

1/8/2014
Fulton Neighborhood Association
Red Cow/CPA 24 Discussion

FNA President Jim Tincher and Council Member Linea Palmisano led a discussion about parking concerns and possible solutions around Red Cow Restaurant and the resulting Critical Parking Area 24. Red Cow owner Luke Shimp, City of Minneapolis Traffic & Parking Services Director John Wertjes and approximately 40 residents and FNA Board members were also present.

Jim gave a brief review of the CPA 24 history. The CPA was requested in spring 2013, studied and processed over the summer and fall, then approved by the Minneapolis City Council in November 2013. The CPA prohibits parking from 4 p.m. – 10 p.m. daily on the west side of the 4900 block of Chowen Ave S and both sides of the 4900 block of Drew Ave S. On Dec. 23, a judge granted a Temporary Restraining Order prohibiting the CPA and the signs were covered.

Jim proposed that the neighborhood residents and Red Cow come up with some sort of a compromise. If this can be done, Council Member Palmisano could take that compromise to the City Council and ask it to be ratified. If the court case continues, someone is going to lose. A compromise would be a situation acceptable to all.

Several questions were asked prior to the discussion:

Q: On what grounds did the judge grant the TRO?

A: Flaws in the parking study.

Q: Have there been previous studies in the area:

A: Public Works studies the area throughout the summer; unsure about any previous or later studies. The restaurant meets zoning code for the number of required parking stalls (7) as it has ten stalls.

Q: If some sort of compromise is reached, do the neighbors have to agree?

A: Unsure on this. Likely the same rate of agreement (75%) as required for the CPA request would be necessary. The original request was done by two separate petitions, one for each block.

Discussion:

* Can we negotiate parking with the Methodist Church and The Waters (once it opens)? Luke stated that he has previously discussed this with the Methodist church and they were unreceptive. He will contact them again. In the meantime, he has been in discussions with Lake Harriet Christian Church to use their parking lot. If approved, Red Cow can offer valet service from 5-10 p.m. Thurs – Sat. (possibly Sunday?).

* Concern was expressed about the valet traffic in and out of the church parking lots, especially if the Methodist Church is used. Their parking lot entrance is directly across the street from a private drive.

* The residents on Chowen Ave already have to put up with excessive traffic and parking issues once a week at the Farmers Market during the market season. They are not willing to compromise the ban on permitted parking on the west side of their block. They had already agreed to not ask for a ban on both sides of the street.

* A resident of the 4900 block of Drew proposed changing the restrictions to be no parking 10 a.m. – 10 p.m. daily on the east side of the block and to open up the west side of the block to 2 hour parking. City enforcement of the restrictions would be key to the success of this proposal.

*Compromise needs to come out of a comprehensive Small Area Plan that addresses the overall Business District and future uses. (**NOTE:** a SAP is being considered for 50th St between France and Lyndale Aves).

* The ban will just (and already has) shift the problem to other blocks and neighbors. Council Member Palmisano has already expressed this concern to Public Works and the City Attorney. She does not want to alleviate the problem in one area just to create it in another.

* A more professional look at the problem is necessary. The CPA was a reaction by the affected neighbors that has now caused a new problem. Parking has now shifted to south of 50th St and this causes more pedestrian and safety issues as they have to cross a very busy County Road. There is a traffic light at 50th & Chowen, but not at 50th & Drew.

* Previous restaurants near the Red Cow location (Pearson's, Pig & Fiddle) has had adequate parking. Valet service is a good start, but will not fix the problem. The City needs to vigorously defend against the lawsuit and follow its own processes that it has put in place.

* Parking on 49th St. is now full as the problem has shifted.

* Concern about additional parking pressures once The Waters opens was also expressed. Has the City calculated enough spaces for them? Council Member Palmisano noted that we may need to look at the Zoning Code and determine if it is adequate for the way we drive and transit TODAY.

*It would take a long time to change the Zoning Code (possibly years). Is there something we can do now?

* A resident of Drew notes a sense from the Chowen Ave residents that they are not willing to compromise as they only have one side of the street designated for permit parking. She does note a sense of compromise from the Drew Ave residents and is open to further suggestions.

* We need a universal approach and need to work together for the WHOLE area.

* A resident of 50th & Drew (possibly Ewing?) noted that they bought their homes knowing it was near a commercial area and need to expect some of these parking pressures. It is the trade-off for living in a much desired, trendy area.

*Council Member Palmisano noted that the CPA concept is not something we can or even should be replicating in response. It is not a tool we should be using over and over again. A larger plan would be more effective.

* Jim requested that representatives from the affected blocks and surrounding blocks meet again on 1/9 to continue the conversation and try to draft a compromise.