Council Not Standing Still on Parking Issue

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Brianna Gibbs/KMXT

The Kodiak City Council will take a more comprehensive look at parking downtown in meetings to come. The council heard from Police Chief T.C. Kamai during last night’s work session about the lack of long term parking near the downtown “mall.”

“Now I think if you study this slide real closely, you’ll see, you’ll come to the same conclusion that we did," Kamai said, "that there seems to be a demand for long term parking and not so much for short term.”

The slide Kamai refers to was the break down of parking usage on a daily basis. The information was collected by the Kodiak Police Department in July. Much of the parking downtown is designated for two hour spaces, but based on the study, those slots aren’t being used very much. What is being used is long term parking, or nine- to 12-hour parking spots. Kamai said a reason for this is because many of the employees at businesses downtown are often left with nowhere to park for their eight hour work day.

During the public comment period at the beginning of the work session a handful of downtown employees spoke up about the need for long term parking, including Bob Polasky, the CEO of Sun'aq Tribe of Kodiak, whose tribal center is located downtown. Polasky said Sun'aq has more than 25 employees that often receive parking tickets because the only available parking is in a two hour time slot. He said their tribal van has also received tickets

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-- (Parking Plan 2 : 35 “We have a lot of programs now, we’ve grown a lot over the last 10 years. We have a lot of youth programs and elders programs and so we have a tribal van that’s clearly marked Shoonaq’ Tribe of Kodiak, it’s coming and going off and on, picking up kids for this event or that and getting ticketed now. And we work down there, it’s a tribal center and we either ask you to have a spot for us like the superior court judge and magistrate has. That says Shoonaq Tribal van. So we have a place to park that, so we don’t have to run and like bring the elders in and worry if it’s going to be over two hours.”)

During Kamai’s presentation to the council he said he wasn’t personally in favor of designated parking spots, but did say something needs to be done about the parking situation.

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(Parking Plan 3 : 35 “Now, recognizing that these are our recommendations for your consideration and Iw ant to be clear that we’re not locking the council into having to do any of this that we’re recommending here but it’s something that we think you should be aware

of or at least consider during your deliberations on this issue. Our first one is we think, based on the data from our study, it would be a prudent measure to increase our nine hour parking on the mall by about, it’s actually 37 percent. We want to change 36 of those two hour parking spaces into 9 hour parking on the mall.”)

Other recommendations from Kamai were to improve signage for parking rules and reevaluate any new parking plan six months after it is implemented to make sure it is an appropriate fit. The council will address the issue at a future meeting. A regular meeting is scheduled for tomorrow evening in the borough assembly chambers.