

CITY OF WISCONSIN DELLS
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
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First I wish to thank my community for the support granted to me in my election for my third term as your mayor. In the next three years, the implementation of the downtown revitalization will be a major goal of our city. Before we can actually make real progress in improving our downtown, our city must develop sound strategies and policies on how we approach difficult issues.

One of the major issues our city faces is the disagreement on the subject of parking. As a kid, I lived on the northwest side of Chicago. The city street was very narrow and it was a well-populated block. I remember after a snowfall that we would not only have to shovel out a parking space on the city street, but then fill that space with lawn chairs, cones, and five gallon buckets to “claim” your space and make sure nobody stole it when your car was not there. That tradition still goes on today in some inner-city neighborhoods.

However, the “claiming” of parking stalls is a figment of imagination, nobody can summarily claim a parking space as it is a public space. Parking stalls, sidewalks, and streets are property of the entire city and all its taxpayers. Here in the Dells, we have some who feel that parking spaces are proprietary. Instead of lawn chairs and cones in those spaces, they use words and visions of lost business if they don’t have parking directly in front of their stores. This has caused an ongoing disruption of our city’s ability to move forward on downtown planning, revitalization, and safety.

In the immediate downtown area, we have over 800 designated parking stalls controlled by meters and kiosks. You can probably add several hundred more “free” parking areas within three blocks of Broadway. We have three under-performing city lots within 150 feet of Broadway that are often not even half full in prime dates in the summer. We don’t have a parking space problem in the Dells, we have a parking perception problem.

There is a simple solution to this problem....our parking spaces can be leased for the year. In fact, several businesses already lease parking areas for shuttles, employees, and patrons. Anyone who feels that parking directly in front of their business is so valuable can pay the city to lease the stall, place a sign restricting it for their patrons, and then police it on their own time. Otherwise, the space is property of all taxpayers and the decision on what to do with it must be for the benefit of all taxpayers. As we look at potentially removing some parking on Broadway to accommodate the revitalization plans, we must move past the perception that parking stalls have a proprietary value to a single business. Unless of course they want to lease the stall and truly claim it, the parking space is a public space. Our visitors and our residents have spoken loud and clear that they want an improved downtown with a pedestrian friendly atmosphere. Its time our city delivered.



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