

Council raises parking fines to stop scoff laws

By Jeanne Davant

Parking violators will be subject to much larger fines that the Parking Authority Board and City Council hope will discourage "bad parking behavior."

Council approved the fine increases proposed by the Parking Authority Board at Tuesday's regular meeting.

Parking for more than 72 consecutive hours, adjacent to a yellow curb, within 14 feet of a fire hydrant or five feet of a public driveway, more than 1 foot from a curb, on a sidewalk, within an intersection or crosswalk or in a designated bus stop will result in a \$55 fine.

So will double parking, parking the wrong way on a street, parking that impedes traffic or parking where official signs prohibit it.

Fines for all of these offense increased from \$25.

People who park in spaces designated for persons with disabilities or handicapped parking spaces will see fines jump from \$100 to \$150.

The increases are the result of observations by Parking Enforcement Officer Matt French of "deliberate scofflawing," Parking Authority Board Chairman Val St. Cloud said.

"The parking officer had told us that people were deliberately parking in handicapped parking places, saying it's the cost of doing business," St. Cloud said.

The problem of deliberately illegal parking is particularly acute near the Incline, said Parking Authority Board member Spencer Wren.

"Quite a few violators told Matt they don't mind paying \$25 to use the Incline," Wren said. French documents every violation with a photograph.

The increased fines may address violations where people are parking in the center lane of Manitou Avenue, "putting their flashers on and going to lunch," St. Cloud said. "Right now we don't have a real fix on this. One project this summer is to find out what's happening there... (and) looking at what measures we will take. Everyone knows that goes on."

French "has been very effective in getting tickets for things that have been overlooked," Mayor Marc Snyder said. "People are now aware that parking is being enforced."

Council supports county camping law

By a 4-2 vote, Council also passed a resolution "encouraging and supporting" the efforts of El Paso County to pass a ban on camping on public land similar to those in force in Manitou and Colorado Springs.

Mayor Marc Snyder and Councilmen Matt Carpenter, Ed Klingman and Michael Gerbig supported the resolution. But Council members Rick Barry and Aimee Cox expressed strong reservations and voted against it. Councilwoman Ingrid Richter was absent.

"My concern is that the county has not requested our assistance," Barry said. "We should really let them take the lead in their own business. I don't want the El Paso County Commissioners telling us how we should do our business.... Do we want to say, basically, you need to step up? We're using incredibly strong political language, and I don't think it's good."

Cox agreed, saying she did not think the resolution was appropriate.

"Before I endorse another political body's resolution, I'd like to see what they are doing," Cox said. "I would prefer to table this until a there is a better public process in the county."

Carpenter said the county is developing regulations.

"We are part of El Paso County, the state and the United States," Carpenter said. "As citizens and as council members, it's our duty to advocate on behalf of our citizens."

"We're especially talking about No Man's Land," Snyder said, referring to the area between Colorado Springs and Manitou where many campers have put up tents along Fountain Creek. "I think consistency would be key to resolving this problem. This I find to be much more in the spirit of getting everybody together."

"I do feel it's appropriate for us to voice an opinion because this has a large impact on us," Klingman said.

Gerbig initially said, "This isn't the kind of thing I'd want to do," but then supported the resolution, saying, "This a narrow issue. I don't want to do this often."

Mike Crepeau, owner of the Hotel San Ayre on West Colorado Avenue, encouraged support for the resolution and cooperation on other issues in No Man's Land. Crepeau, representing the Avenue Merchants group, said the problems cut across several jurisdictions and private property.

"This isn't just about camping," he said. "We can solve these problems very readily if we work together. Now's a good time to do it."

In other business, Council...

- Learned that a new code enforcement officer has been hired. Marta Dubay will begin her duties March 22. Dubay stood out in her interview, Carpenter said. "She had really researched it. She has got code enforcement in her blood—literally. Her mother was one of the first code enforcement officers in California."

- Approved a 2010 lease-purchase agreement with Municipal Services Group. Under the five-year agreement, the city will finance capital equipment including nine vehicles, seven radios, and a hot tub and chair lift for the pool, for a total of \$256,342, plus financing costs of \$21,105.

- Discussed a potential charter amendment that would allow the city to apply for more stimulus funds to expand the water-sewer projects currently under way. City Attorney Jeff Parker said he is working with a bond attorney to determine whether such an amendment would involve TABOR issues. Council previously had been told that it would have to have voter approval for a charter amendment or exemption in place in order to be considered for additional funds. Will Koger of Nolte Associates said he would check with state funding authorities about the timing of the application and an election on the charter provision that limits Manitou's ability to borrow. Snyder wants to hold the election in November to avoid the cost of a special election.

- Approved an expansion at Swirl Wine Emporium, 717 Manitou Ave., which will add a bar and patio area.

- Approved a proclamation designating March 7-13 as Girl Scout Week.

[Return to Article Index](#)