

Parking ticket inspired him to take on City Hall



ADAM McCUNE
McCune's Manchester

THEY SAY YOU can't fight City Hall. While that may be true in some sense, the following is a letter I sent to the city concerning a recent parking ticket, and their official response. Portions of both letters have been edited for length. My effort was successful.

I was greeted on Friday by one of your lovely orange envelopes on my car door. I can't

thank you enough.

I thought I had done everything right on that day. I got out, dutifully parked immediately in front of a shiny new parking kiosk on Central Street. Put in my card, punched up the maximum time and even came back to my car a full 10 minutes before my time had come up. Good Mr. Citizen.

So why did I have one of those lovely orange presents under my wiper? I was within 15

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feet of a fire hydrant.

I have no doubt that this is a grandfathered city ordinance, if not an outright tradition. For sure it's an easy money maker, because I didn't have the tape measure and video camera that's needed to document such an incident. I understand, times are tough and every effort needs to be made to raise some much needed capital. But why me?

I called and heard you took a picture of my car. Lovely isn't it? Which do you like best? It's classic German diesel engineering? It's boxy European headlights or the stylish tones coming from its muffler when it starts up. I'm partial to the latter, though you probably weren't there to appreciate that aspect of my classic 300TD. Which, by the way, you labeled a "MERZ STWG" on your ominous parking violation. Is this a new form of texting?

Anyway, to the point. I can't really dispute how far away I was from said fire hydrant. I can say that, short of knowing the exact detail of the ordinance, there would be no way to know what to expect. That and our recent downfalls of snow have slightly obscured the hydrant in question.

Surely, had the road been cleared underneath that ugly rotten ice and snow, it would have revealed a cross-hatch pattern, indicating "no parking." I'm not blaming the plow guys, those poor people have worked enough. I'm just saying I would have parked elsewhere. In fact, there were other spaces. I simply chose the one closest to the kiosk. Who would expect that's not a "legal" space?

Does that picture you took include the lack of a proper sign? Does it show the crusted snow on top of the road, making it impossible to see any tell-tale road markings?

At any rate, some sort of signage is necessary here. I don't think anything short of that is sufficient.

Until that sign is in, I just don't feel comfortable paying this ticket. I'd rather donate \$50 to the Food Bank. Lord knows they could use it.

I'd also be happy to send a check for the full amount owed (\$50) immediately with one condition: that it is earmarked specifically for a sign saying something like "Read All Ordinances" or "Danger: Meter Maid Loitering Area." Or even simply, "No Parking." I'm assuming that

last one is probably better. It seems more suited for public service. Otherwise, I won't pay. I'm telling this to you with certainty. You can hunt me down, like a dog, wasting countless hours on wages and gasoline in vehicles and watch your blood pressure rise as you spend thousands of dollars jugging around a yellow boot all in the name of my \$50, or we can come to some sort of mutually beneficial agreement.

So, in case my intention has been obscured in this lengthy diatribe, let me state this clearly: I'm formally asking for a review of my ticket.

Thanks, Adam McCune

Dear Mr. McCune,
I received your parking ticket dispute for the above citation, and I recalled speaking with you on the phone some time back. First, let me say that we have already voided your parking ticket, as the pictures taken at the time the ticket was issued do indeed show that the striping is covered in ice and the vehicle was parked directly in front of a Pay & Display meter.

During wintertime, we do receive some disputes of this nature, and we always try to fairly resolve each situation. The (parking control officers) out in the field generally take snow and ice into consideration when deciding to issue a ticket. In some cases there is a difference of opinion and when we receive disputes, management and enforcement staff discuss them as a group to determine a fair and consistent method of enforcement.

With regards to your suggestion about signage, we do our best to reduce the amount of visual noise (or "stuff") on the sidewalks, and a large percentage of that "stuff" is sign posts. We have found that when there is snow and ice obscuring the striping in that area, people don't park illegally. Most winters, the street is clear up to the curb and we haven't had a problem. So, rather than install more sign posts, we will opt to take it easy on enforcement this winter and see what happens next winter.

Brandy Stanley
Parking Manager
City of Manchester

Adam McCune is the host of the MEE Morning Shift on 96.5 the MEE. He's currently thinking about what to do with his \$50, now that it's no longer a political prisoner. You can e-mail him at adam@965themee.com