

**MINUTES OF PUBLIC HEARING ON AN ORDINANCE AMENDING
CHAPTER 168, ARTICLE IV, SECTION 168-138A(2) OF THE TOWN CODE OF
ORDINANCES BY INCREASING THE PENALTIES FOR CERTAIN SPECIFIC
PARKING VIOLATIONS**

May 9, 2000

Council Chambers

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President Rob Bouvier called the hearing to order at 7:24 p.m.

Present were Councilors Holly Abery-Wetstone, Rob Bouvier, Kevin Connors, Carl Donatelli, Liz Gillette, Andrew Schoolnik, John Shulansky and Al Turco. Councilors Jim O'Brien and Al Turco were absent.

President Bouvier: Mr. Feldman.

Mr. Feldman: Mr. Mayor, again this is a public hearing on an ordinance that would adjust penalties for parking. The last time this was done I believe was in 1989. I just want to point out to you that while the fee is adjusted from \$10.00 to \$14.00 per violation as described in the ordinance, there is an additional \$2.00 administrative charge tacked on to that and that \$2.00 actually helps defray the cost of our own, if you will, parking court. We have a hearing officer that listens to appeals and deals with the administrative apparatus needed to basically carry out a program such as this so it jumps, the fine itself, the penalty is \$10.00 to \$14.00. There is a \$2.00 fee that is prescribed by ordinance as well so a parking ticket in West Hartford would be \$16.00. Again, it would include that \$2.00 fee.

President Bouvier: Thank you, Mr. Feldman. Any questions? Mr. Connors.

Vice President Connors: Mr. Mayor, through you, Mr. Feldman, I had one comment on this from someone and after we got through the fact that the speed limit monitor did not have anything to do with the parking meters because I think somebody got confused because they were in the same article. They thought that maybe should we be changing the cost of parking fines when we still have so many things we need to do with parking in town and I think they pointed the Center. I don't know if those two are related. I said that I would bring them up.

President Bouvier: Mr. Feldman.

Mr. Feldman: Mr. Mayor, Mr. Connors, it is an interesting point and I guess I would argue the fact that meters, the on-street meters should be used for short term parking, people that are there for perhaps an hour or half hour or forty five minutes. Anything longer we would encourage people to use the off-street lots where they could park there and not worry about parking tickets. Trust me when I tell you that there is no joy in West Hartford when we issue parking tickets. It is something that we would prefer not to do but I think given the nature of commercial business, particularly in West Hartford Center, we have to encourage people to not violate or misuse those parking meters again intended for short term, limited stay parking. The only way we have to do that is to issue tickets. It is perhaps a sign of the times that a lot of people just discount the \$10.00 ticket and if you look at some of the surrounding towns we were very surprised to see that some of the surrounding towns are now charging upwards of \$25.00 for a parking ticket. I'm not suggesting that we go there but it also does I think underscore the importance that municipalities are placing on asking

people to comply with town ordinances and for those that choose not to we are going to collect \$16.00 from them.

Vice President Connors: So, really the cost of the ticket really doesn't have much to do with availability.

Mr. Feldman: It has nothing to do with availability, well, in a way it does because what we try to do is have that turn over.

Vice President Connors: Okay, that is good. Thank you.

President Bouvier: Ms. Wetstone.

Councilor Abery-Wetstone: Through you, Mr. Mayor, you touched on the fines in other surrounding communities is the \$16.00 in range with the average in our surrounding towns? I know Hartford is \$15.00 but I'm thinking of somewhere else.

Mr. Feldman: Actually, Mr. Mayor, CRCOG recently did a very extensive and a very thorough survey of all municipalities as far as special revenues such as these and if I remember right, I think Hartford is closer to \$25.00 and again I'm not suggesting that that we even go near there but for those municipalities that have some type of parking tickets or parking penalties like we do, we are right here I believe at the mean, at around \$15.00 or so dollars, \$14.00 or \$15.00.

Councilor Abery-Wetstone: Thank you.

President Bouvier: Mr. Shulansky.

Councilor Shulansky: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. Mr. Feldman, through you, Mr. Mayor, do you, based upon our historic experience with parking tickets, could you discuss how the change in the projected revenues relates to the budget that we passed two weeks ago?

President Bouvier: Mr. Feldman.

Mr. Feldman: Sure, good point. Mr. Mayor, Mr. Shulansky, a-part of the overall budget that you adopted a couple of Tuesdays ago did anticipate additional fees and part of that was the additional fees generated by these parking revenue changes. I believe these changes could, based upon the number of tickets that are written and revenues collected could generate I think it is an additional \$70,000. It is not a dramatic amount of money although we all would like to have that certainly in our checking accounts but given our overall \$140 million budget \$70,000 is not a make or break item but it does generate additional revenue.

Councilor Shulansky: So if you will allow me, Mr. Mayor, this increase is consistent with the policy actions that were anticipated in our budget passage last meeting.

President Bouvier: Mr. Feldman.

Mr. Feldman: Mr. Mayor, Mr. Shulansky, that is correct.

Councilor Shulansky: Thank you.

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President Bouvier: Any other questions or comments at this time? If not, we will close the public hearing.

The hearing adjourned at 7:29 p.m.

Norma W. Cronin
Town Clerk/Council Clerk