

URBANA TRAFFIC COMMISSION

Tuesday, August 8, 2017

Approved October 10, 2017

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Harold "Dean" Hazen, City Council Member, Ward 6, Chair
Craig Shonkwiler, Assistant City Engineer
Sylvia Morgan, Chief of Police

MEMBERS ABSENT:

None

OTHERS PRESENT:

John Collins, Operations Manager, City of Urbana
Chris Manrique
Beth Beaty, Administrative Services Manager
Sheila Dodd, Habitat for Humanity

The meeting began at 4:00 p.m.

Approval of Minutes:

Sylvia Morgan moved to approve the minutes of the June 13, 2017 meeting. Craig Shonkwiler seconded the motion. The Commission voted 3-0 to approve the minutes of the June meeting.

Additions to the agenda:

There were no additions to the agenda.

Public Input

Those wishing to provide input did so as items were discussed.

Unfinished Business

Item #1- Discussion of parking on Thompson Street at Division Avenue.

Chris Manrique reviewed comments from the July meeting about parking on the southeast corner of Division Avenue and Thompson Street. He noted that since the two single-family residences were built at 301 and 303 Thompson Street, vehicles had been parking on the south side of the street. He said that there had been at least three times when the street was impassable due to congestion created by parked cars. He was concerned that emergency vehicles would not be able to access homes in cases of emergencies. Mr. Manrique added that law enforcement did ticket those who were blocking the street, but he said that the congestion occurring at the intersection of Thompson Street and Division Avenue created a visibility problem for those turning from Thompson Street onto Division Avenue.

Craig Shonkwiler stated that the properties where the two single-family residences were built were once a church. He verified that parking restrictions on the south side of Thompson Street had been in effect in front of 301, 303 and 305 Thompson Street prior to the construction of the homes at 301 and 303 Thompson Street. He stated that at its June meeting the Urbana Traffic Commission had recommended parking restrictions on Division Avenue to provide a safe distance of sight for motorists turning from Thompson Drive onto Division Avenue. Mr. Shonkwiler mentioned that during the review of the recommendation, the Urbana City Council asked the Urbana Traffic Commission to re-evaluate parking restrictions and include possible restrictions at the northeast corner of Thompson Drive and Division Avenue. Mr. Shonkwiler pointed out that the northeastern leg of the intersection was under the jurisdiction of Urbana Township. He said that the Urbana Township Highway Commissioner was agreeable to restricting parking on the east side of Division Avenue north of Thompson Street.

Sheila Dodd stated that Habitat for Humanity wanted to help the homeowners comply with the parking restrictions and be good neighbors. She said that Habitat for Humanity had plans to extend the parking pad an additional 30 feet for each residence to accommodate two vehicles at each property. She anticipated that the project would be complete at the end of August.

Craig Shonkwiler mentioned that one occupant had four vehicles. He recommended that the resident park two cars on the parking pad, one on the north side of Thompson Street and the other vehicle on Division Avenue, south of the proposed parking restrictions.

Beth Beaty said that she would notify the residents once the ordinances were approved and include information about unapproved parking surfaces. After notification, violators would be ticketed. Ms. Beaty asked if vehicles would be allowed to park on the gravel surface in front of 301 and 303 Thompson Street.

Mr. Shonkwiler said that the gravel surface was not an approved surface. He continued by stating that if people continued to park in the gravel area, the City would ask the residents to remove the gravel from their front yards.

Ms. Beaty said that Parking Enforcement would follow the direction of the posted signage once residents had been notified.

Craig Shonkwiler moved to restrict parking on the east side of Division Avenue from the centerline of Thompson Street to 91 feet south of the centerline of Thompson Street and to restrict parking on the north side of Thompson Street from the centerline of Division Avenue to 56 feet east of the centerline of Division Avenue. He said that staff would research the jurisdiction on Thompson Street to determine the exact area of the restrictions within the City.

Sylvia Morgan seconded the motion.

Sylvia Morgan said that the ordinances would be for the extension of parking restrictions within the City limits and that those restrictions outside of the City limits would depend upon discussions with Urbana Township.

Mr. Shonkwiler recommended that City staff work with Urbana Township to restrict parking on Division Avenue north of Thompson Street. He asked that Parking Enforcement notify residents of the parking restrictions once the parking restrictions were in place. He would recommend to Urbana Township that the township install parking restrictions on the east side of Division Avenue from the centerline of Thompson Street to 91 feet north of the centerline of Thompson Street.

Dean Hazen asked who owned the graveled area in front of 301 and 303 Thompson Street.

Craig Shonkwiler stated that the area belonged to the property owners.

Craig Shonkwiler reviewed the warrants for installing stop signs and stated that the intersection did not meet the warrants for installing stop signs. He said that the intersection had no reported crashes and no physical barriers, such as buildings, to obstruct the view of oncoming traffic. Mr. Shonkwiler added that yield signs were not warranted and that the parking restrictions would provide the necessary visibility for traffic on Thompson Street to safely turn onto Division Avenue.

Ms. Dodd said that one homeowner asked if the length of their parking pad could be extended even farther than recommended. She said that she encouraged the homeowner to work with Community Development to determine the feasibility of the request.

The motion was approved 3-0.

This item will go to Council for consideration.

The Recording Secretary will notify those interested parties of the date of the Committee of the Whole meeting when these restrictions will be discussed.

Ms. Dodd said she would continue to monitor parking in that area and discuss concerns with the homeowners at 301 and 303 Thompson Street.

Beth Beaty recommended that the homeowners contact Community Development as soon as possible about extending the parking pad to avoid having no place to park once the restrictions were approved. She mentioned that there were no guaranteed on-street parking spaces within the City of Urbana and that the residents could park wherever on-street parking was allowed.

John Collins mentioned that there was more parking available on the west side of Division Avenue for those with additional vehicles.

Item #2- Discussion of on-street parking near 901 East Main Street.

Craig Shonkwiler indicated that this item was on the agenda in June. He said that the owners of Second Hand Rose had requested parking restrictions on Main Street near 901 East Main Street to provide turn-over in the parking spaces so their customers could park near the front of their business. He informed the Commission that it was on the agenda again in August to receive input from the adjacent property owners and give the owners of 901 East Main Street another opportunity

to discuss their concern before the Commission since they were not in attendance at the previous meeting. Mr. Shonkwiler mentioned that one resident submitted an e-mail requesting that the current parking situation on Main Street remain unchanged as there were no pressing parking issues. The resident indicated that there were parking spaces available on the property at 901 East Main Street that could be used if there were problems with customer parking. The resident added that he felt the parking restrictions would limit parking for the residents to solve a problem that did not occur.

Sylvia Morgan concurred with the information relayed in the e-mail. She noted that there were two open spaces on Lynn Street that were rarely occupied. Chief Morgan said that she would rather see customers use those spaces than create parking restrictions on Main Street that would penalize residents in that area.

Dean Hazen agreed that it seemed more appropriate to encourage customers to use the Lynn Street parking than to restrict parking on Main Street that was also used by residents on Main Street.

Craig Shonkwiler pointed out that the owners at 901 East Main Street had two opportunities to address the Commission and did not respond. He noted that he had driven past that location many times and did not see parking issues.

Chief Morgan was not in favor of the restrictions on Main Street.

Craig Shonkwiler moved to take no action.

Sylvia Morgan seconded.

The Commission moved 3-0 to take no action on the request for parking restrictions near 901 East Main Street.

New Business

Item #3- Discussion of a loading zone in Goose Alley west of Race Street.

Craig Shonkwiler discussed a request for a loading zone that was submitted by Dennis Roberts on behalf of Allen Strong. Mr. Roberts explained in his request that Mr. Strong frequently loaded and unloaded items between his vehicle and the Courier Café. Mr. Roberts said that Mr. Strong had received parking tickets while stopped to load and unload. He felt that a loading zone in Goose Alley would allow Mr. Strong the opportunity to load and unload materials without receiving a ticket.

Beth Beaty said that there was sufficient room to park in the alley without blocking access at the alley entrance. Ms. Beaty said that if a vehicle was not blocking the alley or facing the wrong direction in the one-way alley, Parking Enforcement would probably not ticket the vehicle. She recommended that vehicles not park in the entrance to the alley and that the vehicles travel eastbound since the alley was designated as a one-way, eastbound street.

Mr. Shonkwiler mentioned that one of the alley's purposes was for loading and unloading. He said that using the alley would be better than loading and unloading from Race Street.

Chief Morgan said that it would be reasonable to sign the alley with a 15-minute loading zone. She indicated that there were other routes for traffic if a vehicle was in the alley.

John Collins suggested that the loading zone designation extend the length of Goose Alley from the western terminus of the alley to Race Street. He added that the loading zone would be for any of the businesses bordering the alley.

Craig Shonkwiler agreed that it would be helpful to have a loading zone in the alley. He thought the placement of signage might be problematic.

Chief Morgan asked if signage could be placed on a building.

Mr. Collins suggested placing signage on one of the bollards located in the alley.

Sylvia Morgan moved to install a 15-minute loading zone for eastbound traffic in Goose Alley from the western terminus to Race Street.

Craig Shonkwiler seconded the motion.

The Commission approved the recommendation 3-0.

This item will go to Council for consideration.

With no other business at hand, the meeting was adjourned at 4:47 p.m.

The next regularly scheduled Traffic Commission meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, September 12, 2017, at 4:00 p.m. at the Urbana Public Works Department, 706 Glover Avenue, second floor conference room.

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara Stiehl
Recording Secretary

NOTE: Following the meeting, Mr. Coco Tembo came to the Public Works facility to discuss his concerns about the parking restrictions on Thompson Street. Mr. Tembo arrived after the meeting had adjourned.

Craig Shonkwiler met with Mr. Tembo to discuss the proposed and current restrictions on Thompson Street.

Although Mr. Shonkwiler explained that Mr. Tembo could park on the north side of Thompson Street, Mr. Tembo was concerned about parking on the north side since some residents had told him that he could not park in front of their residences.

Mr. Shonkwiler explained that there were no reserved on-street parking spaces on Thompson Street. He advised Mr. Tembo to contact the Public Works Department if Mr. Tembo encountered any problems. Mr. Shonkwiler said that staff would notify the residents to let them know that on-street parking on a public street was available to anyone.