

Published April 11th, 2012

Lafayette's New Parking Meter.... Now your credit card will feed 'er

By Cathy Tyson



One of the next generation parking meters installed for a three month trial run in front of the Mercantile Building. Photo C. Tyson

Will that be plastic or coins? In response to the city's auditor suggesting that the city reduce cash transactions, the City Council opted for a three month trial run of solar powered parking meters that accept Visa and Mastercard in front of the Mercantile Building. If drivers buy in to the new-fangled models, they may receive the green light to spread throughout the downtown. Collecting, sorting and depositing sacks of heavy coins is no picnic for parking enforcement staff, "It would be much more efficient if we decided to switch all the meters," said Community Service Officer Cathy Surges-Moscato.

"They're definitely more user-friendly," continued Surges-Moscato, who is in charge of the test drive that runs from late March to late June. At only \$1.00 per hour, most parkers who may stop for a quick latte and croissant at La Boulange can scrounge enough change to feed the meter. But plastic costs just the same for those that are change-challenged, although the city pays a small percentage to process debit and credit cards.

While some parking experts have suggested adjusting parking rates in response to demand, there are no plans for that in Lafayette at this time. Switching old meters to next generation models is actually fairly easy - in a nutshell, the

old heads come off, and new twin-hydra heads fit onto the old base.

Put another nickel in...

In that nickel-munching thing

Get me curbside parking time

It's legal, legal, legal.

Lafayette's new parking meter

Now your credit card will feed 'er

Ugly duckling, never said

It's regal, regal, regal

Metal "art" along the sidewalk

Soon will have the townfolk talk

A bit like Lurch, a perfect perch

For seagull, seagull, seagulls...

Closer! Come on get closer!

Just park your car along the boulevard

And swipe your plastic-

it ain't hard

Takes the stress off L-P-D

No more jangling coins to see

Wonder who collects bank fees

from meters, meters, meters...

-Cathy Dausman

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