

URBANA TRAFFIC COMMISSION
Tuesday, April 12, 2016

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
Tracey Pettigrew, Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District
Beth Beaty, Municipal Collector's Office Supervisor
Lesley Deem
Elawrence Davis
Charles Hogue, Circle Academy

The meeting began at 4:00 p.m.

Approval of Minutes:

Pat Connolly moved to approve the minutes of the March 8, 2016 meeting. Craig Shonkwiler seconded the motion. The Commission voted 3-0 to approve the minutes of the March meeting.

Additions to the agenda:

There were no additions to the agenda.

Public Input

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

Unfinished Business

Item #1- Discussion of parking restrictions at Canaan Credit Union, 404 West Main Street.

Craig Shonkwiler reviewed the details of a request for parking restrictions at 407 and 409 Main Street to create short-term parking solutions for the Canaan Credit Union located at 404 West Main Street. He stated that parking restrictions (two-hour parking, Monday through Friday, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.) were implemented on a 90-day trial basis. He explained that the trial period had expired and now the Commission was to determine whether or not the parking restrictions should be installed on a permanent basis. He said that he had not seen much activity in those spaces.

The Recording Secretary added that staff at the credit union had requested that the restrictions on one of the spaces be changed from a two-hour restriction to a 15-minute restriction since Canaan Credit Union staff noticed people parking in the spaces for longer than two hours. She said that she had mentioned to them that they could contact Parking Enforcement if they noticed that there were violations.

Beth Beaty explained that enforcement of a 15-minute restriction would be difficult and ineffective since enforcement would not travel an area frequently enough to provide enforcement every 15 minutes.

Pat Connolly moved to restrict parking to two hours, Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. across the street from 404 West Main Street.

Craig Shonkwiler seconded the motion.

The motion carried 3-0. This item will go to Council for consideration.

Mr. Elawrence Davis asked if the City would consider signing one of the spaces as a 15-minute parking space. He noted that he had observed vehicles parking in the spaces for longer than two hours without receiving tickets.

Mr. Shonkwiler said that the enforcement of a 15-minute space at a remote location, such as this, would be difficult. He suggested that the Canaan Credit Union contact the Parking Enforcement Division if there were problems with vehicles parking in the spaces for longer than two hours. He asked the Recording Secretary to send contact information for Parking Enforcement to Mr. Davis.

New Business

Item #2- Discussion of traffic control on Linview Avenue at Killarney Street.

Craig Shonkwiler explained that Linview Avenue was a north/south road and Killarney Street was an east/west road that met at an uncontrolled T-intersection. He said that currently northbound MTD buses were parking on Linview Avenue near the intersection, which created a visibility problem for those approaching the intersection from the east and south. He added that the buses

were parking within 15 feet of a fire hydrant. He provided three possible considerations for the intersection: 1) restrict MTD bus parking on Linview Avenue; 2) install a stop sign on Linview Avenue at Killarney Street and buses would be prohibited from parking within 30 feet of the sign; or 3) install a No Parking Here to Corner sign on Linview Avenue for northbound traffic.

Tracey Pettigrew explained that the northbound buses waited at that location for approximately six minutes to condense the wait time on campus. He added that the bus also served Carle Hospital. He said that the buses used to park farther away from the intersection, but one of the businesses did not like having the buses parked in front of their location. He said that MTD had issues with businesses on Killarney Street who did not want the buses parked along that street and there were driveways along Linview Avenue that limited available parking space.

John Collins suggested that a stop sign could be installed on Linview Avenue for northbound traffic so the buses would park 30 feet away from the intersection.

Tracey Pettigrew recommended installing a bus stop sign and the bus drivers would know to park in front of that sign. He said that the drivers stayed with their vehicles at that location so if emergency vehicles needed access to the fire hydrant, the bus drivers could move the buses.

Michael Madigan expressed concern about the bus stop being in front of the business to the south. He asked staff to contact the business owner to see if there were any problems with the bus stopping there.

Pat Connolly asked if the buses agreed to not park near the intersection, would a stop sign be necessary at that intersection.

Michael Madigan asked if there were any other locations where the buses might be able to park.

Craig Shonkwiler said that there were no crashes at that location within the last five years. He added that the average daily traffic on Killarney Street was 1,450 vehicles. He stated that he would prefer traffic control be placed on Linview Avenue instead of on Killarney Street. He suggested waiting to install any signage until the property owners had been notified and City staff and MTD had contacted the business to the south of the intersection.

Tracey Pettigrew said that MTD would take care of the installation of the bus stop signage.

Different locations were discussed with no other ideal location being available. After the discussion, Michael Madigan recommended that staff and MTD notify the business owner and install the bus stop signage if the business would allow temporary bus parking on Linview Avenue. He added that if the owner was agreeable with the bus parking, then MTD could install the bus stop signage on Linview Avenue.

Item #3- Discussion of parking restrictions on Division Avenue between Oakland Avenue and Bailey Avenue.

Craig Shonkwiler explained the current loading and unloading procedures for Circle Academy. He reviewed past recommendations for parking and staging of buses around the Circle Academy. He said that Mr. Hogue had approached the City for advice on improving traffic around Circle Academy.

Charles Hogue explained that students from various area school districts attending Circle Academy. He said that nearby residents had complained about driveways being blocked and streets being rutted by the buses. He said that the route was from Kerr Avenue to Broadway Avenue to Oakland Avenue to wait for drop-off and pick-up, then Division Avenue.

Craig Shonkwiler asked what the duration of the bus parking was.

Mr. Hough stated that the buses arrived between 8:00 a.m. and 8:15 a.m. with unloading occurring between 8:15 a.m. and 8:40 a.m. He added that buses lined up for pick up beginning at 2:00 p.m. and students were dismissed to the buses between 2:20 p.m. and 2:40 p.m. He said that remainder of the day had sporadic bus traffic. He said that some buses were lining up on Broadway Avenue.

Mr. Shonkwiler stated that Oakland Avenue was used as a staging area for the buses until the buses could pull up on Division Avenue and unload or load in front of Circle Academy. He noted that the buses spent very little time on Division Avenue.

Mr. Hough pointed out that congestion near a school in a residential neighborhood was common, so with the schools in a residential neighborhood all had to coexist with their neighbors.

Mr. Shonkwiler mentioned that the current parking restrictions were no parking 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., on school days, on Division Avenue between Kerr Avenue and Oakland Avenue.

Mr. Hough said that the buses did not unload north of the driveway in front of the Circle Academy. He stated that there were plans to build a new school in the northeast corner of the Cunningham Children's Home property.

Ms. Leslie Deem asked what specific changes were being recommended regarding parking on Division Avenue.

Michael Madigan pointed out that the Traffic Commission was listening to concern from residents and school representatives.

Craig Shonkwiler mentioned that a suggested change was to exclude buses from the parking restrictions.

Ms. Deem asked if the buses would be parking on both sides.

Charles Hough said that the school administration did not want to unload and load buses on the west side of Division Avenue since students would then have to cross the street to go to school.

Leslie Deem said that residents were concerned about the streets not holding up from the buses wearing down the street. She recommended that the buses try to stage on Chapin Street instead of parking on Broadway Avenue.

Michael Madigan asked if buses could be staged that far from the school.

Charles Hough said that the school staff needed to see the drivers to direct them toward the loading/unloading area on Division Avenue.

Craig Shonkwiler said that the City did not want the buses to stage on Broadway Avenue due to visibility concerns.

Ms. Deem asked if the time restrictions on the east side could be reduced from the 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. restriction to 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Mr. Hough said that there might be an incident on a bus that would require the bus to wait longer than 3:00 p.m. before leaving.

Mr. Madigan said that even if that were to occur, it was not a common situation and that only involve one bus.

At that time, Mr. Michael S. Billhymer's e-mail was read into the record. (See attached.)

Michael Madigan asked for more details about the new schools. He mentioned after the new school was constructed, the parking restrictions for the loading and unloading of buses on Division Avenue no would longer be needed. He asked Mr. Hough if there was a timeline for the construction of the new school.

Mr. Hough said that there was no start date, but he added that once the school was constructed, traffic would be within the campus.

Michael Madigan asked if there were future plans for the building which currently housed the Circle Academy.

Charles Hough said that there were no known plans at the time.

Michael Madigan suggested that they might consider a purpose that would not impact the surrounding neighborhood.

Mr. Hough assumed that the building would be used as office space as opposed to using it for classrooms.

Mr. Madigan asked if representatives from Cunningham Children's Home would send a letter to the Mayor and surrounding neighbors to apprise them of the timeframe for the construction of the new facility for Circle Academy.

Ms. Deem stated that she came to the meeting because she was concerned about losing parking.

Craig Shonkwiler moved to change the hours for the parking restrictions from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on school days on the west side of Division Avenue from Oakland Avenue to Bailey Avenue and to restrict parking on the east side of Division Avenue from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., on school days, except buses.

Pat Connolly seconded the motion.

The motion was approve 3-0.

This item will go to Council for consideration.

Ms. Deem asked if Circle Academy had summer session.

Mr. Hough stated that there was a six-week summer session, but classes ended at noon.

Michael Madigan requested that Mr. Hogue be notified when the item was to go to Council as Mr. Hogue's presence might be helpful to answer any questions from the Council.

With no other business at hand, the meeting was adjourned at 5:03 p.m.

The next regularly scheduled Traffic Commission meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May10, 2016, 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

From,
Michael S Billhymer
[REDACTED]
Urbana IL 61801

Thank you all for your service to our community.

I just received your letter regarding parking restrictions, on Division Avenue. My mail is forwarded to my new address,

[REDACTED]

Unfortunately I will not be able to attend your meeting on the twelfth.

In the fifteen years I have owned property on Division, bus traffic has gotten consistently worse. Circle Academy, and Cunningham Children's Home use these small little streets as their back alley. The damage these fifteen to twenty buses do these streets is profound, I have been trying to get Circle Academy, for almost two years now, to find a way to service bus traffic from Cunningham Avenue. Bus pickup and drop off is mostly a chaotic mess. They have created a situation where full size school buses are sitting at idle for up to forty-five minutes at a time waiting for Circle Academy to receive or release students.

The south shoulder of Oakland Avenue between Division and Broadway is completely broken down and rutted. The end of a sidewalk from Washington School yard is destroyed. Many pedestrians, have to negotiate these streets and sidewalks which have been broken down by bus traffic. Being a pedestrian in this neighborhood while Circle Academy is conducting their twice daily bus parade can be downright dangerous. I also wonder what effect six or seven buses sitting on Oakland would have on access for emergency vehicles attempting to reach residences on these surrounding streets. Bus traffic to Circle Academy is also, undoubtedly having a negative impact on the value, and salability of property in this neighborhood.

So, I will make this brief, I would strongly urge each of you to, strongly urge Cunningham Children's Home/Circle Academy, to figure out a way to handle bus traffic from Cunningham Avenue, which is built to withstand the traffic they bring everyday. And to stop imposing this daily mess on the taxpaying property owners of this neighborhood.

Thank you

Sincerely,

Mike Billhymer