

URBANA TRAFFIC COMMISSION
Tuesday, March 2, 2010

MEMBERS PRESENT:

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

MEMBERS ABSENT:

None

OTHERS PRESENT:

Mary Van Cleave, 806 South Urbana Avenue
William Van Cleave, 806 South Urbana Avenue
George Francis, 801 South Anderson Street
Eleanor Blackmon, 501 East Oregon Street
David Kibbey, 713 South Maple Street
Carl Stewart, 807 South Maple Street
Rich Coyne, Operations Manager
Les Stratton, Operations Supervisor
Lisa Lockett, 804 South Maple Street

The meeting began at 4:02 p.m.

Additions to the agenda:

There were no additions to the agenda.

Approval of Minutes:

There was one correction to the minutes. The meeting date was incorrectly written as *Tuesday, February 3, 2010* instead of *Tuesday, February 2, 2010*. Mike Bily moved to approve the minutes as corrected. Joe Smith seconded the motion. The Commission voted 3-0 to approve the corrected minutes of the February 2010 meeting.

Unfinished Business

There was no unfinished business for discussion.

New Business

Item #1- Discussion of parking restrictions Urbana Avenue, Maple Street and Grove Street from Washington Street to Oregon Street.

Joe Smith stated that letters were sent to residents on Urbana Avenue, Maple Street and Grove Street in the block between Washington Street and Oregon Street.

George Francis stated that he didn't receive a letter. (Mr. Francis was given a copy of the letter sent to those residents on the streets specified.)

Rich Coyne explained that City trucks had been unable to go down these streets when cars were parked on both sides of the street. He mentioned that plows were forced to back up on these streets, which caused a delay in snow removal since the driver had to call for assistance to complete the maneuver. He said that this winter a snow plow hit a car because the driver had to pass between cars parked directly across from each other on the street. He added that the street sweeper could not travel down the street without having to lift its brushes.

Les Stratton said that there were a number of incidents where trucks had to back out of the street in that area. He stated that when the trucks are forced to do that, they leave piles of snow in the middle of the street, which made travel down the street difficult. In addition, Mr. Stratton said that when snow collected on the street, motorists did not park near the curb, even further limiting the width for those travelling down the street.

George Francis said that the City was going to extreme measures if the problem was occurring only during snow removal season. He asked that the City consider signs that restrict parking during heavy snowfall.

Dennis Roberts said that the City of Champaign had designated snow routes and the parking was restricted when 2 inches or more of snow falls. He mentioned that the streets in this area of Urbana were narrower than most streets.

Rich Coyne said that most streets in the City are 28 feet in width and that those that are less than 28 feet have parking restricted to one side of the street. Mr. Coyne stated that cars frequently park across from each other on these streets that are mentioned. He showed pictures taken early in the day that illustrated how little room there was for a pick-up truck to pass between vehicles that were parked on both sides of Maple Street.

Lisa Lockett stated that the pictures were not typical of what normal parking on the street would be. She said that when people are having work done in their homes there would be more parking. Ms. Lockett stated that the pictures were taken in front of her home and the trucks parked across from each other were doing work on her home. She had noticed that more residents from Washington Street were parking on Maple Street. She added that with many houses being rented there were more vehicles parking on the street.

Dennis Roberts said that neighborhood changes could explain why there was more congestion from parked vehicles on the streets.

Mike Bily explained that the Traffic Commission would be listening to input from residents for the next three months before making a recommendation.

Joe Smith said that the residents from Wabash Avenue, Lynn Street and Webber Street would be invited to the April 6th meeting of the Urbana Traffic Commission and then the Commissioners would make a recommendation at the May 4th meeting.

Mary Van Cleave expressed concern that placing vehicles on one side of the street would allow vehicles to travel faster down the street. She mentioned that Urbana Avenue was used by motorists to by-pass the intersection of Washington Street and Vine Street. She was concerned about children in the street.

George Francis stated that he lived on Anderson Street but that he preferred to park on Grove Street because it was a quieter street. He was concerned about the availability of parking for those residents having parties at their homes. He said that fire trucks have been able to travel down the streets. He mentioned that Anderson Street was also a narrow street.

Joe Smith mentioned that parking was already restricted to one side on Anderson Street.

Eleanor Blackmon expressed concerns about unintended consequences that might result from the parking restrictions. She did mention that school buses have had difficulty maneuvering down the streets. She asked that the City look at other ordinances to add flexibility for residents who might want to expand parking on their own properties. She mentioned that perhaps the City would consider allowing pervious pavers to be used to increase parking on private property at a low cost to residents. She noted that when bicycle paths are completed on Washington Street, those who currently parked on Washington Street would move to the north and park in these blocks. She asked that the City help residents deal with the restrictions.

Dennis Roberts commented on the statement that vehicles were speeding down the streets. He said that sometimes peoples' perceptions of vehicle speeds were that the speeds were faster than the actually were.

William Van Cleave said that he knew how fast vehicles were travelling because he drove a lot.

Lisa Luckett said that motorists flew down Maple Street in the mornings to avoid Vine Street and Washington Street. She had concerns about traffic speeds increasing if parking were restricted to one side of the street. She mentioned that the new signs that restrict parking near the corners of the streets had added to the parking congestion on the street. She said that she would favor parking restrictions during heavy snowfalls.

William Van Cleave said that there was more parking available on the east side of the street than on the west side of the street.

Joe Smith mentioned that the suggestion for restricting parking on the east side was based upon the fact that the streetlight poles were on that side of the street and that the parking signs could be placed on the poles. He said that the restrictions did not have to be on that side and he appreciated the input to help with the decision-making process.

Mr. Van Cleave said that the street was not congested in the early morning. He mentioned that during the day, high school students parked on their street and that added to the congestion.

David Kibbey said that he was concerned that the congestion would increase once the bicycle paths were installed on Washington Street.

Lisa Luckett asked if snow removal could be done later in the day. She said that many people were illegally parked on the street and away from the curb. She was concerned that tickets were not issued to those who were illegally parked.

Les Stratton explained the procedure for residential snow removal in Urbana. He stated that to safely care for the streets, the routes needed to be passable.

David Kibbey asked about the process for leaf removal.

Mr. Stratton explained that the leaf pusher had difficulty removing leaves on those streets.

Mr. Kibbey asked if there was a possibility to use different equipment on their streets.

Les Stratton said that smaller vehicles were assigned to parking lots. He said that it would take longer to reach those streets if smaller vehicles were re-directed to the streets after completing the parking lots. He said that doing so would be a piecemeal approach to snow removal and an inefficient use of equipment.

Dennis Roberts asked if streets could be left unplowed.

Les Stratton said that it would limit access for emergency vehicles.

Lisa Luckett said that her daughter lived in Lincoln Park and that their community restricts parking on certain days of the month.

Les Stratton mentioned that the City of Urbana used to have those restrictions, but the cost of towing vehicles and the loss of goodwill among the residents made it an unpopular option.

Ms. Luckett stated that just because it was easier for the City to maintain the streets by restricting parking, didn't make it easier for the residents.

David Kibbey asked for a summary of the comments received from e-mails and phone calls.

The following results were reported:

Urbana Street	1-favored restrictions
Maple Street	4-favored restrictions; 1-opposed restrictions; 1-conditional approval (snow route)

Grove 2-favored restrictions; 4-opposed restrictions; 3-conditional approval (2-snow route, 1-west side instead of east side)

Mr. Kibbey asked that the residents be mailed a survey to determine the opinions of the residents.

Ms. Luckett said that an emergency vehicle was able to go down the street the other day.

David Kibbey said that a delivery truck did have difficulty traveling down the street.

Dennis Roberts said that traffic needed to use caution when traveling down narrow street. He mentioned that traffic on Green Street had restrictions on one side, but that traffic still traveled slowly down the street.

Lisa Luckett said that residents did not have problems with the traffic flow. She added that other people who used the street created the problems.

Dennis Roberts stated that the streets were public streets. Mr. Roberts concluded the meeting by saying that the Traffic Commission would hear comments from the residents on Wabash Avenue, Webber Street and Lynn Street at the April meeting. He said that he was concerned about City operations being effective.

The meeting adjourned at 4:52 p.m.

The next meeting will be held April 6, 2010 at 4:00 p.m. at the Urbana City Building, 400 South Vine Street, second floor conference room.

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara Stiehl
Recording Secretary