



# City of Sanibel

## Planning Department

### MEMORANDUM

DATE: January 29, 2013

TO: Jim Jordan, Planning Director

FROM: Jim Fricke, Planner

SUBJECT: Valet Parking and Signage: Identification of Options

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#### **Background**

It has been brought to the attention of the Planning Department and Code Enforcement that at least two local restaurants are offering valet parking to their patrons and have advertised this service with on-site signs. Sanibel code does not currently permit valet parking, either in terms of the conduct of this service or with specific related signage requirements, nor does the Code provide guidance on this matter.

While the specific issues and any resulting resolution are under consideration, any enforcement action other than the removal of signs from the public right-of-way is being held in abeyance as per direction of the City Manager. A valet parking sign which had been improperly placed in the public right-of-way was removed after the establishment was notified.

#### **Actual and Potential Issues**

Without guidance from either Sanibel code or via an administrative permitting process, unregulated valet parking could give rise to situations which impede safe and convenient traffic circulation and pedestrian movement, cause directional confusion, or detract from community aesthetics.

The actual issues observed or brought to the attention of planning staff to date have

involved signage. Signage which advertises valet parking is not specifically permitted in Sanibel code, as neither the "Accessory Sign" nor the "Permitted Temporary Signs" language in Section 106 includes a category that addresses signage for valet parking.

Under current ordinance, therefore, a temporary sign advertising valet parking would be a violation.

Additional potential issues which may arise include:

- Customer vehicles awaiting valet service may stack into the public roadway.
- Parked vehicles may exceed the establishment's lot capacity, resulting in inappropriate on-site parking which protrudes into landscaped areas or buffer areas, blocks or delays emergency access, blocks or impedes pedestrian access, blocks or impedes access for the disabled.
- Parking may bleed off-site to adjacent commercial or institutional establishments (with or without prior agreement).
- Parking may bleed to off-site to residential streets.

### **Options**

Many communities have chosen to regulate valet parking, either by specific ordinance or through a permitting process. These ordinances can be very detailed and regulate every aspect of valet parking including, for example: the qualifications of parking staff, liability insurance requirements, vehicle claim and retrieval tracking, and other operational standards. Other communities choose to provide guidelines via an administrative permitting process, primarily to affect: signage, use of the public right-of-way, and hours of service. Generally, the impetus to regulate valet parking has come from the desire to eliminate intrusions into the public right-of-way and parking congestion issues.

Given the current limited use of valet services on Sanibel and the absence of any pending adverse issues other than improper signage, it may be appropriate to implement one or more of the following options:

1. Leave the current ordinances intact and enforce any violations, for example, no violation would be presumed to exist, if:
  - a valet parking sign can meet the qualifications of an exempt sign under an appropriate condition in Section 106-3, *and*,
  - the valet parking is within the establishments designated and required off-street parking space, *and*,
  - the valet parking is not observed to impede traffic flow or circulation or to impede or obstruct pedestrian, emergency or disability accesses.
2. Modify Chapter 106 – Article 3 - Division 3 – Temporary Signs: Allow (without a permit) Valet Parking signs by specifying number, size, structure, location, timing and removal.

3. Implement a simplified administrative permit process: Use the Special Events permit process as a model. Conditions of the permit could outline sign requirements, days/hours of service, and limits on use of the public right-of-way. Additionally, if any vehicle parking is to occur off-site a condition of the permit could be the provision of a parking plan and a copy of any related shared parking agreement(s).
  
4. Modify and/or implement ordinances to specifically regulate valet parking: Establish authority to issue valet parking permits; establish operational requirements, conditions and fees; modify off-street parking and loading requirements to encompass valet parking considerations; provide for appropriate signage; provide for the protection of other businesses, residences and the public right-of-way from adverse impacts; and, provide for compliance and enforcement.

### **Conclusions**

Staff is prepared to move forward based on the direction of City Council.