

URBANA TRAFFIC COMMISSION  
Tuesday, December 9, 2014

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Michael Madigan, City Council Member, Ward 6, Chair  
Craig Shonkwiler, Assistant City Engineer  
Pat Connolly, Police Chief

MEMBERS ABSENT:

None

OTHERS PRESENT:

John Collins, Operations Manager

The meeting began at 4:00 p.m.

**Additions to the agenda:**

There were no additions to the agenda.

**Approval of Minutes:**

Craig Shonkwiler moved to approve the minutes of the October 14, 2014 meeting. Pat Connolly seconded the motion. The Commission voted 3-0 to approve the minutes of the meeting.

**Public Input**

There was no public input.

**Unfinished Business**

**Item #1- Discussion of by-laws and meeting rules for the Urbana Traffic Commission.**

Craig Shonkwiler discussed specific sections of the by-laws. He mentioned that the Legal Division asked whether or not it was necessary to include items that were mentioned in the Code of Ordinances. In particular, Mr. Shonkwiler discussed the language regarding the composition of the Traffic Commission, the filling of vacancies on the Commission and the posting of meeting notices.

The Commissioners agreed that it was acceptable to include the information so it would be part of the by-laws.

Michael Madigan stressed that whenever changes were made to the Code of Ordinances relating to the by-laws, the by-laws would have to be changed.

The Commission discussed how people would register their intent to address the Traffic Commission in light of a court decision that allowed public participation without being asked to give personal addresses.

Pat Connolly suggested that the Traffic Commission not ask speakers to give their addresses.

Michael Madigan said that most people would provide at least a general location to adequately discuss their concerns.

Pat Connolly recommended that anyone who wishes to speak give that person's name and topic of discussion. He asked if the Commission wanted to restrict input to five minutes.

Barb Stiehl mentioned that it might be necessary if a large group of people wanted to speak on a particular topic.

Michael Madigan said that if someone needed more time, the Commission could always grant the person additional time.

Craig Shonkwiler highlighted the sections of the by-laws concerning the end time for meetings and Commissioners' absences from meetings to ask for the Commission's approval of those items. He discussed the section about proxy voting and voting in absentia. Mr. Shonkwiler suggested that proxy voting has drawbacks, but that the Commission has used proxies to expedite the discussion of topics.

Michael Madigan said that those who have served as proxies typically discussed the topics with the Commissioners they represented and were given leeway to listen to discussion during the meeting and either vote or if they feel they do not have enough information, ask that the item be postponed until the Commissioner was present.

Craig Shonkwiler recommended that the proxy voting be further defined to include rules to govern when and how proxy voting would be used. He said that language would be added and sent to the Commissioners for their review.

Pat Connolly suggested that a proxy be identified in writing.

Michael Madigan said that proxies would be appropriate for City staff, but that he was uncertain whether or not the Council member would or should have a proxy. He asked if Legal staff could provide a recommendation about a proxy for the Council member.

Craig Shonkwiler asked that the section prohibiting voting in absentia remain.

The Commissioners agreed to keep the restriction for absentee voting.

Craig Shonkwiler recommended striking the section prohibiting Commissioners from voting to approve minutes if they were absent.

Michael Madigan felt that it would not be an issue since proxies discuss actions with the Commissioners.

The Commissioners agreed to remove the provision prohibiting Commissioners to vote to approve minutes if they are absent from the meeting.

Craig Shonkwiler asked to strike the provision requiring the City Council to approve amendments to the by-laws. He added that the by-laws were for the functioning of the Commission and would unnecessarily add to the City Council's agenda if amendments to the by-laws had to be approved by Council.

Pat Connolly said that the by-laws will need to be available at all meetings.

Craig Shonkwiler said that the by-laws will be revised to reflect the changes discussed at the meeting.

Pat Connolly moved to defer the approval of the by-laws to the next meeting after the suggested changes are made to the document.

Craig Shonkwiler seconded the motion.

The Commission voted 3-0 to defer the approval of the by-laws until the next meeting.

## **New Business**

### **Item #2- Discussion of traffic control on Lincoln Avenue between Ohio Street and Iowa Street.**

Pat Connolly read an e-mail from Amie Pankau who is an employee at Lincoln Avenue Residence Hall. Ms. Pankau had contacted the University of Illinois Police Department to ask if flashing yellow lights could be installed on Lincoln Avenue between Ohio Street and Iowa Street.

Craig Shonkwiler said that traffic movement on Lincoln Avenue was a complex issue since Lincoln Avenue was a major north/south road in Urbana.

Pat Connolly said that the flashing lights on Springfield Avenue near Grainger were not very helpful and created confusion of motorists and pedestrians.

Craig Shonkwiler mentioned that the flashing lights were going to be installed on Windsor Road near Meadowbrook Park, but that the pedestrian traffic on Springfield Avenue and Lincoln Avenue would constantly activate the signals. He added that that section of Lincoln Avenue had

been studied, most recently after two pedestrians were killed near the Illini Grove to determine whether or not the road diet contributed to the accident. Mr. Shonkwiler stated that there might be other solutions, such as reducing the speed limit. He had hoped the Ms. Pankau would have been available for the meeting to provide more specific details.

Michael Madigan said that with all of the pedestrian crossings along that corridor it was difficult for vehicles to travel over 25 miles per hour.

John Collins mentioned that the “Stop for Pedestrians in the Crosswalk” signage was very confusing for motorists and pedestrians. He said that he had spoken with Ms. Pankau and she observed traffic from her office.

Pat Connolly said that lower speed limits would reduce the severity of accidents.

John Collins said that lower speed limits and enforcement of traffic laws for pedestrians and motorists in that small section of Lincoln Avenue might be effective.

Craig Shonkwiler explained that Lincoln Avenue was on the periphery of the University District and provided a major access from the north to the south ends of Urbana. As a result, Mr. Shonkwiler stated that the speed limit was not reduced when speed limits within the University District were reduced. He added that Green Street was not included in the reduced speeds since there was a concern that the lower speed limit might discourage traffic to downtown Urbana. He said that there were plans to redo Green Street in Urbana and that the consultant might be able to look at reducing speed limits on Green Street as part of that project.

Michael Madigan asked if the consultant would be able to look at Lincoln Avenue to determine the impact of lowering the speed limit in that area.

Craig Shonkwiler stated that staff could look at the crash data and discuss the results in the spring. He cautioned that reducing the speed limit without a study could create disregard for the lowered speed limit since motorists would not see a reason for the reduction. He said that the character of the roadway determines the comfort of the driver and the speed more than placing a sign on the roadway determines the comfort of the driver to travel at a certain speed. He warned that a reduction in the speed limit would require careful thought. Mr. Shonkwiler recommended conducting a speed study and asked if the Police Department could give him a listing of citations for review.

Pat Connolly asked Mr. Shonkwiler to send an e-mail explaining specific details that would be helpful.

The Recording Secretary was directed to send the results of this meeting to Ms. Pankau.

**Item #3- Discussion of traffic speeds at Ohio Street and Orchard Drive.**

Craig Shonkwiler reviewed an e-mail sent by a resident who lived at the corner of Ohio Street and Orchard Drive in which the resident asked for the installation of stop signs to slow traffic at

that intersection. He mentioned that stop signs were not used to slow traffic and that brick streets, such as the ones on Orchard Drive, have the tendency to slow motorists. Mr. Shonkwiler recommended listening to the resident and then conducting a speed study. As a side note, he added that the City had looked at a traffic calming policy from the City of Champaign and noted that the City of Champaign did not add traffic calming devices on brick streets and did not install those devices on emergency response routes.

Michael Madigan recommended studying speeds on Orchard Drive.

Craig Shonkwiler suggested that Public Works and Police should meet to discuss an approach for handling concerns about speeding. He said that he would contact the resident to discuss his concerns with him.

Pat Connolly volunteered to help with speed studies if needed.

Craig Shonkwiler said that it would be helpful and recommended developing a procedure for dealing with future concerns.

Discussion followed regarding future agenda items.

The meeting adjourned at 5:15 p.m.

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 13, 2015 at 4:00 p.m. at the Urbana Public Works Department, 706 South Glover Avenue, second floor conference room.

Respectfully submitted,  
Barbara Stiehl  
Recording Secretary