

URBANA TRAFFIC COMMISSION
Tuesday, February 5, 2013

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:

Jacqueline Hannah, Common Ground, 300 South Broadway Avenue
Brad Bennett, Senior Civil Engineer
John Collins, Operations Manager
Charlie Smyth, Council Member, Ward 1

The meeting began at 4:03 p.m.

Additions to the agenda:

The Recording Secretary noted that the time of the meeting shown on some copies of the agenda was incorrectly shown as 7:00 p.m.

Approval of Minutes:

Pat Connolly requested that the minutes be re-sent so they could be reviewed by the Traffic Commission and action regarding approval would be taken at the next meeting.

Public Input

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

Unfinished Business

Item #1- Discussion of the installation of traffic control in front of Common Ground in the Lincoln Square parking lot.

Joe Smith discussed the results of a traffic study conducted between Thursday, November 1 and Friday, November 2, 2012 in front of Common Ground, located at 300 South Broadway Avenue, which was requested at the October 2012 Traffic Commission meeting. He stated that there were 816 pedestrians crossing Walnut Street between 7:00 a.m. on November 1st and 9:00 a.m. on November 2nd. Mr. Smith added that the average number of pedestrians was 55 pedestrians per hour; peak times were between noon and 1:00 p.m. with 133 pedestrians crossing, between 5:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. with 109 pedestrians, and between 6:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. with 105 pedestrians. He said that the number of motor vehicles passing through that intersection was

1,242. From the study, Mr. Smith concluded that the intersection warranted the installation of a crosswalk and recommended the installation of a crosswalk for a 40 foot area in front of Common Ground. He stated that the crossing was one of the busier intersections in Urbana.

John Collins stated that the ladder-style markings for a crosswalk would work best in that location.

Joe Smith suggested using signage that would typically be found in a crosswalk in a parking lot. Mr. Smith suggested installing, "Stop for Pedestrians in Crosswalk" signage. He felt that most of those crossing in that area were Common Ground patrons.

John Collins asked if there was adequate room on the sidewalks to post warning signage for the crosswalks.

Joe Smith stated that the sidewalk was 16 feet wide, which would be sufficient area for signage.

Pat Connolly asked if the Urbana Police Department would be able to ticket violators.

Joe Smith said that the Police could enforce if it was on a City lot, which it was.

Joe Smith moved to install a 40 foot marked crosswalk in front of Common Ground located in the Lincoln Square parking lot.

Dennis Roberts seconded the motion.

The motion passed 3-0.

This item does not require Council action.

Charlie Smyth asked if the signage could be stronger to let motorists know about the crosswalk.

John Collins said they could include a bow tie to the signage indicating that State law requires motorists to stop.

Pat Connolly said that he would check with the Legal Division to verify that the Police Department could ticket violators.

Joe Smith indicated that the intersection of Broadway Avenue and High Street did not have pedestrian volumes as high as at the crossing in front of Common Ground so a crosswalk was not warranted at that location.

Jacqueline Hannah asked for a timeline for the installation of the crosswalk.

John Collins stated that the installation would be a high priority that would be incorporated into the work to be completed for Market at the Square, perhaps in late March.

Jacqueline Hannah mentioned that Common Ground would be celebrating its grand opening on Monday, February 11th.

New Business

Item #2- Discussion of parking restrictions on Kinch Street.

Brad Bennett read into the minutes the information contained in two e-mails from residents on Kinch Drive. Mr. Bennett stated that Ms. Janet Gravlin at 1105 Kinch Street was opposed to the bike lanes. Ms. Gravlin's e-mail stated that the bicycle lanes were not needed since the current bike lanes were not used. Ms. Gravlin continued by expressing concern about speeding vehicles on Kinch Street making bicycle travel unsafe. She said that the original communication about the bicycle lanes led residents to believe that the bicycle lanes were for children, but she did not believe that the lanes were for elementary school students.

Mr. Bennett read an e-mail received from Joe and Audrey Wolschlag at 1403 Kinch Street. Mr. and Mrs. Wolschlag expressed concern that the width of the street and the volume of traffic would not provide enough capacity to accommodate the bicycle lanes. Their e-mail stated that they did not believe that bicycle lanes would improve the livability of their neighborhood. They stated that residents needed to use the street for parking since many homes had one-car garages. They also said that students would not use the bicycle lanes since many use mass transit or drove themselves to school. They expressed concern about crime in their neighborhood stating that one of their vehicles had its windows broken when parked on an adjacent street.

Mr. Bennett explained that the bicycle lanes were for any bicycle rider, not specifically for students.

Dennis Roberts said that Mr. Wolschlag said that he did not think that many parents in the area would agree with the proposed bicycle plan.

Pat Connolly said that he discussed a plan to monitor speeding on Kinch Street with Mr. Wolschlag that included the installation of traffic monitors by Public Works when temperatures were warmer, which would probably be in March.

Dennis Roberts asked about the reasoning for the different street widths on Kinch Drive.

Joe Smith said that the earlier part of the road was constructed when wider street widths were not required for collector streets.

Dennis Roberts stated that the section of Kinch Street between Pennsylvania Avenue and Michigan Avenue appeared to have the most significant impact from the parking restrictions. He added that the other sections on Kinch Street could accommodate parking.

Pat Connolly asked if any changes could be made to help with the area that was narrow.

Brad Bennett said that the parking restrictions were needed to install the bicycle lanes.

Pat Connolly asked about the bicycle lane connections that would be made possible with the addition of bicycle lanes on Kinch Street.

Joe Smith stated that the bicycle lanes on Philo Road and Kinch Street would connect to the bicycle lanes on Washington Street and Florida Avenue. He added that Smith Road was too narrow to add bicycle lanes.

Pat Connolly said that there would not be any other option for a connector on the east end of Urbana.

Charlie Smyth suggested that if any further development occurred to the east, a bicycle lane would be included in the development.

John Collins asked if Lierman Avenue would connect Washington Street and Main Street.

Joe Smith said the Lierman Avenue had an off-street path for bicycles to connect Washington Street to Main Street.

Dennis Roberts mentioned that the bicycle lanes on Kinch Street would lead to Prairie Elementary School.

Charlie Smyth added that there was a controlled stop at Kinch Street and Washington Street that provided safe crossing for those students bicycling to school.

Joe Smith said that Mr. Wolschlag had mentioned that most parents drove their children to school and the children do not use bicycles.

Brad Bennett said that the Safe Routes to School program encourages students to walk or bike to school as part of a healthier life style. He mentioned that the Urbana Middle School used a program to encourage students to bike and walk.

Pat Connolly mentioned that the invitation to the meeting was sent to all residents and property owners on Kinch Street and that the Commissioners heard from two residences.

Charlie Smyth asked if any feedback had been received from residents on Washington Street after the bicycle lanes were installed between Philo Road and Vine Street.

Joe Smith said that one property had no driveway, but that the resident had no issues with the plan.

Dennis Roberts recommended that this item would be discussed at the March 5th Traffic Commission meeting since some meeting information showed an incorrect meeting time.

Pat Connolly asked that the Recording Secretary to e-mail those who had provided input with the discussion of the parking restrictions on Kinch Street at the meeting. Specifically, Chief

Connolly asked that the residents be informed that a speed monitor would be installed on Kinch Street in the spring and that the decision regarding the parking restrictions would be made at the March 5th meeting of the Urbana Traffic Commission.

Pat Connolly mentioned that he would not be able to attend the March 5th Traffic Commission meeting.

Item #3- Discussion of the installation of a stop sign for eastbound Delaware Avenue at Broadway Avenue.

Joe Smith mentioned that a request for the installation of a stop sign was brought to the Traffic Commission following the installation of a stop sign on Vermont Avenue and Broadway Avenue. Mr. Smith said that the person who requested the stop sign on Vermont Avenue asked if one was needed on Delaware Avenue. Mr. Smith stated that the visibility at the intersection of Vermont Avenue and Broadway Avenue did not meet the warrants for installing a stop sign since there was a clear line of sight and no reported accidents. He moved that no action be taken.

Pat Connolly seconded the motion.

The motion was approved 3-0.

Item #4- Discussion of cell phone restriction signage near schools.

Pat Connolly said that a resident posed a question to Lt. Surles about increasing the size of the signage near schools, which informs motorists of cell phone restrictions in school zones, because she felt the signs were not visible. Chief Connolly asked that this item be discussed at Traffic Commission.

John Collins stated that the size of the signs was regulated by the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), which leaves the decision to install signage to each municipality, but dictates the size and placement of the signage if a municipality chooses to install the signs. Mr. Collins continued his discussion by stating that there was limited space available to accommodate the signage that was required to be installed and that an increase in the size of the signage would create an accessibility issue.

Joe Smith stated that the City was bound to follow the MUTCD when installing signage.

John Collins said that the sign would be visible if the motorists were travelling the speed limit.

Pat Connolly said that an increase in the size of the signs would create a hazard for those using the sidewalk because the signs would extend into the walking path of pedestrians.

Dennis Roberts moved that no action be taken.

Charlie Smyth asked if the signage could be a different color.

Joe Smith stated the informational signage must be the color currently used.

Dennis Roberts asked that the resident be notified of the decision of the Traffic Commission.

Joe Smith stated that the size of the sign was visible when travelling 20 miles per hour.

The motion was approved 3-0.

Discussion followed about upcoming Traffic Commission issues.

The meeting adjourned at 4:45 p.m.

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

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara Stiehl
Recording Secretary

NOTE: The Recording Secretary returned to the second floor conference room at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, February 5, 2013. No one arrived to attend the Traffic Commission meeting at that time.