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Free Beaches Town Center parking for NB residents approved unanimously

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Effective July 1, residents of Neptune Beach will be eligible to receive three free hours of parking at Beaches Town Center. The Neptune Beach City Council voted unanimously Monday to approve the change to the paid parking program.

Neptune Beach currently offers resident incentives with 35 designated spaces for free parking, but many residents complained that the spaces were too far away from restaurants at Town Center.

“Given the current underutilization of these spaces and the feedback we've received from our residents, this resolution creates an allowance for resident parking available throughout the main, on-street paid parking zone,” said Mobility Management Director Megan Steward.

According to statistics, Steward said the average turnover rate at Beaches Town Center is two and a half hours.

“This would add an additional half-hour,” said Councilor Josh Messinger, adding that Atlantic Beach has proposed a similar measure for residents. “They originally offered a half-price program for one hour, but it changed around a bit, and it landed on three hours. The desire of our residents and our neighbors is not to have those dedicated spaces. I think this is the right and prudent move.”

The change was proposed by Messinger during the recent City Council workshop. Residents must pre-register and be approved to receive three free hours of parking per day. They must also check-in using the mobile app or a kiosk. Requiring resident check-in will provide measurable data for city staff to track resident usage of BTC parking, which will help improve analytics and understanding of the needs of the residents.

“I think this speaks for itself. I think it will be a positive improvement. We will still have the dedicated spaces. This is kind of an addition, and I look forward to utilizing it myself when it comes on board,” said Messinger. “I think having the uniformity between our two cities will be highly beneficial.”

City Manager Stefan Wynn said sandwich boards are in use at Jarboe Park to indicate parking, but may be transferred to BTC to notify residents to register for free parking.

“We will use our normal means, that is, news alerts, posting on our website and social media,” he said, adding a news release will also be included in the upcoming water bill.

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