

URBANA TRAFFIC COMMISSION
Tuesday, May 5, 2009

MEMBERS PRESENT:

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

MEMBERS ABSENT:

None

OTHERS PRESENT:

Ashley Price, 1403 South Smith Road
Melissa Kane, 1405 South Smith Road
Conrad Wetzell, 2334 West John Street, Champaign
Khalyn Avery, 1315 Abercorn Street

The meeting began at 4:00 p.m.

Additions to the agenda:

There were no additions to the agenda.

Approval of Minutes:

Mike Bily moved to approve the minutes as read. Joe Smith seconded the motion. The Commission voted 3-0 to approve the minutes of the April 2009 meeting.

Old Business

There was no old business to discuss.

New Business

Item #1- Discussion of the installation of a four-way stop at Smith Road and Michigan Avenue.

Ashley Price asked that a four-way stop be installed at the intersection of Smith Road and Michigan Avenue to slow motorists on Smith Road. She said that she lived near the intersection and heard near misses often.

Melissa Kane stated that her car was hit on December 20, 2008 while parked on Smith Road when a motorist lost control of his vehicle and totaled her car. She added that many children live in the neighborhood.

Ms. Price said that she had heard that a school bus stop was moved because traffic speeds were too high.

Chief Bily said that the bus stop was moved for other reasons, not because of traffic speeds.

Dennis Roberts asked if there were stop signs on Michigan Avenue.

Ms. Price said that there were, but that there were no stop signs on Smith Road between Washington Street and Florida Avenue. She continued by saying that an accident occurred in March that resulted in an injury

Joe Smith mentioned that the driver, who sustained an injury, was intoxicated, fled the scene of the accident and was driving with a suspended license. Mr. Smith added that there had been three accidents at that intersection during the last three years (October 2006, December 2008 and March 2009). He stated that of those three accidents, only one (October 2006) was a right-angle crash. He said that the Manual for Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) guidelines recommend that a four-way stop be installed when five or more accidents occur within a year, which had not occurred at this intersection.

Ms. Price asked what could be done to control vehicle speeds.

Chief Bily said that the Police Department would place the speed trailer on Smith Road to determine when speeding was problematic and that he would assign an officer to that area to ticket motorists who were speeding. He added that it would be effective for awhile.

Ms. Price said that she wanted stop signs on Smith Road to stop motorists.

Mr. Smith stated that stop signs do not control speeding. He stated that stop signs are installed to control right of way at an intersection. He continued by saying that the traffic counts conducted at the intersection showed that the average hourly volume was 115 vehicles on Smith Road and 31 vehicles on Michigan Avenue. He stated that the volumes were too low to meet the guidelines defined in the MUTCD. He discussed the delay time at the intersection for motorists on Michigan Avenue. He said that none of the vehicles had a wait longer than 5 seconds and that the guideline for installing a stop sign would have to have an average wait of longer than 30 seconds. Mr. Smith explained that the one final guideline that was considered was whether 15% of the motorists were approaching the intersection at a speed of 40 m.p.h. or higher; he said that those within the 15% were travelling less than 40 m.p.h. He concluded by saying that the guidelines used by the City to justify the placement of stop signs were not met at this intersection.

Dennis Roberts asked if a 30 m.p.h. speed limit sign could be installed on Smith Road.

Joe Smith said that he would recommend increased signage along Smith Road. He recommended adding the 30 m.p.h. speed limit signs and intersection warning signs on Smith

Road. In addition, he suggested that “Cross Traffic Does Not Stop” bowties be added to the stop signs on Michigan Avenue.

Dennis Roberts added that the increased signage would make the speed limit clear to motorists.

Mike Bily said that he would assign STEP enforcement to that area.

Ashley Price asked if there were other intersections in Urbana where speeding was a problem.

Mr. Smith stated that there were.

Dennis Roberts said that the Police Department would respond to the concern and monitor the situation.

Joe Smith moved to approve the recommended signage on Smith Road and Michigan Avenue.

Dennis Roberts seconded the motion.

The motion passed 3-0.

This item does not require Council action.

Item #2- Discussion of parking restrictions on Rainbow View.

Khalyn Avery discussed concerns about parking on Rainbow View near the alleys and streets that intersect that street. She was particularly mindful of the situation after narrowly missing a child who ran into the street. She added that the signs restricting parking along the south side of Rainbow View were frequently ignored. Ms. Avery requested that the curbs be painted yellow; the police ticket vehicles that are parked illegally and/or parking be restricted on Rainbow View between Abercorn Street and Smith Road.

Joe Smith discussed the recommendations that Ms. Avery suggested. He mentioned that the City no longer paints curbs yellow since signs would be easier to see during inclement weather than the yellow curbing. He concurred with Ms. Avery that the alleys in the subdivision created confusion since some motorists were not sure whether they could park near the intersection with an alley. He also agreed with Ms. Avery that parking restrictions would improve visibility along Rainbow View. He asked if parking was available at other locations for residents in that area.

Ms. Avery stated that residents of Savannah Green had space along the streets in front of their homes, along with space in the driveways and garages that were accessible from the alleys. She added that there were spaces for residents of the apartment complex to the north of Rainbow View.

Mike Bily said that the visibility conflict for public alleys justified the parking restrictions.

Dennis Roberts moved to restrict parking on Rainbow View between Abercorn Street and Ogelthorpe Avenue on the south side.

Joe Smith said that as the area between Ogelthorpe Avenue and Smith Road develop, the Commission might consider restrictions between those streets.

Mike Bily seconded the motion.

The motion passed 3-0.

This item will go to Council for consideration.

Item #3- Discussion of parking restrictions on Stoughton Street, west of Lincoln Avenue.

Conrad Wetzel spoke about visibility concerns near the driveway for the First Mennonite Church that was located on Stoughton Street. Mr. Wetzel said that it was difficult to see motorists on Stoughton Street when leaving the church parking lot. He requested that one parking space be removed.

Mike Bily asked if parking was restricted on the other side of side of Stoughton Street.

Joe Smith said that there were restrictions. He asked if the alley was used for exiting the parking lot.

Mr. Wetzel said that the alley was used by the church and by the mosque.

Mr. Smith was concerned about removing parking in an area where on-street parking was limited. He said that the precedent had been not to remove parking for driveway access. He suggested that the parking situation be reviewed to see if the spaces could be more carefully delineated without losing any spaces. He added that the No Parking Here to Corner sign might be moved back to allow more visibility near the access to the driveway.

Mr. Wetzel thought that any additional clearance near the driveway would be helpful.

Joe Smith moved to approve moving the No Parking Here to Corner sign after parking spaces have been measured to make sure that no spaces would be lost.

Mike Bily seconded the motion.

The motion was passed 3-0.

This item will go to Council for consideration.

The meeting adjourned at 4:48 p.m.

The next meeting will be held June 2, 2009 at 4:00 p.m. at the Urbana City Building, 400 South Vine Street, second floor conference room.

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara Stiehl
Recording Secretary