

New parking fines approved, some will drop

By Jeanne Davant

You'll pay more for some parking violations this year. For some first offenses, however, you'll pay less.

Manitou Springs City Council approved Tuesday night a revised schedule of fines based on recommendations from the Parking Authority Board.

After the city revised the parking fine schedule in early 2010, "we discovered that different sections have more than one offense listed," City Planner Michelle Anthony said. "Things went up that we didn't even know were there. Some of them needed to go back down."

Fines for most violations were raised last year to \$55. Under the new schedule, fines for many first offenses will go back down to \$25 or \$35. Second and third offenses, however, will draw escalating fines.

For example, the fine for parking in a spot for more than 72 hours, which went from \$25 to \$55 last year, now is set at \$25 for a first offense. A second citation for the same offense will draw a \$35 fine, and a third offense, \$50.

Similarly, parking within five feet of a driveway, which used to draw a fine of \$25 and was raised to \$55 last year, now will trigger a fine of \$35 for the first offense, \$45 for the second and \$55 for the third.

The fines for some violations involving safety issues have not been lowered. Parking at a bus stop, on a sidewalk, within an intersection or crosswalk, or in a way that obstructs traffic will still yield a \$55 ticket on first offense. For second and third offenses, those fines will escalate to \$65 and \$75.

The fine for parking in a spot marked for persons with disabilities was not lowered but was kept at \$ 150 for a first offense — the same as in 2010 — but second and third offenses will draw fines of \$250 and \$300.

A late fee of \$10 will be added to the fine for any ticket not paid within 30 days. And after three unpaid tickets of the same offense 12 months, the owner's vehicle may be "booted." Fines will escalate even more for further violations — up to \$300 each for nine or more offenses. A vehicle owner will first be notified by letter of placement on a Boot List. A boot fee of \$100 will be waived if the tickets are paid before the booting occurs.

Anthony said that doesn't happen often, but people who incur multiple violations "tend to do it with gusto."

Anthony said the handheld devices carried by parking officers enable them to keep track of vehicles that have been cited previously. When the officer enters a license plate number, the device reveals any previous violations. That made it possible to establish an escalating fine schedule.

Anthony said parking officers will continue to issue warnings unless the violation involves a safety issue such as parking in front of a fire hydrant or blocking traffic. Officers also can track warnings on their handheld devices, and a second violation will trigger a ticket and fine.

Anthony said exceptions may be made in inclement weather such as last week's storm, when some residents weren't able to get up hills to their homes. Mayor Pro Tern Aimee Cox said she was one of those people.

"They are not enforcing during those times," Anthony said. "But as soon as the Police Department or the Streets Department say people can get up, people need to get their cars off Manitou Avenue."

In a related action, Council unanimously approved on first reading an ordinance that describes the location of time-restricted parking on Canon Avenue between Manitou and Grand avenues.

Anthony said the Parking Authority Board recommended changing the 15-minute time limit on the east side of Canon across from the Post Office to three hours. The ordinance extends the downtown parking district to Grand Avenue. The 15-minute limit on the west side of Canon in front of the Post Office remains the same.

The vote on the ordinance was 4-0. Council members Ingrid Richter and Ed Klingman and Mayor Marc Snyder were not present at Tuesday's meeting.

Council also unanimously OK'd on first reading an ordinance that regulates the placement of rolloff dumpsters, storage pods and other immovable objects that take up parking spaces.

The ordinance requires permits and sets fees of \$100 for placement of a dumpster for 30 days or less and \$75 for placement of a storage pod or other object for 15 days or less in the downtown zone. For the same time periods, the fee for placement along other streets is \$30. Additional fees are charged for longer periods of time.

The Finance Department will review all applications for placement of dumpsters or storage pods on city streets and can conditionally approve or deny them based on input from the Police, Fire and Streets departments.

Permits are not required for placing dumpsters on private property, but they must be screened from view if left in place for more than 90 days. Storage pods on private property require a permit from the Planning Department and/or Regional Building Department.

In other business. Council...

- Unanimously approved on first reading an ordinance that brings the city's code into compliance with state law on possession or consumption of small quantities of marijuana. Under the ordinance and the law, possession of up to two ounces of marijuana can be cited and dealt with in Municipal Court. The previous limit was one ounce.

- Approved a \$ 13 2,400 contract with Atkinson-Noland & Associates of Boulder for engineering services for the Canon and Park Avenue historic bridges. Planning Director Dan Folke said the firm will do load testing, produce structural design specifications and help develop a bid form for the contractor. The bridge repairs will be paid for by grants from the Colorado Department of Transportation and the State Historical Fund, and Folke said he hopes the work will be completed by the end of this year.

- Re-appointed Lisa Quintana to the Parking Authority Board.

- Approved resolutions establishing the front of City Hall as the location for posting of city notices (a housekeeping measure), and appointing Council members to liaison positions.

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