TONY ZIELINSKI
ALDERMAN, 14TH DISTRICT

Mayor signs regressive parking meter tax legislation

Statement of Alderman Tony Zielinski
October 4, 2018

Today Mayor Tom Barrett quietly signed two legislative files related to parking meter fees that were approved by the Common Council over my strong objections on September 25 (see https://milwaukee.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=3538266&GUID=69FEFB77-27E6-45F2-B273-D3F1F313BE9F&Options=ID|Text|&Search=parking and https://milwaukee.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=3515820&GUID=229423A1-8B0F-4A22-B3DE-61BBD734354F&Options=ID|Text|&Search=parking).

The first file increases the amount of time the city can charge for parking at meters. By ordinance this means that now instead of there being no limitations on parking at meters from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m., that period now starts at midnight and goes to 7 a.m.

For someone shopping, eating at a restaurant or attending a game or performance downtown or in the Historic Third Ward, this means they'll need to make sure to plug those meters to cover that period from 7 p.m. to midnight!

The second ordinance approved by the Council and signed today by the Mayor authorizes the commissioner of public works to set parking meter rates between $0.25 and $5 per hour, and between $5 and $50 for event parking. This has been called "surge pricing" and hits low-income and average citizens hard when they come downtown and need to park for an event or an appointment. For many of them it will result in additional parking tickets and parking tickets that will come with an even steeper price tag. These people are already paying too much for parking and now the Council and the Mayor are hitting them again and hard just for coming to visit the downtown area.

These parking changes are projected by the Mayor to bring in an additional $1.9 million in 2019 (so he's already counting the money).

The Mayor had an option on these fee increases – he could have vetoed the Council's actions. He chose not to do so and average citizens in Milwaukee will be paying the (premium) parking price for years to come.

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