MINUTES
TRANSPORTATION and PARKING COMMITTEE

February 3, 1997

Present: Jean Eversole, Lisa Furjanic, Cindy Harrison, Ann Spencer, J.B. Sutphin, Widget Shannon, Gene Reed, Mike Jones, and Becky Brim

The meeting of the Transportation and Parking Committee was called to order by chair, Jean Eversole

Approval of December 2, 1996 minutes: With corrections to the December 2 minutes noted, on motion by J.B. Sutphin, seconded by Lisa Furjanic the minutes were unanimously approved by those present.

BUSINESS

High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Commuter Parking Follow-up: Lisa Furjanic reported that news is positive on the HOV lot. There seems to be no amount of differences in number of spaces opening up. Presently lot is monitored from 8 to 12 but 10 to 2 appears to be the busiest. Recommends monitoring be from 8 to 2. Commented that it would be difficult to have more than 2 individuals in a vehicle because of student's schedules.

BT Advisory Committee report: Mr. Mike Connelly, from Blacksburg Transit, informed the Committee that the late night service on Thursday nights had been curtailed. Ridership is very low on Thursday nights. Friday and Saturday are the busiest. Recently Mike drove on one of these nights and had steady loads all night. Ridership on a typical day totals 9-10,000. On bad weather days, numbers increase to 11-12,000.

Underground Parking: The feasibility of underground parking was discussed at some length. Mike Jones recommended a subcommittee to review. Ann Spencer referred the issue to Facilities. Jim and J. B. will develop a response. Part of the real issue is the parking structure, the cost, the location on a site by site basis.

Bicycling, etc. -- An alternative to parking on and around campus is bicycling. To encourage participation and bicycle use, Mike Jones agreed to talk with Bridgit Mitchell of CommonHealth to see if a joint program could be worked out. There are many bicycle racks on campus with more to be purchased. Mr. Connelly also noted that currently one Blacksburg Transit bus has a bicycle rack on front as part of an experiment and there is State money to buy 8 more racks for 8 buses. Racks on the buses would help with rain days.

Ice complaint in an around Burruss Hall: Cindy Harrison shared with the committee a complaint that had been told to her about the recent ice on campus. Some employees who work in Burruss Hall stated that the walkways were very hazardous and speculated about safety of the walks. In response, Widget Shannon stated that the building custodians are often the ones to clean around the buildings and entrance ways.
Physical Plant does not have enough personnel to adequately do a thorough job. Ann Spencer also stressed that priorities have to be set and walks are typically done first, however, given the latest ice storm, the continual weather circumstances made it impossible to keep up. It was also noted, how frugal and difficult it was to keep one’s own home entrances/driveways clear.

Motorcycle Parking on Campus: J.B. Sutphin indicated that a map has been done and will be given to Curtis for comment. Four motorcycles can fit into one parking space. Prime spots may be made available near buildings around campus. Again, this would be an incentive to improve parking and access.

Parking at the ISB Building (Computing Center): Mr. Bruce Harper addressed the committee. At issue is whether Virginia Tech employees who work in this building should be required to purchase a parking/vehicle permit. In this area of campus are the Corporate Research Center buildings. The ISB parking lot is the only Virginia Tech employee lot. Landscaping and parking clearance are handled by Southwestern Lawn and Landscape. Some private businesses park in the ISB lot, for example the National Weather Station staff and they do not pay to park. Mr. Harper expressed dissatisfaction that Tech employees in the Garvin and Research Buildings are not mandated to purchase parking/vehicle permits and this is unfair to Tech employees in ISB. He asked the committee to address this issue and provide a solution, preferably waive the parking fee to ISB employees.

Background: Ann Spencer stated that the CRC started with one building dedicated as a VT building and this has grown. Ann recommended that Dr. Smoot be involved. J.B. stated that currently VT Tech does a certain amount of painting and signage in this area. Mike Jones stated that Tech police are affected by the growth of this area. Not enough resources available to meet university demands. Mike also suggested that the head of the CRC be involved in the decision process.

Ann asked that Jean Eversole and others of the committee work with her and start by discussing with Dr. Smoot. Come back with a clearer perspective. This issue definitely needs a new look. A change in policy may be necessary.

Miscellaneous Parking: Gene Reed shared information that will impact parking the next few months in and around campus:

- 37 additional parking spaces will be the Derring Lot with a center walkway over to B Lot
- Caldwell Lot - below the power house and upper/lower Stanger lot will provide 54 spaces
- Spring Road will be put back with a loss of 365 spaces to the stadium parking lot. During Spring break the entire lot will be closed and people will have to park across the road on the grass. Commencement will be a problem with limited parking and heavy congested traffic. As the Recreation fields become heavily used - some areas will be roped off for student use
- The Solitude lot will gain some spaces.
Signage at the Cage Lot has NOT been installed yet. Signs are at the Sign Shop.

The next regular meeting of the committee will be March 3, 1997. There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Becky Brim

CONFIRMED: The Transportation and Parking Committee will meet the first Monday of each month in 400D Burruss Hall from 4 to 5 p.m.