

URBANA TRAFFIC COMMISSION

Tuesday, June 7, 2011

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Dennis Roberts, City Council Member
Pat Connolly, Chief of Police
Joe Smith, Senior Civil Engineer

MEMBERS ABSENT:

None

OTHERS PRESENT:

Irene Halcrombe, 917 North Harvey Street
Randy Rose, Health Alliance, 301 South Vine Street
John Collins, Operations Division Supervisor
Karen Clevenger, 1609 Lincolnwood Drive
Graham Berry, Soccer Planet, 2310 North Willow Drive
Tim Bartlett, Urbana Park District, 901 North Broadway Avenue

The meeting began at 4:07 p.m.

Additions to the agenda:

There were no additions to the agenda.

Approval of Minutes:

There were two corrections made to the minutes. On page 4, Pat Connolly asked that the minutes reflect that he would report on STEP enforcement on Florida Avenue at Lincolnwood Drive and that Joe Smith would report on streetlighting.

On page 3, Karen Clevenger asked that the minutes reflect that there was an accident this year (2011) instead of 2010 as shown in the minutes.

Joe Smith moved to approve the minutes as amended. Pat Connolly seconded the motion. The Commission voted 3-0 to approve the minutes of the May 3, 2011 meeting.

Unfinished Business

Item #1- Discussion of a traffic study on Illinois Street between Vine Street and Broadway Avenue.

Joe Smith discussed the results of a traffic study performed on Illinois Streets between Vine Street and Race Street on Wednesday, June 1 during the time periods of 7:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.; 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.; and 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. He said that the area was divided into 5 zones with the first zone being the area with the crosswalk. He mentioned that most of the pedestrians crossing Illinois Street crossed the street outside of the crosswalk. He said that the pedestrian crossing patterns warrant moving the crosswalk from the east side to the west side of Walnut Street, but he noted that during the Market at the Square many market patrons use that crossing. He said that most people crossing the street crossed directly from their vehicles to the other side of the street. He added that he had no recommendations to make to the Traffic Commission.

Randy Rose from Health Alliance Medical Plan said that he had tried numerous times to instruct employees to drive carefully when leaving the parking lot on the south side of Illinois Street. He asked for suggestions to encourage employees to come out of the parking lot safely. He wondered if a caution light or signage might help.

Dennis Roberts asked if the problem mostly involved employees.

Pat Connolly said that motorists should stop before leaving the parking lot. He said that some pedestrians cross outside of the crosswalks.

Randy Rose said that busses from the Mass Transit District park to the east of the entrance to the parking lot to take a break at the gas station, making traffic more congested.

Joe Smith said that he would discuss the issue of adding a second crosswalk and the possibility of adding a barrier (chains) to encourage pedestrians to cross at the crosswalks.

Pat Connolly said that the City would try to approach the concern incrementally to find a solution.

Pat Connolly asked if the issue with MTD parking near the lot could be addressed.

This item will be discussed at the September meeting of the Traffic Commission.

Item #2- Discussion of the installation of a left-turn only lane for northbound traffic on Lincoln Avenue between Florida Avenue and Pennsylvania Avenue.

Joe Smith said that he was making this request to avoid some of the confusion that motorists northbound on Lincoln Avenue have when approaching the intersection at Pennsylvania Avenue. He stated that a hill on Lincoln Avenue made it difficult to see that the left lane becomes a left turn only lane. He recommended that larger signage be added to warn motorists of the lane change. He added that this did not require any action from the Traffic Commission. He will ask that the Operations Division add the signage before school begins.

Item #3- Discussion of traffic on Lincolnwood Drive and Florida Avenue.

Joe Smith discussed the possibility of adding streetlights on Florida Avenue to the west of Lincolnwood Drive. He said that the Public Works Department will look into this further.

John Collins said that the warning signs for the curve had been ordered. He mentioned that the installation would be assigned at a later date.

Pat Connolly said that there were two additional accidents that had recently occurred since the last meeting of the Traffic Commission. He mentioned that one accident involved a vehicle on Florida Avenue turning northbound onto Lincolnwood Drive and into a car heading southbound on Lincolnwood Drive. He added that the operator of the southbound vehicle did not have any headlights turned on. He said that the second accident involved a hit and run on Lincolnwood where an illegally parked vehicle was hit. He stated that Strategic Traffic Enforcement Program (STEP) details assigned to the area revealed no excessive speeds during the two time periods they were observing traffic. He said that he believed that additional lighting and signage would help reduce accidents.

Joe Smith asked the minutes to show the support of the Traffic Commission for the installation of streetlights on Florida Avenue, west of Lincolnwood Drive.

Pat Connolly seconded the request.

The Commission voted 3-0 to support the installation of streetlights on Florida Avenue.

Joe Smith said that if the money was not available, it might be directed from another line item. He added that the installation might be done in-house using existing poles, but that the City would have to hire a contractor to install the conduit for the streetlight poles.

Item #4- Discussion of parking on Harvey Street at King Park.

Irene Halcrombe said that she was frustrated with the continual problem of visitors to King Park parking on Harvey Street and blocking her driveway. She mentioned that tickets hadn't been issued after the drop-off area to the park had been designated as a tow-away zone. She added

that people continue to park in the loading zone area and wait until the police arrive before they move their vehicles.

Pat Connolly said that it is difficult for an officer to wait for ten minutes to enforce the loading zone. He asked if the Park District could help by informing patrons at King Park of the parking restrictions.

Irene Halcrombe asked if park patrons could park on the grass.

Tim Bartlett said that there was parking available on Wascher Street, other side streets and King School. He informed the Traffic Commission that the Park District was ready to install bicycle lanes in the park that would originate at Harvey Street, but that the Park District would be reluctant to do so if the area was designated as a no parking zone. He felt that some inconsiderate people were the cause of the problem. He added that there were six to ten rentals of the pavilion a year and that the remainder of uses were from people who did not rent it from the park district. He further explained that the location of the pavilion was based upon input from members of the neighborhood.

Joe Smith asked if a couple of spaces could be added by moving the drop off area into the park.

Tim Bartlett said that might work.

Pat Connolly said that the parking would provide parking for loading and unloading and avoid blocking driveways for those residents near the park.

Joe Smith suggested that the loading zone designation be removed. He asked Tim Bartlett to work with Public Works to see if the design for the bicycle lanes could include a drop off area near the pavilion.

Tim Bartlett said that he would share the designs with Public Works. He added that the Park District would continue to remind those who rent the pavilion to park in designated parking areas to avoid blocking driveways.

Joe Smith said that he didn't want a large parking lot near the pavilion, but that he wanted to give park users options for using the park pavilion.

Joe Smith moved to create a no parking anytime area at the end of Harvey Street, remove the loading zone and keep the tow away zone.

Tim Bartlett said that he would send the plans for the bicycle lanes to Joe Smith once they were complete.

Dennis Roberts seconded the motion.

The motion passed 3-0.

This item will be put into place on a 90-day trial basis and reviewed at the September Traffic Commission meeting.

Chief Connolly asked that the Police Department be informed once the signage on Harvey Street was installed.

New Business

Item #5- Discussion of parking restrictions on the east side of Anderson Street, north of Mumford Drive.

Barb Stiehl explained that the Operations Division requested the parking restriction to keep a manhole cover from being blocked by parked vehicles.

John Collins mentioned that if there was an emergency, the Police Department could be contacted and the vehicle could be towed. He said that if it wasn't an emergency, signs could be posted to temporarily remove parking.

Joe Smith asked that no action be taken.

Item #6- Discussion of parking restrictions on both sides of Willow Road, north of Anthony Drive.

Graham Berry explained the plans for the indoor soccer field on Willow Road. He said that there would be 62 parking spaces within the property that is north of Michelle's Bridal on Willow Road. He said that the matches would be scheduled so he felt that there would not be a demand for parking beyond those spaces on the property.

Joe Smith said that the parking restrictions on Willow Road would encourage all visitors to the site to park on the property and not park on Willow Road since Willow Road was too narrow for parking.

Joe Smith moved to install parking restrictions on both sides of Willow Road between Anthony Drive and Beeson Street.

Dennis Roberts seconded the motion.

The motion passed 3-0.

This item will go to Council for consideration.

Item #7- Discussion of the installation of deer warning signs on Coler Avenue between Country Club Road and Sunset Drive between Coler Avenue and Broadway Avenue.

Joe Smith discussed a concern that a resident had about an increase in the deer population near the Anita Purves Nature Center. He asked if deer warning signage could be installed around the Busey Woods area. He mentioned that it was not a high priority since the location of deer could not be isolated to a particular area, but he said that one on Country Club Road, the 1400 block of Coler Avenue and Bradley Avenue for eastbound traffic at Coler Avenue might alert motorists to the concentration of deer.

John Collins said that they would look into placing the signage when time allowed.

No action was taken on this item.

The meeting adjourned at 5:31 p.m.

The next meeting will be held July 26, 2011 at 4:00 p.m. at the Urbana City Building, 400 South Vine Street, second floor conference room.

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara Stiehl
Recording Secretary