

URBANA TRAFFIC COMMISSION
Tuesday, December 4, 2012

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Dennis Roberts, City Council Member, Ward 5, Chair
Pat Connolly, Chief of Police
Joe Smith, Senior Civil Engineer

MEMBERS ABSENT:

None

OTHERS PRESENT:

Melisa Fondren, 1711 E. Florida Avenue, Apt. 205
Carletta Donaldson, 406 Brookens Drive
Willeta Donaldson, 406 Brookens Drive
Carlos Donaldson, 406 Brookens Drive
Jeff Yockey, 304 West Washington Street
Brad Bennett, Senior Civil Engineer
Cynthia Hoyle, 2207 South Cottage Grove Avenue
Charlie Smyth, Council Member, Ward 1
Deborah Walker, 1802 East Florida Avenue
Diane Marlin, Council Member, Ward 7
Brandon Bowersox-Johnson, Council Member, Ward 4

The meeting began at 7:00 p.m.

Additions to the agenda:

None

Approval of Minutes:

Joe Smith moved to approve the minutes as read. Pat Connolly seconded the motion. The Commission voted 3-0 to approve the minutes of the November 6, 2012 meeting.

Public Input

Those in attendance asked to speak to items as they were discussed.

Unfinished Business

Item #1- Discussion of parking restrictions on Florida Avenue between Philo Road and Kinch Street.

Brad Bennett provided a summary of the program requiring the parking restrictions. He explained that the City received a \$199,000 grant for the Safe Routes to School program in 2010.

He continued that as a recipient of the grant, the City would install bike infrastructure around and near the schools or connecting schools in Urbana, which would accomplish part of the goals of the Urbana Master Bicycle Plan. Mr. Bennett mentioned that parking restrictions would be necessary to allow room for the bicycle infrastructure along Florida Avenue. He discussed some misconceptions frequently associated with the installation of bicycle lanes. He mentioned that the on-street bicycle lanes would be optional since it might be safer for children and inexperienced bicyclists to use sidewalks. He also said that bike lanes were safer for more experienced bicyclists since motorists backing out of driveways would be more likely to see a bicyclist in a bike lane than see one traveling on a sidewalk. He stated that this was part of a project to provide connected bicycle infrastructure in Urbana.

Joe Smith reviewed the revised map of the parking restrictions showing both existing parking restrictions and the proposed parking restrictions. He said that all of the parking on the south side of Florida Avenue for Florida House and the Pointe remained intact. He stated that there would be 16 spaces available near Florida House and that staff met with the property manager at Florida House who was pleased that no parking would be lost. He did mention that there was one space on the north side of Florida Avenue that would be marked to indicate that parking would not be allowed since the space was not long enough for a vehicle to legally park. He added that all parking on the south side of Florida Avenue would remain as it was from Philo Road to Thomas Paine. He said that there would be a few spaces remaining on the north side of Florida Avenue. Specifically, he noted that spaces would be available in front of Florida House (1502 East Florida Avenue), to the east of 1802 East Florida Avenue and between 1908 and 2002 East Florida Avenue. He mentioned that many of the spaces removed did not comply with the visibility clearances established by the City.

Dennis Roberts asked where the bike lanes would end.

Brad Bennett said that the bicycle lanes would continue east to 2007 East Florida Avenue.

Dennis Roberts asked if residents at the duplexes have been involved in the discussion.

Barb Stiehl stated that the residents and property owners were notified about the meeting.

Carletta Donaldson said that the City should talk to everyone impacted by the changes.

Dennis Roberts asked about the transition between the shared bicycle lanes and the off-street path.

Joe Smith stated that the sharrow (shared lane) would provide the transition between the bicycle lanes and the off-street path. He mentioned that the installation of a left-turn lane for eastbound traffic onto Kinch Street made it difficult to add a bicycle lane in that area, so a sharrow would be installed in that area. He said that parking would not be allowed on the "S" curve on Florida Avenue because of visibility concerns.

Carletta Donaldson asked for a description of current and proposed parking restrictions for each block on the north and south side of Florida Avenue.

Deborah Walker mentioned that her house at 1802 East Florida Avenue had been hit twice by cars and cars had hit their cars while parked in their driveway.

Carletta Donaldson asked if the City could include some clause in the ordinance to compensate the homeowner if cars ran into the yard at 1802 East Florida Avenue. She asked if an additional space could be added in front of 1802 East Florida Avenue so three cars could park in front of that property.

Dennis Roberts said that the City did not provide insurance for the homeowners.

Joe Smith said that he could adjust the restrictions to restrict an additional space since the curve on Florida Avenue was turning away from Curtiss Drive.

Dennis Roberts pointed out that the modification could regain an additional space between 1802 East Florida Avenue and 1605 South Curtiss Drive.

Joe Smith mentioned that parking restrictions were already in place on the south side of Florida Avenue approximately 285 feet east of Philo Road because of the two eastbound travel lanes and the location of driveways near the intersection.

Carletta Donaldson mentioned that she had seen cars parked in that area.

Joe Smith said that parking in that area would not be legal. He mentioned that signage would be installed to indicate where parking would be restricted.

Melisa Fondren discussed her concern about bicyclists not obeying traffic laws.

Charlie Smyth said that bicyclists needed to pull behind cars when they approached a vehicle in the turn lane and not pull beside them.

Pat Connolly mentioned that the Police Department received many complaints about southbound traffic on Philo Road using the through lane to turn westbound onto Florida Avenue instead of crossing over the bicycle lane to use the turn lane.

Signage for motorists and bicyclists on roadways was discussed.

Brandon Bowersox mentioned that the educational video about bicycle travel should be shown again.

Charlie Smyth suggested that the dashed lines might be extended farther back to provide a clear indication of where the turn lanes begin.

Joe Smith mentioned that the design for new traffic signals at the intersection of Florida Avenue and Philo Road was underway.

Bicycle lanes on Main Street were discussed.

Carlos Donaldson stated that he felt that the installation of bicycle lanes in Urbana was very confusing. He asked if any surveys were conducted to determine the number of bicyclists using Washington Street, Florida Avenue and Philo Road. He questioned why the lanes were needed when bicyclists had been using the streets without the lanes. He felt that the installation of bicycle lanes did not consider the financial burden created by adding the bicycle infrastructure. He discussed his concerns about the bicycle lane ending abruptly on Philo Road.

Dennis Roberts stated that there was a desire in the community to improve alternate forms of transportation. He stated that a goal for the City was to be a bicycle friendly community.

Cynthia Hoyle presented information about road diets and bicycle lanes.

Dennis Roberts move to adopt the changes recommended for Florida Avenue parking restrictions, which included adding a space to the east of 1802 East Florida Avenue.

Joe Smith seconded the motion.

Dennis Roberts suggested that the merging lanes have a longer area of dashed lines and that signage be considered that would warn motorists and bicyclists about traffic lanes merging.

The motion passed 3-0.

Carletta Donaldson asked for the specific parameters of the parking restrictions.

Barb Stiehl said that they would be available on the City's website with Council packet information.

Melisa Fondren asked when these restrictions would go into effect.

Joe Smith said that these would be completed in the summer of 2013.

This item will go to Council for consideration.

The meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

The next meeting will be held February 5, 2013 at 4:00 p.m. at the Urbana City Building, 400 South Vine Street, second floor conference room.

The January 1, 2013 meeting of the Urbana Traffic Commission has been cancelled.

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara Stiehl
Recording Secretary