutes of free parking through the kiosks, as there isn't a workaround for the PM transaction fee unless Ridgewood takes on the cost.

7. Education, Outreach, and Accessibility

Carol Bialkowski raised the issue of senior residents being frustrated with both kiosks and the app and asked for strategies to educate them.

The ParkMobile account manager stated she would be happy to inspect the area's signage. PM rolled out new, eye-tracking-tested signage in the summer of 2024 to ensure clarity.

Other educational opportunities include leveraging in-app messaging and distributing physical materials like wallet cards with QR codes.

Another attendee asked if senior-specific parking stickers could be implemented.

Jeanne suggested conducting info sessions for employees of local businesses to explain how parking on the street affects the businesses they work for.

A suggestion was made to have them park in the Graydon lot and provide a Jitney ride, potentially with advertising opportunities on a golf cart.

The council discussed revisiting a jitney service, noting a field trip to Maplewood and a current survey on a senior bus.

Pam Perron suggested holding info sessions for seniors at locations like HILT, senior organizations, and the library, and using the "Ridgewood Talks" podcast to explain parking intricacies.

Gary noted that education needs to extend beyond Ridgewood residents to all visitors (i.e. inclusive of non-residents).

Joan Groome offered to take the ParkMobile representative to meet with local shop owners to understand their issues firsthand.

8. On-Street vs. Employee and Permit Parking

Tom asked whether there are maximums for out-of-town permits; there are not.

It was noted that residents only receive a $100 break on permits and that perhaps there should be a cap on non-resident permits. It was stated that shifting employees off the street may be more valuable than selling non-resident permits.

An attendee suggested that the garage should be first-come, first-serve, and employees should not be directed to park on the garage roof.

A recommendation was made to go back to a two-hour limit on the street to increase turnover, as a three-hour limit allows employees to move their cars only once during a shift.

A question was raised as to why motorcycle parking is so expensive, and a suggestion was made that it should be half-price.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

The current Cale parking kiosks have reached end of life; therefore, the Village acknowledged that it must replace them. Senior citizens have difficulty using the kiosks and the ParkMobile app.

Employee parking on downtown streets is a primary obstacle to creating turnover for retail customers. Multiple strategies are being considered to shift employees to off-street lots.

Better data and transparency are needed from ParkMobile to understand revenue and usage patterns fully.

New technologies, such as validation codes for retailer-funded discounts and dynamic pricing, present opportunities to manage parking demand but also raise concerns about complexity and cost allocation.

Widespread education and multi-channel communication (signage, info sessions, podcasts) are critical for the success of any new parking initiatives and must target both residents and visitors.

ACTION ITEMS

Gather data to provide more transparency on the total revenue ParkMobile generates from the Village. Owner: ParkMobile account manager.

Follow up on the revenue discrepancy between premium non-resident permits ($214k) and resident permits ($55k). Owner: Bob Rooney

Verify why the parking data shows zeros for ParkMobile usage in certain zones, such as Walnut Street. Owner: Bob Rooney

Initiate the process to have the Walker consultants return to assess parking, recommend kiosk replacements, and review signage. This will be put through to the council for approval. Owner: Pam and Bob

Gather data on shopper capacity and parking utilization on a Thursday and Saturday at 2:00 PM. Owner: Captain Glenn Ender

Inspect the downtown area to assess the clarity and effectiveness of current parking signage. Owner: ParkMobile account manager

Joan will invite Ana to meet with local shop owners to hear their concerns directly. Owner: Joan Groome

Next meeting June 12, 2025 in person.

Respectfully submitted,

Miranda Soffian