Transportation and Parking Committee
Minutes
October 14, 2005

Present: Carolyne Dudding, Patrick Donohoe, Edward Lener, Richard McCoy, Steve Mouras, Hesham Rakha, Elizabeth Reed, Josh Sarfity, Wyatt Sasser, Lisa Schweitzer, James Tyger
Guests: Scott Cheatham, Sara Perich

Patrick Donohoe called the meeting to order at 8:40 a.m.

The September 9, 2005 minutes were approved.
Members briefly introduced themselves.

Old Business:
• Patrick Donohoe updated everyone on plans to formally change the makeup of the committee. This will go through the Commission on University Support which has not yet met. Patrick will talk with Chief Duncan regarding the proposal to add a representative from the VT Police Department.

• Steve Mouras gave a brief update on issues related to visitor parking. A formal funding request has now been submitted. Estimated cost for the project is $160,000.

New Business:

• Scott Cheatham, SGA Chair for Student Life, presented a resolution to the committee regarding changes to practices in the parking lots for Owens and Dietrick dining halls. These are restricted to Faculty/Staff permit holders on a 24/7 basis. However, residents of the Oak Lane Community can get a special tag that allows parking during weekdays from 4:30 to 9:30 pm at Owens and from 4:30 pm to 12:30 am at Dietrick. The SGA resolution asked that these same hours be extended for the weekend and that additional hours from 10:00 am – 3:00 pm be added on Saturdays and Sundays.

• The committee discussed the pros and cons of the requested changes at length. The two lots in question are both small, with very high demand. It is also important that Faculty and Staff working at the dining facilities are able to park nearby. The committee decided to vote on the requests of the SGA in two separate parts. The first part consisted of extending the same hours currently offered during the weekdays to the weekends. Many members felt this would reduce confusion as well as making it easier for Oak Lane residents to access the building on those days. This passed by a vote of 7 in favor of the measure to 2 against and this recommendation will now be passed along to Parking Services for their review and consideration. A second vote was then taken on the issue of adding additional hours from 10:00 am – 3:00 pm on Saturdays and Sundays. This measure was defeated by a vote of 1 for and 8 against.
Steve Mouras reviewed a faculty complaint related to motorcycle parking. A small number of spaces reserved for motorcycles are designated faculty/staff only but most are open for student use as well. Demand for motorcycle spaces is highly seasonal. In addition, many of them were created using “leftover” spots in the lots that are not big enough for a regular parking space. Steve recommended against creating additional spaces that are for faculty/staff use only since the overall demand on campus at this time is modest. Also if the one of the currently available motorcycle-only spaces is full then the faculty or staff person may simply park in a regular space.

Wyatt Sasser voiced a concern related to parking appeals and carpool parking spaces. Some individuals who are ticketed for parking there say they didn’t realize it was not a regular commuter/graduate or faculty/staff space. Signs have already been changed once to reduce potential confusion of this sort. The issue will be discussed further at the next meeting and images of the signs in question will be distributed.

Ed Lener raised an issue on behalf of a Faculty Senate member who felt that signage at the new Inn at Virginia Tech was inadequate and confusing with regard to guest parking. The committee discussed the current layout of the parking lots there and Steve Mouras reminded everyone that the policy of reserved spaces for overnight guests was also in place previously at the former Donaldson Brown Hotel. Parking Services will work with staff at the Inn to try to make sure that parking policies are communicated clearly. All overnight guests of the hotel should be given a parking pass at check-in. Faculty and staff coming to a meeting at the conference center or to the restaurant should park in the designated F/S spaces.

Ed Lener also raised a concern relating to the Blacksburg Transit schedule on Monday, October 10. The BT went on the same reduced schedule as is used for other break periods. The result was less frequent operation, runs that ended several hours earlier than normal, and no operation of the Hokie Express around campus or to the Oak Lane area. Although there were no classes on this day, all campus offices were open regular hours and most students were still here in Blacksburg. Steve Mouras indicated that this was the first time this day in the fall semester with no classes was in effect and that he would pass along these concerns at the next board meeting for Blacksburg Transit.

Josh Sarfity brought up a question about expanding the Safe-Ride program to include off-campus areas. Steve Mouras responded that this was an initiative of the VT Police Department and that they are the primary ones to determine policies for the service. The committee will discuss the issue further as needed.

Meeting adjourned at 10:00 A.M.

Next meeting scheduled for November 11th at 8:30 in the Sterrett Center, Room 90R.

Respectfully submitted,
Edward Lener, Recorder