

## Downingtown Council consents to spending \$115,248 for parking machines

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Downingtown Borough Council consented during its meeting on Jan. 21, 2015 to spend \$115,248 for 10 parking machines to help with parking enforcement. Pictured is the type of Kiosk machine purchased from Global Parking Solutions. Courtesy photo

DOWNTOWN—Borough Council members voted Wednesday to spend \$115,248 for parking machines to help with enforcement.

The Downingtown Main Street Association members reviewed parking system options for the borough when asked by Borough Manager Steve Sullins.

The 10 Global machines, referred to as kiosks, can be used for the nearly 400 parking spaces in the borough. The machines are being funded from the current parking system and from parking tickets.

The borough plans to hire three parking enforcement officers, regardless of the approval for the machines. Sullins said it will be easier for the employees to collect money from 10 machines compared to meters for each parking space.

Aubrey Hays, vice president of the Downingtown Main Street Association, and Michael Kavur, of Global Parking Solutions, explained the payment methods that borough officials can choose.

Hays explained that people can pay by entering their license plate number into the machine; pay by entering the parking space number; or by displaying the receipt ticket on their vehicle's dashboard.

The payment selections can vary by which zone locations the machines are in. The borough will have three zones, including the west end, east end and the train station.

Payments can be cash, coins or by credit card. Hays said they could opt to allow the train station payments can be done in advance for the week or month.

Hays said the investment return for \$1 a day for 20 days at the train station kiosks, with three full parking lots, totals \$32,940. This does not include Saturdays, or factor the payment of parking enforcement officers.

A phone app allows people to add payments by a credit card number, to extend parking time. This option has a fee, incurred by the borough.

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Through a video presentation, Jack Law, director of Public Works, explained how the current parking system works for parking lots that have a box with coin slots. This parking per day is paid by parking space number.

He said enforcement is harder for the parking officer to keep track of who has paid. He said the system to collect the cash relies on personnel accountability.

"The newer system would be more efficient," Law said, "both in enforcement and in paying customers."

Sean McGettigan, a member of Main Street, said the outdated parking system is not consistent throughout the borough. He said some areas have parking meters that he said are hard to read.

"We're behind the times, in terms of parking," McGettigan said through the video presentation.

Machines can be added or relocated. Hayes said that is an advantage if the machines need to be moved when the train station is relocated.

The machines have a seven-year lifetime, Kavur said, with some lasting longer. The machines are covered by warranty for the first year. An optional extended warranty costs \$708 per year per machine.

The Kiosk project was approved 5-1 with Councilwoman Ann Feldman dissenting. Feldman publicly thanked those who participated in the presentation. After the 90-minute presentation with question and answers, Feldman said she needed more time.

"We did not have a thorough financial matrix showing how this is going to play out," Feldman said to council following the vote. "I think it was a foolish decision, it could have waited until the next council meeting."

"This has been years of evaluation," Sullins said when he thanked Main Street Association members for their efforts.

Steven Plaughter, executive director and Main Street manager, said the on-street parking in the business district continues as two-hour free parking and is not part of the Kiosk program.

The proposed Kiosk locations include nine municipal parking lots, totaling 396 parking spaces.

Council did not make decisions on payment methods or increasing parking fees, which range from 25 cents to a dollar per day.

"Tasks still ahead for association and the parking committee are to study the present fee structure for parking at Kiosk locations and make recommendations to borough council for any increases," Plaughter said after the meeting. "Many of the lots have a 50 cents per day fee, which is seriously undercharged, and not in line with costs to maintain the parking lots."

*source: [www.dailylocal.com](http://www.dailylocal.com)*