

URBANA TRAFFIC COMMISSION
Tuesday, November 1, 2005

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Dennis Roberts, City Council Member
Eddie Adair, Chief of Police

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Joe Smith, Senior Civil Engineer

OTHERS PRESENT:

Charlie Smyth, City Council Member, Ward 1
Gary Biehl, University of Illinois
Shawn Crowley, Parking Enforcement
Kate Pokarney, U of I Media

The meeting began at 4:00 p.m.

Additions to the agenda:

There were no additions to the agenda.

Approval of Minutes:

Eddie Adair moved to accept the minutes as read. Dennis Roberts seconded the motion. The Commission voted 2-0 to approve the minutes of the October 2005 meeting.

Item #1 - Discussion of parking restrictions on Maple Street between Michigan Avenue and Pennsylvania Avenue.

Dennis Roberts reviewed discussion from the October Traffic Commission meeting where Operations Division asked for parking restrictions on the west side of Maple Street from Michigan Avenue to Pennsylvania Avenue as a means to preserve the recent improvements made to Maple Street. He added that the residents were to be notified of the suggested parking restrictions.

Ms. Stiehl reported that the residents and property owners had been notified of the proposed restrictions. She added that the restrictions were not in response to any parking violations or complaints about on-street parking.

Eddie Adair moved to restrict parking on the west side of Maple Street between Michigan Avenue and Pennsylvania Avenue.

Dennis Roberts seconded the motion.

The motion passed 2-0.

This item will go to Council for further consideration.

Item #2 - Discussion of parking restrictions in the 300 block of East Crystal Lake Drive

Shawn Crowley explained that the area immediately to the west of Cunningham Avenue on Crystal Lake Drive was occupied by businesses. She stated that the problem was that the businesses were using the street to store vehicles on the south side of Crystal Lake Drive, which she stated sometimes blocked the driveway on the south side of the street and obstructed the stop sign. She added that Parking Enforcement had a difficult time locating the owners of the vehicles.

Barb Stiehl mentioned that there were legal on-street parking spaces along the south side of Crystal Lake Drive and that those not using the legal spaces could be ticketed.

Ms. Crowley stated that signage was needed to eliminate on-street parking along the south side of the street from Cunningham Avenue to the west end of the parking lot owned by 607 North Cunningham Avenue. She added that visibility was a problem at the stop sign when turning onto Crystal Lake Drive from Cunningham Avenue.

Dennis Roberts stated that there were cars that were illegally parking along the street by blocking the driveway.

Ms. Stiehl stated that there were lines showing where the driveway entrance existed. She added that the Illinois Department of Transportation plans to install traffic signals at that intersection in the near future. She asked how on-street parking blocked visibility of the stop sign when parking in that area was on the property at 607 North Cunningham.

Ms. Crowley stated that vehicles had been seen blocking the driveways by parking on the street.

Ms. Stiehl contended that if a vehicle was blocking a driveway, the vehicle could be ticketed and that would not be a reason to eliminate parking on that side of the street. She added that the Traffic Engineer was concerned that eliminating parking in that area would move the vehicles into the residential area of that street.

Ms. Crowley stated that the vehicles continue to park illegally in that area and that the business did park vehicles in the residential area.

Dennis Roberts suggested painting yellow on the street to identify the area where parking would be prohibited.

Ms. Crowley said that they would not paint the curbs in that area.

Ms. Stiehl stated that where violations occurred was where vehicles could be ticketed under the current parking situation.

Ms. Crowley agreed that they could ticket, but that the parking was not clear cut to people.

Eddie Adair moved to eliminate parking on the south side of Crystal Lake Drive from Cunningham Avenue to the west side of the driveway owned by 607 North Cunningham Avenue.

Mr. Roberts seconded the motion.

Ms. Crowley said that it was difficult to see when exiting that driveway.

Mr. Roberts asked how that would be different from a residential driveway.

Ms. Crowley stated that traffic was traveling faster on Cunningham Avenue than on a residential street.

Ms. Stiehl stated that the City did not usually paint driveways to designate parking restrictions.

Dennis Roberts suggested that two parking signs be installed—one to indicate no parking here to corner and one to indicate that there was no parking near the driveway entrance.

Shawn Crowley asked why parking could not be restricted now since it would be restricted when signals were installed.

Dennis Roberts stated that when the signals were installed there would be lanes painted that would indicate that area as a lane of traffic.

Barb Stiehl stated that there was not a need to eliminate all parking when the parking concerns are in areas where motorists could be ticketed already.

The motion passed 2-0.

Ms. Stiehl stated that she would find out about the correct signage needed to mark the parking restrictions.

This item will go to Council for consideration.

Following the meeting, it was discovered that the installation of the traffic signals at Cunningham Avenue and Crystal Lake Drive was tentatively scheduled for 2007.

Item #3 - Discussion of 20 m.p.h. speed limit for the University District.

Gary Biehl discussed the University of Illinois' proposal to reduce the speed limit in the University District from its current speed of 25 m.p.h. to 20 m.p.h. He added that the request was a result of meeting convened by the University to take steps to improve safety on campus. He added that additional meetings would be held to develop long-term and short-term plans to improve safety.

Eddie Adair asked if the City of Champaign was in favor of the speed limit reduction.

Mr. Biehl stated that they seemed to be in agreement with the proposed change. He added that the University of Illinois would be responsible for the purchase and installation of the new signage.

Charlie Smyth asked why the lower speed limit was necessary in the outlying areas of campus, such as St. Mary's Road.

Mr. Biehl stated that the University and cities wanted uniformity within the University District to aid enforcement so they did not want varying speed limits throughout the district.

Dennis Roberts stated that the traffic problems seemed to be more of an attention problem than a speeding problem.

Mr. Biehl stated that the University had made a commitment to safety that included reducing speeds within the campus area.

Eddie Adair stated that the cities of Champaign and Urbana had been instructed to issue tickets for traffic violations, not just warnings.

Dennis Roberts asked if there would be an education campaign to notify people of the change in the speed limit.

Eddie Adair stated that the University should encourage the education of pedestrians.

Mr. Smyth said that the 20 m.p.h. must be justified. He questioned how the lower speed limit could be justified in areas where pedestrians were not present most of the time. He stated that on some streets, pedestrian traffic would be sufficient enough to justify the lower speed limit, but that there were other areas he was not certain that there would be enough traffic.

Mr. Biehl stated that the reduced speed limits would be for only those streets that were currently posted at 25 m.p.h.

Shawn Crowley asked if the recent accidents on campus were caused by speeding vehicles.

Dennis Roberts replied that they were not.

Charlie Smyth asked when speeding motorists were ticketed.

Chief Adair stated that motorists were typically ticketed for speeds that were five or more miles above the posted speed limit, except for school zones where any speed over that limit was ticketed.

Mr. Smyth asked why the University wanted to reduce the speed limit to 20 m.p.h. when they could just strictly enforce the 25 m.p.h. limit currently in effect. He stated that he was not convinced that speed was a factor in any of the recent accidents.

Mr. Biehl stated that reaction time was better for motorists traveling at 20 m.p.h. than at 25 m.p.h.

Eddie Adair moved to reduce the speed limit from 25 m.p.h. to 20 m.p.h. in the University District.

Dennis Roberts seconded.

The motion passed 2-0.

This item will go to Council for consideration.

Dennis Roberts suggested that other suggestions be pursued.

Eddie Adair stated that pedestrian safety be a mandatory part of freshman orientation at the University.

It was requested that prior to Council discussion of this item that the Public Works Director enact his temporary powers to direct that the 20 m.p.h. signage be installed.

Meeting adjourned at 5:05 P.M.

Following the meeting of the Urbana Traffic Commission, the City of Champaign met and rejected the request to reduce the speed limit to 20 m.p.h. in the University District. As a result of Champaign's decision, the City of Urbana will not pursue the issue of speed reduction in the University District since it is the desire to keep the speed limit in the University District uniform.

The next meeting will be held December 6, 2005 at 4:00 p.m. at the Urbana City Building, 400 South Vine, second floor conference room.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Stiehl
Recording Secretary