

Walter M. Gardner, Jr.
Mayor

John Freeman
Administrator

TOWN OF WARRENTON
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August 9, 2010 Public Hearing on Proposed Parking Ordinance Changes

The August 9, 2010 Public Hearing was held at the Warrenton Rural Fire Department on South Main Street.

Those present were:

Mayor Walter M. Gardner, Jr.	John Freeman, Town Administrator
Commissioner and Mayor Pro Tem Woody King	
Commissioner Jules Banzet	Public Works Director Bill Perkinson
Commissioner John Blalock	Police Chief John Younts
Commissioner Audrey Tippett	Jennifer Harris, Warren Record
Commissioner Mary Hunter	

Absent: Commissioner Robert Davie
Commissioner John Mooring

Mayor Gardner called the Public Hearing to order at 6:30pm. He then announced that the purpose of the Hearing was to hear public comments specifically about the elimination of parking on the block of West Franklin between South Main and Front Streets and about limiting the parking on East Market Street. Then public comment would be welcome on parking issues in general. First he asked if there were any comments about the West Franklin Street proposal; there were none. Then he asked if there were any comments about the proposal to limit parking to 15 minutes on East Market Street at the request of BB&T Bank; again, there were none. He then invited those who had signed up to make their general comments.

1. Cathy Gardner voiced her opposition to additional limitations such as that proposed for East Market Street. She said the need was reduced with the closing of the drug business of Hunter Drug (still open as a gift shop) and that BB&T customers in a hurry could use their drive-through. She said that the BB&T parking lot is already utilized by its customers.
2. Bill Miller said that at least once or twice a month BB&T is very busy and there is a problem getting in and out.
3. Barbara Holtzman said that on August 2 she was a "victim" of the Town of Warrenton when she parked next to the Tax Office on courthouse square to do research in the courthouse. She said there were no time limits indicated on the handicapped space and there were not enough signs. She also said that the \$30 fine was "outrageous." She said merchants should not be worried about their customers finding parking places because there was only one other car parked on the street and plenty of available spaces. She said there will be less and less customers as a result of enforcement.
4. Naomi Allen said she had also parked in a handicapped space at the courthouse and felt she was unfairly penalized by the Town's lack of signs. She said the Town looks bare and will get worse. She said some things take longer than 2 hours. Commissioner Banzet asked Chief Younts if the 2 hour limit as applied to handicapped

spaces was a state statute and Younts answered that it was if the handicapped spaces were in a district of time limited parking. This is the case in downtown Warrenton as the entire district is limited to 2 hours.

5. Jana Miller introduced herself as the Executive Director of the Warren County Chamber of Commerce, and said as such she was here to preserve commerce. She said she had received many complaints about visitors getting tickets and that there was no way to extend their time. She said she had received an email from a Norlina commissioner who said he liked parking enforcement in Warrenton as it worked to Norlina's advantage. She said two painters in the building occupied by Domestic Violence got tickets while working, erasing their pay for the day. She said that counseling sessions at Triumph Health care often take more than two hours. She said she had received emails from tourists who said they would not return to Warrenton. She said parking enforcement was doing a good job of getting rid of business.

6. Linda Foster introduced herself as owner of Touched by an Angel beauty shop and said quite a few of her clients had received tickets, and that she had addressed her concerns to the mayor, town administrator and police chief (who took 4 days to reach). She said she had not received notice of the enforcement. She said the BOC had dismissed tickets received by the other beauty shop but did not dismiss hers, and it was not fair to treat businesses differently. She said permit devised by the Chief was difficult to use and listed a complicated series of phone calls about reporting the time to put on the permit, starting with the call being transferred to the sheriff's department because no one answered at the police department. She said she could be sued for not treating her customers' hair properly while having to manage the permits. She said the result of parking enforcement was that there were no cars on the street. She complained about the neighboring business causing parking problems (?).

7. Gwendolyn White supported Foster's comments, saying she was one of those who got a ticket. She said she usually goes on Saturday and did not expect or know about enforcement on weekdays. She said she had called the police department and was somewhat confused about comments relating to Southern City Grill customers needing parking spaces.

8. Richard Hunter recommended that the Board immediately suspend vigorous enforcement. He did not see parking as a problem on Main Street although he said merchants parking on the street had always been a problem. He said that the \$30 fine was excessive and discouraged visitors. And he said that time limited parking on courthouse square was a problem on court days because defendants did not receive notices about parking in the unlimited lot behind the county manager's office and their business often took more than 2 hours. He requested a voucher that he could give to those in such a situation (that could allow their tickets to be voided).

9. David Gardner, owner of the Furniture Exchange, recounted that a couple had spent three hours in his store deciding on a large furniture purchase, and were upset to find that they had been ticketed. He said that if he had interrupted their visit to ask them to move their car he would have lost a major sale. He asked that vigorous enforcement be ceased immediately.

10. Esther Hunt said that, on behalf of businesses, the Town should "get rid of" parking enforcement. She said Warrenton is already pitiful. She said the ticket she had received while at Touched by an Angel was not fair. She said she pays taxes. She said she might relocate.

11. Eddie Serls, owner of Warrenton Supply, said parking enforcement was the most positive thing that had happened for his business. Although there might be bugs to work out it was good for his business as his customers now could find parking spaces. He said it would not be fair to him not to enforce parking. He did say that he felt \$30 was excessive for a parking fine. He suggested signs to longer term public parking as an alternative, and suggested that Triumph Health Ctell their clients where to park when appointments are made.

12. Cathy Gardner spoke again to voice her opinion that all parking signs except handicapped should be removed, and there had been no problems for her visitors until now. She also said she did not believe that

handicapped parking was limited to match the surrounding district, and in any case said there should not be any limits at all.

There being no further comments Mayor Gardner thanked those who had addressed the Board and closed the Public Hearing at 7:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,

John Freeman
Town Administrator