



# CITY OF DECATUR ILLINOIS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **City Council Agrees On Parking System Changes, Transfer House Use**

DECATUR – The Decatur City Council on Monday informally agreed to implement a series of changes to the downtown parking system and gave staff the go ahead to come up with a plan to utilize the Transfer House as a downtown tourism center.

The council agreed informally Monday to authorize the booting and towing of vehicles with owners owing \$100 or more and to pursue suspending the drivers licenses of persons with 10 or more unpaid citations. The council also agreed to create an on street employee parking program where, for \$15 per month, motorists could lease a dedicated parking space in the downtown area and to utilize a city trolley to provide a quick drop-off service to the city's garages.

Covered parking in Garages B and C would be \$25 per month, an increase for some and a decrease for others, while uncovered parking would be \$15 in both garages, an increase of \$3 per month. Parking enforcement hours would go from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and staff will pursue technological advances allowing for the tracking of persons who park longer than limits allow by plugging meters to extend time limits.

The City has been working to address downtown parking issues for some time now in an effort to provide additional parking options for employees/residents who work or live in the area while freeing spaces in the downtown core area for retail and restaurant consumers. Just as important has been a need to improve enforcement efforts for motorists who choose to not follow established parking rules while visiting Downtown Decatur.

Many of the changes agreed upon Monday night came in response to public comments generated during a two-week city survey on the parking issue. A total of 109 people provided comments on a plan suggested at the last meeting, most of whom agreed with the changes being suggested but who felt that some changes needed to be "tweaked" to meet the needs of the parking public.

In other business, the council agreed informally to pursue the use of the Transfer House as an interactive tourism and information center in keeping with the results of a public survey on potential uses. Tentative plans are to utilize electronic kiosks where visitors could go for visitor information (about restaurants, hotels, public services, entertainment venues, Lincoln and agricultural history, etc.) and electronic dioramas telling the story of our history. The Transfer House could feature artwork and videos detailing current tourist attractions or events of days gone by - perhaps including reenactments of President Lincoln giving his first political speech, being nominated for President or of other momentous historic events.

City staff will now work with other community groups to flesh out the details of using the Transfer House as a tourism center which will include information on cost and how to best secure and operate the facility.

The parking system and Transfer House discussions took place during a study session, meaning that no formal vote was taken. Council will review the results of parking system changes to monitor effectiveness in six months.

For more information contact Billy Tyus at 424-2753.