

URBANA TRAFFIC COMMISSION
Tuesday, September 5, 2006

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Dennis Roberts, City Council Member
Mike Bily, Chief of Police
Joe Smith, Senior Civil Engineer

OTHERS PRESENT:

Shawn Crowley, Parking Enforcement
Sophia Zeigler, 2008 South Anderson Street
Joe Rasmussen, 1305 Farley, Champaign
John Farney, 2504 East Florida Avenue
Sterling Atkins, 1109 North Harvey Street
Yvette Brown, 1108 North Harvey Street
Ellen Amberg, 305 Pond Ridge Lane
Chad S. Beckett, 508 South Broadway Avenue
Dorothy Randle, 115 West Eads Street
Edward "Jim" Silha, 1407 Ogelthorpe Avenue

The meeting began at 4:05 p.m.

Additions to the agenda:

There were no additions to the agenda.

Approval of Minutes:

Dennis Roberts moved to accept the minutes as read. Joe Smith seconded the motion. The Commission voted 3-0 to approve the minutes of the August 2006 meeting.

Item #1 - Discussion of parking restrictions on Michigan Avenue between Abercorn Street and Montgomery Street.

Joe Smith stated that if parking was restricted it should follow the pattern of the other east/west streets in the subdivision.

Joe Smith moved to restrict parking on the north side of Michigan Avenue between Abercorn Street and Montgomery Street.

Mike Bily seconded the motion.

Mr. Smith added that the Traffic Commission should look at parking restrictions on Rainbow View and Country Squire Drive after the subdivision development was completed.

The motion passed 3-0.

This item will go to Council for consideration.

Item #2- Discussion of the installation of a 30-minute loading zone on Lincoln Avenue, south of Nevada Street.

Joe Smith discussed the proposal for a loading zone on the west side of Lincoln Avenue south of Nevada Street and on the east side of Lincoln Avenue near the bus shelter.

Shawn Crowley requested that the signage specify that the loading zone would be for commercial vehicles.

Joe Smith stated that it would not be safe for customers to use that area.

Dennis Roberts asked if the businesses along the west side of Lincoln Avenue had parking available for their customers.

Joe Smith confirmed that parking was available in lots adjacent to Caffe Paradiso and Jimmy John's. He said that the signage should allow 30 minutes for loading and unloading.

Dennis Roberts moved to designate 30-minute loading zones for commercial vehicles on Lincoln Avenue.

Joe Smith seconded the motion. He stated that he would measure the locations to give specific measurements for the ordinance.

The motion passed 3-0.

This item will go to Council for consideration.

Item #3 - Discussion of parking restrictions in the 700 block of West Main Street by St. Patrick's Catholic Church.

Joe Smith summarized a letter received from Chad Beckett of St. Patrick's Catholic Church requesting that a loading zone be designated on the north side of Main Street to provide access to the food pantry run by the church. *Currently, the area is designated as no parking, except on Sunday.*

Ellen Amberg clarified that the parish center was the location of the food pantry, not the church. She stated that the food pantry was part of the Eastern Illinois Food Bank. Ms. Amberg said that the current location for loading food for needy families was not easily accessible. She said that the food pantry served over 100 people per week, usually between the hours of 4:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. She requested temporary parking to allow food to be loaded during that time frame.

Mr. Rasmussen stated that one-third of the block would be sufficient to accommodate spaces for loading vehicles. He stated that the temporary parking would not be for their dining room, but that the parking would be for the food pantry only. He said that 15 minutes would be adequate to load food into vehicles.

Joe Smith stated that the signage would have to specify the days of the week when the loading zone would be effective, since parking was allowed on Sundays in that area of Main Street.

Ms. Zeigler expressed some concern about traffic on Main Street.

Mr. Rasmussen stated that Coler Street had been considered but that street was narrower.

Dennis Roberts agreed that Main Street provided more visibility for those entering and exiting their vehicles.

Joe Smith recommended the installation of a 15-minute loading zone on the north side of Main Street from 4:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m., Monday through Saturday.

Dennis Roberts moved to designate a loading zone on the north side of Main Street.

Mike Bily seconded the motion.

The motion passed 3-0.

This item will go to Council for further consideration.

Item #4 - Discussion of speeding on Eads Street between Goodwin Avenue and Lincoln Avenue.

Joe Smith researched the last speed study conducted on Eads Street. He summarized the findings of that study which showed the average speed on Eads Street was 28 m.p.h. He said that since that study was conducted in 1995, there had been more development in that area so he recommended conducting another study which would monitor traffic for 24 hours, 7 days a week.

Dorothy Randle expressed concern about speeding and loud car stereos.

Mike Bily stated that the Police Department had heard similar complaints from other residents and had increased enforcement of the noise ordinance.

Sterling Atkins stated that the speeding problem was particularly noticeable on week-ends.

Ms. Randle stated that it seemed to be at its worse between 6:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.

Yvette Brown thought that the problem began after 3:00 p.m. and sometimes continued into the night.

Dennis Roberts stated that the study would be important to help determine if the problem was valid.

Ms. Brown asked how the study would help.

Joe Smith stated that the study would show traffic speeds and when speeding was problematic. He added that these tools help with enforcement.

Ms. Brown asked if "Slow Children" signage could be installed.

Joe Smith stated that the City did not install those signs.

Mr. Roberts added that the signage would give a false sense of security that motorists were giving special attention to this area, when in fact the overuse of the sign may cause motorists to disregard it.

Mr. Atkins asked if stop signs could be installed.

Joe Smith stated that if the signs were installed, they would not slow traffic. He added that there might be a risk of running the signs if they were installed without meeting the requirements established by the City.

Dennis Roberts stated that the results of the speed study would be discussed at the October Traffic Commission meeting.

Item #5 - Discussion of traffic concerns in Savannah Green.

John Farney discussed his concerns about traffic speeds increasing since the opening of Smith Road from Washington Street to Florida Avenue.

Ed Silha expressed concern about vehicles playing loud music. He added that even though stop signs were added on the side streets, traffic conflicts still occurred.

Mr. Farney expressed concern about the lack of signage on the alleys in Savannah Green.

Joe Smith mentioned that the City would sign the alleys once the developer turned over the maintenance of the streets to the City.

Mr. Farney expressed concern about the possible increase of traffic on Florida Avenue after it was open to High Cross Road. He also expressed concern about traffic speeds on the alleys since many children used the alleys as a play area.

Mr. Silha asked if stop signs could be installed on Smith Road at Michigan Avenue to make the intersection a four-way stop.

Joe Smith stated that a traffic study would be conducted at Florida Avenue and Smith Road and at Michigan Avenue and Smith Road to determine whether a four-way stop intersection was warranted. He stated that he would report the results at the November Traffic Commission meeting.

Mike Bily asked if there was a specific time when traffic seemed to be speeding on Smith Road.

John Farney stated that dinner time and late night (between midnight and 1:00 a.m.) were times when speeding seemed to be a problem.

Chief Bily said that the Police Department would set the speed trailer on Smith Road to let motorists know what the speed limit was. He stated that STEP enforcement would be assigned to Smith Road to enforce speed limits in that area.

Joe Smith stated that the City was waiting for the developer to turn over control of the streets and alleys before signing the area with stop signs and one-way signs on the alleys.

This item does not require Council action.

The Commission discussed items to be placed on the October Traffic Commission agenda.

Meeting adjourned at 4:40 P.M.

The next meeting will be held October 3, 2006 at 4:00 p.m. at the Urbana City Building, 400 South Vine, second floor conference room.

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara Stiehl
Recording Secretary