



February 6, 2012

Mayor Suzanne Atwell
Vice Mayor Terry Turner
Commissioner Shannon Snyder
Commissioner Willie Shaw
Commissioner Paul Caragiulo
1565 First Street
Sarasota, FL 34236

Re: Downtown Parking Meters

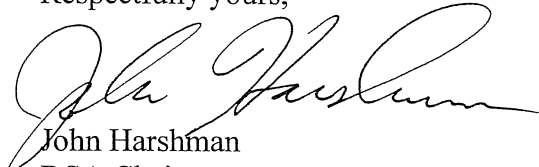
Dear Mayor and Commissioners:

The Downtown Sarasota Alliance (DSA) is the collective voice for merchants, property owners, residents and businesses downtown. Many of our members have expressed frustration over the recently installed parking meters, and particularly some of our merchant members have identified significant loss of business due to the parking meters. The DSA board of directors has listened to member objections regarding the meters and discussed the January 12, 2012 memorandum from the City of Sarasota Parking manager. Pursuant to that discussion, the DSA board voted to recommend that the City Commission temporarily suspend the use of the parking meters in order to determine what corrections need to be implemented or if the meters should be removed permanently. The DSA directors have a variety of opinions and observations regarding the meters. The following are comments expressed by DSA board members:

- Initially the meters were to be placed only around the new parking garage as motivation for people to park in the garage for a time for free. However, the meters were installed in an area larger than what was initially defined. Meters are placed in only two areas of the city; west of Orange Avenue and around the Court House. No other areas of the City have meters. This puts an unfair burden on the areas with meters as it is reasonable to assume that, when given the choice, customers will patronize areas without meters rather than areas with meters.
- The meters regularly malfunction.
- The meters do not provide a receipt.
- Temporarily, meters on Palm Avenue should be suspended and the parking in the Palm Avenue garage should be free. Business downturn is further exacerbated by construction on Ringling Blvd, and suspending meters during this construction would help mitigate this loss of business.

- Other tier 1 areas in the City without meters singles out the metered area.
- Employee parking in City garages and lots should be revisited to provide for 7-day a week parking instead of 5-days.
- A master parking plan needs to be in place.
- If meters are removed; the DSA will support the City in efforts to assure that no employee parking on street occurs.

Respectfully yours,



John Harshman
DSA Chairman