

**MINUTES - SPECIAL MEETING
BOONE TOWN COUNCIL
AUGUST 10, 2006**

A special meeting of the Boone Town Council was called to order at 7:00 p.m., Thursday, August 10, 2006, in the Council Chambers, 1500 Blowing Rock Road. Mayor Loretta Clawson presided. Council members present were Bunk Spann, Dempsey Wilcox, Lynne Mason, Janet Pepin, and Rennie Brantz. Staff members present were Greg Young-Town Manager, Kimberly Tester-Deputy Town Clerk, and Blake Brown-Public Works Director. Town Attorney Sam Furgiuele was also present.

The purpose of this meeting was to receive public comment regarding the use of wheel-lock devices in private parking lots throughout the town of Boone.

DISCUSSION OF PARKING CONTROL DEVICES

Mayor Clawson opened the public hearing and invited Mike Hill, owner of Purveyors of Art & Design shop, to speak. Mr. Hill read into the record a prepared statement (**permanently on file**) regarding the practice of booting and other issues pertaining to downtown Boone including lack of public parking and the state of disrepair of the street infrastructure. Mr. Hill also presented a letter (**permanently on file**) from Ms. Eloise Pope addressing these particular issues. In response to a statement from Mr. Hill about the lack of public parking, Council member Wilcox reiterated that there is no shortage of public parking spaces, especially along Queen Street, but that many people do not like the fact that they cannot park in front of a particular business. He explained that the Town of Boone has spent approximately two million dollars to provide public parking lots in the downtown area. Mr. Hill suggested the use of parking shuttles, decreased parking limit time, and an increase in parking fines as possible methods of improving the parking situation.

Roger Wright, a local businessman, stated that there are not enough parking spaces along the west end of King Street. He suggested that a parking study be performed to determine the specific problem and to offer solutions on remedying the situation.

Mike Dicker, an employee of Café Portofino, explained that he, indirectly, had been a victim of booting. He stated the main problem with booting vehicles is the way it is being handled. Mr. Dicker suggested three main areas which need to be addressed: an appeal process for violators, cooperation between private lot owners to allow parking after hours, and the aggressive behavior of wheel-lock company employees. Mr. Dicker questioned if the lot between Angelica's Restaurant and Capone's Pizza could be bought by the town and used for parking space.

Christy Bunn, owner of the Mellow Mushroom Restaurant, stated that proper signage is needed to warn visitors about booting in private lots. She stated that she has received several complaints about booting vehicles in her restaurant parking lot.

Betty Hamner, speaking on behalf of the Wheel-Lock Review Committee, presented a report to the Council concerning the results of examining the signage at several private parking lots in which wheel-lock devices are used (**permanently on file**). She introduced each member of the committee including: Eleanor Cook, Daniel Cook, Roland Hamner, Rich Jacobs, and Jon Tate. In regard to the most problematic lots, she stated that Mr. Tate has instituted the following practices: allowing more time for persons visiting the lot to correct their parking choice (10-30 min.), instituting an appeal process, and installing more signage in private parking lots.

Ms. Hamner listed the following committee recommendations for consideration by the Town Council:

1. Private lots should install consistent, visible, and plentiful signage that is clear and easy to read. All signs need to conform to the Town sign ordinance. Signs that provide out-of-date or erroneous information should be replaced or removed.
2. Private lot owners should work together, with mediation if necessary, to resolve personal conflicts so that innocent visitors are not victims of their disputes.
3. The Town should invest in "Public Parking ahead" types of signs so that visitors can be led to the public parking long before they actually enter the downtown area. These signs

should be along Highways 421 and 321 East as well as on Rivers Street from Poplar Grove Road.

4. As a long-term idea, the Town should investigate developing a multi-level parking complex on the flat lot currently operated as paid parking on King Street.
5. The Town should develop a “Welcome to Boone” parking map to be published in local newspapers and tourist guides. This map would delineate where public and private parking lots are located. It should be submitted to the ASU newspaper and be posted on the Chamber of Commerce and other appropriate websites.
6. The Town of Boone should consider putting information about the parking situation on its website outlining the situation and what is happening to resolve the problems.

The committee concluded that with better and more visible signage posted in private lots, the need for booting and towing vehicles should decrease. Members further stated that an outright ban on parking control devices would not solve all issues, but taking steps to limit the need for these devices would be a better solution. Ms. Hamner submitted a packet for information (**permanently on file**) for the Council which includes letters from several business owners concerning booting and their relationship with Lot Management Solutions and a copy of the updated information provided on the parking fee receipt.

Leonard Hay, a new resident of Boone, asked why there are no multi-level parking decks in Boone. The Council informed Mr. Hay of the lack of funds for developing such a complex.

Marie Montemurno, a massage therapist with an office in the Wilcox Emporium, stated that she would prefer the use of parking control devices instead of towing cars.

Jessie Simpson, a new resident of Boone, stated his car has been booted. He agreed that area parking maps would be beneficial.

Jon Tate, owner of Lot Management Solutions, informed the Council that he is considering new and better signage for each lot he manages; however, he inquired as to who would be responsible for checking the signage to ensure that it adheres to the ordinance regulations. Council agreed that there should be a designated person, perhaps from the Police Department, to monitor the signage. Mr. Tate also recommended that ordinance changes be made to recognize the different parking situations in residential and commercial parking lots. He further informed the Council that he has voluntarily suspended the use of parking control devices in the three most problematic parking lots (the Marketplace lot, the Wilcox Emporium lot, and the Mellow Mushroom lot) until signage and other issues are in compliance with the Town’s guidelines.

The Council agreed with the need for better signage in private lots. Furthermore, the Council agreed that the issue requires some type of resolution so that there will not be such a negative attitude about visiting downtown Boone.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further discussion, Mayor Clawson adjourned the meeting at 9:14 p.m.

Deputy Town Clerk		Mayor