

ITEM# 11  
DATE: 10-24-17

## **COUNCIL ACTION FORM**

**SUBJECT: REQUEST TO WAIVE PARKING ENFORCEMENT AND METER FEES  
AT POLLING LOCATIONS WITH METERED PARKING**

### **BACKGROUND:**

The Story County Auditor supervises the election process including all 20 polling places within the City of Ames. Two of these city polling locations (Ames Public Library and Collegiate United Methodist Church) have metered parking that serves as the primary public parking resource for these locations. A third, Collegiate Presbyterian, has three meter spaces along with additional private parking. Citizens who use these locations have frequently requested that metered spaces be available to accommodate voters and that the associated meter fees be waived on election day. The other 17 locations in the city have private parking associated with the facility or, in the case of Iowa State University, already allocate parking for poll workers and voters.

**While there is no statutory requirement to provide parking, some citizens who have raised the issue have noted that meter fees may serve as a potential barrier to voting. Others have referred to the principle of removing barriers to voting in their comments, noting that the City has waived parking fees for commercial events in the downtown area.**

After a review of parking options at each site, it appears that 20 spaces on Douglas Avenue would provide a great deal of convenient, short-term parking. Additionally, there are spaces on Fifth Street (11 spaces) and in Lot Q (62 spaces) for a total of 93 spaces available in the area. For the purpose of accommodating the election, 20 of these spaces will be identified for waiver. At Collegiate United Methodist, there are nine spaces on Lincoln Way that are adjacent to the church. At Collegiate Presbyterian, there are three spaces on West Street.

**It should be noted that City Council has approved this approach in the past. To date there have not been any major issues or any negative feedback from utilizing metered parking for voting.**

### **ALTERNATIVES:**

1. Approve election day-related parking waiver of up to 20 meter spaces near the Ames Public Library, up to nine spaces at Collegiate United Methodist Church, and up to three spaces at Collegiate Presbyterian. In addition, this alternative authorizes the Traffic Engineer to determine the final number of parking spaces allocated to these three election polling locations through the City Council approval of the meter fee waiver for the spaces.

2. Authorize a lesser number of meter spaces for one or all of the three locations.
3. Do not approve the allocation of election-related parking spaces.

**CITY MANAGER RECOMMENDATION:**

The allocation of parking spaces and the waiver of meter fees will assist the Story County Auditor in making polling places accessible within the City of Ames. In those areas where parking is limited, allocating parking to the polling place will allow poll workers to ensure turnover, and as a result, improve access to polls for Ames residents.

Therefore, the City Manager recommends that the City Council adopt Alternative No. 1, as noted above.