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City Council

Approval of Proposed Parklet on 100 Block of Cherry St. NE

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Agenda Item:

Approval of Proposed Parklet on 100 Block of Cherry St. NE

Issue:

A parklet proposal was submitted by Olympia Coffee Roasting Company (108 Cherry St. NE). Council must decide whether or not to approve the use of a single 15-minute meter parking stall for the installation of the proposed parklet.

Committee Recommendation:

The Land Use and Environment Committee and the PBIA Placemaking Committee both recommend approving the parklet application by Olympia Coffee Roasting Company.

City Manager's Recommendation:

Move to authorize the placement of a parklet at 108 Cherry St. NE (Olympia Coffee Roasters Company) consistent with the attached application, and authorize the City Manager to negotiate and execute appropriate contracts.

Staff Contact:

Brian Wilson, Downtown Liaison, Community Planning & Development, 360.570.3798

Presenter(s):

None. Consent Calendar Item.

Background and Analysis:

Parklets are a new type of public space - an economical and creative solution to the desire for wider sidewalks. They serve as "mini parks," providing space for people to sit, relax, and enjoy the city around them, especially where narrow sidewalks or lack of open space would make such activities difficult.

Following last year's successful introduction of two parklets into downtown Olympia, the PBIA (Parking & Business Improvement Area) has decided to continue their matching grant of up to \$3,500 per parklet for the current year. According to the PBIA Chair: *One of the best outcomes of parklets is the partnership that they create between the sponsoring business owner, the City, PBIA and the public. They also bring economic benefit to the City by encouraging people to come downtown and spend dollars in our locally owned businesses.*

In 2013, the parklet Request For Proposals was updated to reach a broader audience of perspective sponsors and highlight specific design standards. The RFP was released for the month of May and made available through the City of Olympia Downtown Project page. Following the May 31st application deadline, proposals were reviewed by a technical committee to ensure the design would not interfere with transportation or utility services. Next, applications were reviewed by the PBIA placemaking committee and ranked based on identified goals.

The City received three parklet applications. The application submitted by Olympia Coffee Roasting Company passed through the technical committee and was approved by the PBIA placemaking committee. The other two applications require further review before receiving preliminary approval.

Olympia Coffee Roasting owners were notified of their preliminary approval and a public notice was posted on their place of business for 10 calendar days. Part of the RFP process requires the applicant to inform their neighbors about their intention to build a parklet. Olympia Coffee Roasters received support from their building owner, and also the owners of Ramblin' Jacks restaurant across the street. The owners of Peppers Restaurant voiced concern over losing on-street parking. We received no public comments during the 10 day open comment period.

The final step of the application process is City Council review. Once approved, Olympia Coffee Roasting Company can begin construction of their parklet.

Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):

Parklets have been an integral part in the City and PBIA placemaking effort. The current parklets have created a safe gathering place for all users of downtown Olympia.

While there has been some concern over the loss of a 1-2 parking stalls for each parklet, Parking Services has shown that such a minimal reduction in spots has little, if no, impact on the parking system. On-street parking occupancy studies over the last year have shown on average nearly 40% of the parking stalls in downtown Olympia are vacant during the peak hours of usage. In addition, the City of Olympia has added parking stalls over the last several years by converting underused loading zones to metered parking.

Options:

Option 1: Approve parklet proposal which will allow Olympia Coffee Roasting Company to begin construction.

Option 2: Do not approve the parklet proposal and ask applicant for more information or design changes before future approval.

Option 3: Reject the parklet proposal.

Financial Impact:

Up to \$3,500 of allocated PBIA funds for construction material costs. The City does not anticipate diminished parking revenue because there is adequate parking nearby, especially on State Street. In addition, in the long run the creation of parklets should make downtown more attractive and bring additional people to downtown.