

URBANA TRAFFIC COMMISSION
Tuesday, October 13, 2015

MEMBERS PRESENT:

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

MEMBERS ABSENT:

None

OTHERS PRESENT:

Elawrence Davis, 404 West Main Street
Bill Brown, City Council Member, Ward 4
Itai Seggev, 410 West Florida Avenue
Pat Shae, 708 West Florida Avenue
Gary Shae, 708 West Florida Avenue
Bill Gray, Public Works Director

The meeting began at 4:00 p.m.

Approval of Minutes:

Craig Shonkwiler moved to approve the minutes of the September 15, 2015 meeting. Pat Connolly seconded the motion. The Commission voted 3-0 to approve the minutes of the September meeting.

Additions to the agenda:

There were no additions to the meeting.

Public Input

Those wishing to provide input preferred to do so at the time the topic was discussed.

Unfinished Business

Item #1- Update on the sign policy.

Craig Shonkwiler reviewed modifications made to the draft sign policy as a result of recommendations made at the last meeting of the Traffic Commission. He stated that examples of specific types of roadway signage, references to MUTCD and the Local Traffic Code, and actions required by the Urbana Traffic Commission had been included in the policy. He said that all regulatory signage needed to be approved by the Traffic Commission. Mr. Shonkwiler stated that there were non-regulatory signage (warning signs) requiring engineering study and the approval of the Public Works Director or a designee of the Public Works Department. He said that other signs in the City's right-of-way that would not require an engineering study would require the approval of

the Public Works Director or a his or her designee. He added that those approvals would be reported to the Traffic Commission. He recommended that the sign policy be posted on the City's website once the final version was approved.

New Business

Item #2- Request for the removal and installation of parking restrictions on the north side of Florida Avenue between Race Street and Busey Avenue.

Craig Shonkwiler discussed the current condition of the pavement on Florida Avenue between Race Street and Busey Avenue. He suggested changes to on-street parking to extend the life of the pavement and to minimize the loss of on-street parking. He mentioned that the pavement repair for that section of Florida Avenue was not budgeted as part of the Capital Improvement Plan's (CIP) 5-year plan, but that it might be added when the CIP was reviewed over the winter if the section had reached a higher priority than some of the projects currently planned for repair within the CIP. He added that the City would contact the University of Illinois to discuss the possibility of improving the traffic signals located at the intersection of Florida Avenue and Orchard Street. Mr. Shonkwiler said that instead of using money for temporary repairs (which might cost around \$100,000) staff recommended moving traffic from the south side of Florida Avenue to the north side and moving on-street parking to the south side to maximize the life of the pavement until funds were available for permanent repairs.

Mr. Itai Seggev expressed concern about having limited parking at his home in the 400 block of West Florida Avenue. He said that his family had two vehicles and a one-car garage with only enough room for one car in the driveway. He added that he had not been able to expand the area of his driveway because of restrictions in the City Code. He added that moving the parking to the south side of the street created a significant inconvenience for him. Mr. Seggev said that he was opposed unless something could be changed so he could park an additional vehicle within his property. He asked when the change was anticipated.

Mr. Shonkwiler said that the City would like to make the changes before winter and continue with the change until reconstruction could be scheduled. He said that during the winter Engineering staff would review projects to determine whether or not Florida Avenue could be moved up on the schedule. He said that City understood the importance of the road as part of the City's transportation network.

Ms. Pat Shae said that removing parking from in front of her home would make it unfriendly and pose a safety concern with pedestrians crossing Florida Avenue to get to the home on the north side. She added that she used the parking lane as a safe area to back out of her driveway.

Mr. Gary Shae said that he understood why the recommendation had been made, but he asked if there might be an alternative to moving parking to the south side of the street because of safety concerns. He added that making the change during the winter might create more problems since daylight was shorter and the weather was harsher in the winter. He felt that it should remain as it was until permanent repairs could be made.

Mr. Seggev said that motorists would not expect to have the parking on the south side of the street since the homes were located on the north side.

Ms. Shae pointed out that there were no sidewalks on the south side of Florida Avenue for pedestrians to use before crossing Florida Avenue.

Chief Pat Connolly said that he understood how the proposed change would add more life to the roadway. He asked about plans to modernize the traffic signal at Florida Avenue and Orchard Street.

Mr. Shonkwiler said that the City would approach the University of Illinois about the possibility of modernizing the traffic signal, which was owned by the University of Illinois and maintained by the City of Urbana. He added that even though Florida Avenue was a busy street, lanes might have to be closed and parking eliminated if the pavement continued to deteriorate.

Ms. Shae said that she would prefer no parking to parking on the south side of Florida Avenue.

Mr. Seggev said that he would prefer some parking as opposed to none.

Chief Connolly asked if the parking could be moved in the areas where the pavement had deteriorated.

Mr. Shonkwiler felt that the south side of the road would not last through the winter if vehicles were continually driving on it. He said that the pavement had poor drainage and a weak base, which led to the south side failing, but the north side was in fairly good condition.

Ms. Shae felt that there should have been a plan developed long ago to deal with the deterioration of Florida Avenue. She was concerned about the value of her property and the safety of those crossing from their parked cars to the other side of street.

Bill Gray said that Florida Avenue exemplified the budget impacts that the City has been feeling. He said that patching had not been effective and staff had been looking at solutions.

Ms. Shae said that she would like to City to spend the \$100,000 to patch Florida Avenue and eliminate parking on both sides of the street. She said that she didn't feel comfortable having the busses travelling in front of her home without the street parking to buffer their impact.

Mr. Gray said that eliminating parking would result in people parking on the side street and in driveways.

Ms. Shae stated that the street was a major street and should be a high priority when considering projects.

Ms. Seggev said that if he was allowed to increase parking on his property, he would approve the removal of parking on Florida Avenue. He said that he relied on having the parking lane next to his home when backing in and out of his driveway.

Mr. Gray asked if any other residents had contacted staff regarding this issue.

Bill Brown said that he had heard from a resident who said that they would prefer no parking instead of parking on the south side. He said that parking on the north side provided residents with an area to pull in and out of their driveways, which was helpful since Florida Avenue was a busy street, especially for those homes near Lincoln Avenue. Mr. Brown asked if any speed studies had been conducted on this street between Lincoln Avenue and Busey Avenue.

The Recording Secretary said that one resident had contacted the City to say that the resident would prefer no parking over the relocation of parking to the south side of Florida Avenue.

Mr. Shonkwiler said there were no speed studies in response to Mr. Brown's question, but studies could be done if needed.

Mr. Brown asked how many residents along Florida Avenue held West Urbana parking permits.

Mr. Seggev said that he and his wife had on-street parking permits. He said that they would like to park on their property if possible. He said that he would follow-up with the City to see what would be allowed. He would be agreeable if parking was eliminated in the areas where the street had deteriorated instead of eliminating parking along the entire area.

Chief Connolly recommended protecting those areas where the pavement was deteriorating by removing parking from those areas.

Mr. Shonkwiler said that it might happen that parking would be removed for an entire block to avoid driving over deteriorated pavement. He stated that he felt it would be wise to spend money to perform work that would result in a permanent repair.

Chief Connolly asked if the Engineering staff could look at which sections needed to have traffic removed to preserve the pavement and determine if it could be done while maintaining the on-street parking spaces. He mentioned that even though speeding was discussed, it would be best to focus on parking.

Mr. Gray asked that the speeding issue be discussed at a later meeting. He said that Mr. Shonkwiler and he had looked at the relocation of parking as one way to preserve the pavement and maintain on-street parking, but he conceded that if it was not acceptable to the residents, then staff would develop another plan that might include eliminating parking.

Mr. Madigan asked if a delay would give Public Works enough time to make the changes.

Mr. Shonkwiler said that the delay would mean that Public Works would have to wait until spring to restripe the pavement. He said that staff would have to fill potholes during the winter. He said that he was okay with reassessing the options. He wanted to look at the impact of moving traffic closer to driveways along the north side and how that affected visibility for residents pulling out of their driveways. He said that he preferred not spending money on temporary repairs that would be

torn out at a later date. He suggested that it might be best to send a mailer to all residents within that section of Florida Avenue to ask if the residents would prefer no on-street parking with traffic running in the middle of Florida Avenue between Race Street and Busey Avenue or on-street parking being moved from the north side of Florida Avenue to the south side with traffic moving to the north side of the street.

Mr. Gray said that there was the option to do nothing, but that would mean that there would have to be emergency repairs done, which would be expensive.

Mr. Shonkwiler said that it would mean that lanes would have to be closed until the repairs could be made. He added that if parking was removed, a narrower buffer could be added so traffic would not travel next to the curb on the north side of the street.

Mr. Seggev was concerned about trucks doing construction work blocking lanes of traffic.

Mr. Gray mentioned that situations similar to that happen on many streets in Urbana. He said that when lanes were blocked, traffic control was required for partial lane closures.

Chief Connolly moved to perform an analysis of the pavement to determine if any parking can remain.

Mr. Shonkwiler seconded the motion.

Mr. Madigan stated that there did not appear to be any other option at this time.

Ms. Shae asked how concerns could be brought forward.

Mr. Gray said that Ms. Shae can contact the Public Works at any time.

The motion was approved 3-0.

This item will be discussed at the November 10th meeting of the Urbana Traffic Commission.

Mr. Shonkwiler explained some of the process used to prioritize roadway construction projects.

Elawrence Davis commented that he had travelled Florida Avenue often while the Windsor Road project was underway. He said that there was a tree that blocked the signage indicating that the right lane must yield which created confusion for motorists. Mr. Davis expressed the hope that the wear on Florida Avenue might be reduced once Windsor Road opened all lanes to traffic.

Mr. Seggev suggested that the merge lane be removed to reduce the problem with vehicles speeding to merge.

Mr. Gray explained that the merge lane actually allowed more cars to clear the intersection thus reducing the number of cars waiting for the signal during each cycle. He added that if the merge

lane were removed, motorists might have to wait through more cycles of the traffic signals to get through the intersection.

Item #3- Discussion of parking restrictions at Canaan Credit Union, 404 West Main Street.

Craig Shonkwiler explained that under the current ordinance parking was prohibited on the north side of Main Street from Monday to Saturday, but parking was allowed on the south side of the street. He said that Mr. Summerville had submitted a Traffic Issues/Concerns Request Form about those visiting the credit union not being able to find a place to park.

Elawrence Davis said that students and teachers occupied the parking on the south side at all times of the day making it difficult for those wishing to conduct business at the credit union to find parking near the facility. Mr. Davis asked if there could be some restrictive on-street parking during their office hours of 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, which would allow spaces for people visiting the credit union. He would prefer that parking would be allowed for limited amount of time on the north side.

Mr. Shonkwiler stated that the City does not provide reserved on-street parking spaces. He said that parking could have a restricted time limit, but the restriction would allow space for anyone wishing to park there for that amount of time.

Michael Madigan asked if there were any spaces available in the parking lot to the east of the church.

Mr. Davis said that the general public used that lot.

Mr. Shonkwiler added that the available parking spaces on Central Avenue appeared to be full when he drove by while conducting a field check of the location.

Pat Connolly asked if a two-hour parking restriction would provide enough time for those using the credit union.

Mr. Davis said that having the two-hour restriction was better than no space at all.

Mr. Shonkwiler stated that he needed to measure the area to determine the location of the spaces.

Mr. Madigan asked if parking could be created in front of the building.

Mr. Davis said that the ground was too high to create spaces.

Chief Connolly asked if there would be adequate space for parking on both sides.

Mr. Shonkwiler said that parking on the street on Sunday was not so much of a concern since traffic was not as heavy, but there would probably not be enough room for parking during the rest of the week.

Mr. Davis asked if there were any development plans for the properties across the street on the south side.

Mr. Gray said there were no specific plans at present.

Mr. Davis said that they would monitor the parking situation and let the City know how well it worked.

Mr. Madigan asked if parking restrictions on Central Avenue would be helpful since it is on the same side of the street.

Mr. Shonkwiler recommended installing two-hour parking on the south side of Main Street to the west of Central Avenue directly across the street from 404 West Main Street as an initial solution.

Bill Gray suggested that the parking restrictions be installed on a 90-day trial basis and that after the trial period the Traffic Commission determine whether or not to request permanent parking restrictions.

Pat Connolly moved to install two-hour parking restrictions for at least two spaces on the south side of Main Street to the west of Central Avenue directly across the street from 404 West Main Street.

Craig Shonkwiler seconded the motion.

The motion was approved 3-0.

Michael Madigan asked that the impacted residents be notified.

With no other business at hand, the meeting was adjourned at 5:14 p.m.

The next regularly scheduled Traffic Commission meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, November 10, 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