

# Teaming up to tackle parking issues

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Why is parking such a hot topic? Why is it so complicated? Why don't we just get rid of the meters? Why don't we just build another parking lot? Why don't we get rid of the two-hour parking or at least enforce it? Where do employees park? So many questions, not enough answers, but MSG has stepped up to create a team approach and find ways to improve the situation.

On Aug. 24, 21 people attended the second Main Street Gettysburg (MSG) Community Economic Development Advisory Committee (CEDAC) and discussed the complicated issues surrounding efficient and effective parking in the downtown area of Gettysburg. MSG has teamed up with the borough staff in working with the business community in finding cost effective resolutions to their business needs.

Recognizing the complexity of the topic of parking, MSG offered a seven-step problem solving model to create a framework for the discussion and the group focused on the first steps; clearly defining and analyzing the problem. MSG had gathered some initial research from other Pennsylvania communities. In addition, Charles Gable pulled together some important information about the impact of the parking revenues and expenses that impact each tax payer in the borough. Following is some interesting information we should all consider:

- \* There are 1049 parking spaces in the borough
- \* Parking rates: Race Horse Alley Garage (356 spaces): \$.75/hour, \$10/day, \$60/month; street meters (693 spaces): \$1 per hour, and long term meters \$1/hour.
- \* Gross revenues for meters, fees and permits: \$936,300
- \* Expenses: Includes all aspects of maintenance \$ 236,043
- \* Net revenue: \$700,257
- \* Parking revenue accounts for 20 percent of all borough revenues, second only to real estate taxes

If parking was eliminated, taxes would need to be raised 1.3848 mills which translates to \$138.48 for every \$100,000 of assessed value. In relation to five other towns in the region, \$1 per hour is average. That said, most of these towns are not tourist towns like Gettysburg.

We do not know the percentage of revenues that are tourist generated, but it would be a significant loss and additional financial burden on the community if we did not have the tourists paying towards parking.

More signage is needed to direct people to parking areas.

Gable presented an overlay of the Walmart parking lot over Lincoln Square and it illustrates that the Race Horse Alley parking garage is within the same distance from Lincoln Square as the geographic parking area of Walmart.

Other considerations specific to Gettysburg are: limited space due to being surrounded by the battlefield, limited height restrictions when considering parking garages, seasonal tourism, limited funds, restrictive ordinances, iconic historic town, and challenges in serving a wide scope of patrons, visitors, and residents.

Tammy Myers, a business owner who attended said, "I am astounded to learn the amount of revenues that the borough receives from parking, especially compared to parking tickets. It gives me a different perspective." Most of the folks in the meeting felt the same way. More work has to be done and MSG will continue to provide the venue and back up support in helping the borough find new ways and funds to improve the wide variety of parking challenges.

Deb Adamik is the president of Main Street Gettysburg.