

Report of the Pay Display Working Group – June 6, 2006.

The Pay/Display Working Group convened at the request of the Cape Elizabeth Town Council. Three town councilors, three members of the Fort Williams Advisory Commission and two members of the public were members of the committee. The committee met three times in May. We would like to especially thank the Town Manager, Michael McGovern, the Public Works Director, Bob Malley, and Police Chief Neil Williams, for their generous and able assistance in our deliberations.

We were asked by the Council to develop a specific proposal to implement a “Pay – Display” parking system within the Park. A pay display system consists of one or more centrally located solar powered parking meters. After parking your car you walk to the nearest meter and insert payment. Meters accept cash, credit and debit cards. The machine will print out a dated receipt, which you would then put on the inside of your vehicle’s window. Some machines will print out a 2-part receipt (Smart Meter, among others, has this technology). The other half of the receipt could be used for discounts at the gift shop, or even a free museum admission. Some have suggested that it could also be used for paid advertising, such as one finds on their Hannaford receipts.

Although not common in Maine (Boothbay Harbor does use this technology), pay display technology is a proven and successful technology that has been used since at least 1974. Many cities including, New York, Chicago, Miami, Charleston, Aspen, New Orleans, Ft. Myers, Portland OR, and Seattle, use the pay display system. It is commonly used all across Europe. Many cities have included specific performance standards in their bid specifications. We do not have to re-create the wheel.

The benefits are numerous. First, it is convenient to the public who will have a number of payment options. Second, a driver may move from lot to lot on the same receipt. Third, fewer meters take up less space, and there is less maintenance. The meters can be removed and installed easily each fall and spring.

Our recommendations for implementation are as follows:

1. Cape Elizabeth residents, who have funded the park since 1964 through their property taxes (now approximately \$50/household), should not be required to pay for parking. A valid transfer station sticker will serve as a Ft. Williams parking decal. Residents who do not use the transfer station may obtain a transfer station sticker to use for park parking. The town administration should recommend a dating system for the decals.
2. Non-residents should be charged \$5.00/day to park, and may purchase a season pass, through the same pay/display meter, for \$25.00/year. These charges compare very favorably to that charged by other towns: Scarborough charges \$10/day and \$60.00/season; Freeport charges \$2.00/per person and \$40.00/season vehicle pass. State parks charge \$4.50/per person per day and \$60.00/vehicle for the season. We recommend no charge for pedestrians and cyclists.

3. The busses and trolleys should be charged \$20/day, and \$100.00/season. We recommend that the Town notify local bus companies and other tour bus companies, to the extent they are known to the town, to provide notice this year of the fee schedule for 2007.
4. In light of the desire to competitively bid the kiosks, and given the desire for a public hearing, and possible workshop by the Council, we recommend an implementation date of April 1, 2007. We further recommend that a parking fee be charged from April 1 to October 31.
5. All school busses should be free **during the school year**, in order to permit neighboring school children to continue to visit the Light House, Fort and Park for free. When not visiting during the school year school buses will be subject to the applicable bus charges.
6. Nonresident Gift Shop and Museum volunteers should be given parking passes (or decals) so that they may park for free. Tenants should be assigned spaces near the building being leased.
7. Parking revenues should be allocated to a Ft. Williams enterprise fund. Revenues are intended to fund the operation, maintenance and capital costs of the park.
8. Since the Council approves all special events at the Park, the Council should determine whether parking fees should be suspended for any particular event. The PSO includes a parking charge in their ticket price. For the Beach to Beacon Race we recommend that the meters not be used until the race participants and associated vehicles have left the park. For both the High School Graduation and the Engine 1 Art Show vehicles are directed to the grassy area near the old firehouse. The parade ground lot is utilized for handicapped and staff parking. Parking fees can remain in effect for the rest of the Park. Scheduled athletic events should be subject to a parking charge.
9. Enforcement will be extremely important. We recommend that an additional park ranger be hired for the season to enforce parking. The Parking Ticket ordinance should be amended to permit a park ranger to issue a parking ticket. Persistent scofflaws should face the same penalties that other Cape Elizabeth parking scofflaws face: towing or application of the "boot." Plaisted Park should be posted as parking for games only. The Ft. Williams Advisory Commission has been asked to make a recommendation on parking by the "Old Main Gate" on Shore Rd. The Police Chief does not believe that off-site parking will be an issue, but the CEPD will monitor the area to make sure it does not become a problem. If it becomes a problem, further Council action may be necessary. Such as posting for no on-street parking, or parking for residents with decals only.
10. Signage is important. People need to understand that the revenue is meant to support the park. Signs need to be erected to provide notice that a parking charge is in effect, and located such that they will not back up the main gate. We strongly believe that this will encourage support for the program. Signage also needs to say clearly that violators may be towed or booted.
11. We want to emphasize the importance of a well-crafted, advance public relations effort to thoroughly communicate the intent, fairness, and basic ins and outs of the Pay/Display system, so that the potential for adverse or surprised public reaction is minimized.

12. Going forward, we also think it important to gather statistical and informational data regarding actual park use in order to set the parking fees at an appropriate level to support the park, while not unduly discouraging visitors.
13. The Council might also consider some form of paid advertising on the parking receipts, or a discount ticket to the gift shop or museum.