

URBANA TRAFFIC COMMISSION
Tuesday, September 15, 2015

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Michael Madigan, City Council Member, Ward 6, Chair
Craig Shonkwiler, Assistant City Engineer

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Pat Connolly, Police Chief

OTHERS PRESENT:

John Collins, Operations Manager

The meeting began at 4:00 p.m.

Approval of Minutes:

Craig Shonkwiler moved to approve the minutes of the August 11, 2015 meeting. Michael Madigan seconded the motion. The Commission voted 2-0 to approve the minutes of the August meeting.

Additions to the agenda:

Craig Shonkwiler moved to add an update on Lincoln Avenue at One South to the agenda.

Michael Madigan seconded the motion.

The item was added 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 on parking restrictions at 1306 Eads Street.

Craig Shonkwiler summarized a conversation he had with Mr. Chris Hayes, the resident at 1306 Eads Street. During their phone conversation, Mr. Hayes mentioned that he had difficulty backing out of his driveway when cars were parked on the street across from his driveway. Mr. Hayes said that he was unable to attend the meeting due to his work schedule. Mr. Hayes stated that four accidents had occurred involving cars backing out of his driveway and hitting cars parked across the street from his home. Mr. Shonkwiler said that police reports show one accident occurred, but perhaps the others were not reported. Mr. Shonkwiler explained that the City did not typically restrict parking across from driveways. Engineering staff had run an analysis on the driveway to determine if there was enough distance for a car to turn into and out of the driveway and the study

showed that there was enough room even with a car parked across the street. Mr. Shonkwiler offered to meet with Mr. Hayes to discuss possible modifications that could be made to the driveway, but Mr. Hayes did not wish to make any changes to his driveway at this time. He recommended that no action be taken.

Michael Madigan agreed. Mr. Madigan asked if there were any objects that might restrict movement.

Mr. Shonkwiler said that there were no restrictions. He said that the driveway was about ten feet wide and that the flare of the driveway could be expanded to provide easier access. He mentioned that Council had not supported the restriction of parking across from driveways in the past. He added that starting the precedent could result in many people asking for that restriction, which would drastically reduce the availability of on-street parking in residential neighborhoods.

Mr. Madigan asked City staff to notify Mr. Hayes that no action would be taken toward restricting parking across from 1306 Eads Street.

Item #2- Report on the installation of Neighborhood Watch signs in south Urbana.

Craig Shonkwiler recommended that the installation of Neighborhood Watch signs be reported to the Traffic Commission instead of being approved by the Commission. He mentioned that he would elaborate on this later during the discussion of the sign policy.

John Collins said that he had not heard from the Police Department about the locations for sign placement.

Craig Shonkwiler said that there was nothing to report at this time.

Item #3- Update on Lincoln Avenue at One South.

Craig Shonkwiler reviewed concerns about pedestrian crossings on Lincoln Avenue at One South and Atrium apartment complexes. He stated that at the July 2, 2013, meeting of the Traffic Commission, no specific instruction was given regarding the concern other than to meet with the Champaign Urbana Mass Transit District (MTD). He mentioned that a separate meeting was held with MTD on November 14, 2013. At that meeting it was recommended that a crosswalk be installed on Lincoln Avenue at Sunset Drive. He said that an analysis was performed by an intern to review the recommendation. The observations noted during the analysis indicated that pedestrians crossed Lincoln Avenue at the point where they were discharged from the bus. As an option, the intern researched the possibility of installing Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFB) which would be activated by pedestrians as part of a mid-block pedestrian crossing plan. Mr. Shonkwiler continued by saying that it was an unfunded project identified in the Capital Improvement Plan. He said that Public Works staff had had been working with other City staff and MTD to get consensus on the project. He mentioned that as time allowed, Engineering staff was surveying the area to determine true costs for the project. He added that MTD had shown some interest in cost sharing, but that ultimately the City would respond to a public safety issue.

Michael Madigan said that it appeared as though progress was being made toward a solution. He added that he was encouraged that MTD was willing to consider working with the City.

Craig Shonkwiler said that staff was working on details to avoid any conflicts with the traffic lights at the North Fire Station located on Lincoln Avenue.

Mr. Madigan asked about the considerations that would be made as a result of the presence of traffic lights at the North Fire Station.

Mr. Shonkwiler explained that the distance between the lights for the crosswalk and the lights at the North Fire Station would have to be far enough apart so motorists could distinguish between the lights indicating pedestrian crossing the street from fire trucks entering and exiting the fire station.

John Collins asked if a pedestrian scramble at Lincoln Avenue and Bradley Avenue would improve pedestrian crossings.

Craig Shonkwiler said that the observations made indicated that the pedestrians didn't follow the walk lights at that intersection. He stated that the City was trying to provide a safe solution. If students would choose not to use the crosswalk, then the students would be crossing at their own risk.

Mr. Madigan asked if MTD could work with property owners to allow the busses to load and unload within the One South complex.

Mr. Shonkwiler said that there might not be enough room for busses to turn inside the complex.

Michael Madigan asked if the RRFB complied with the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD).

Craig Shonkwiler stated that it did and that the same feature would be used on Windsor Road at Vine Street.

(NOTE: Interim approval for Optional Use of Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons was given by the Federal Highway Administration in 2008.)

New Business

Item #4- Discussion of the installation of parking restrictions in the 700 block of South Philo Road.

John Collins explained that patrons of the restaurant, Huaraches Moroleon, were parking along the edge of Philo Road and leaving ruts in the grass along the edge of the pavement. He requested adding some hot mix to the east edge of Philo Road and designating a specific area for parking to keep vehicles off of the grass and parked within an area that would not interfere with traffic.

Michael Madigan said that he was glad that the restaurant was doing well, but that it would be helpful to define the area where parking was allowed.

Craig Shonkwiler said that he would look at the area, but he believed it would be acceptable. He agreed to check the site triangle to make sure there were no visibility conflicts.

John Collins was not sure if there were restrictions already approved.

Craig Shonkwiler moved to install no parking beyond this point to restrict parking on Philo Road, north of Washington Street unless there were already restrictions in place.

Michael Madigan seconded the motion.

The motion was approved 2-0.

This item will go to City Council for consideration.

(Since the meeting it was discovered that Ordinance #9697-77 was passed to prohibit parking for northbound traffic from the centerline of Washington Street to 82 feet north of the centerline of Washington Street. Additional distance will be needed to the north.)

Item #5- Report on the installation of the Sister Cities signs in Urbana.

John Collins reported that Bill Gray had received a request from Council Member Dennis Roberts to install Sister Cities signage for Thionville, France. He stated that the Sister Cities signage for Zomba, Malawi had been removed. He added that the current signage was purchased by the Sister Cities Committee.

Mike Madigan asked if the Traffic Commission needed to approve the installation.

Craig Shonkwiler said that under the draft sign policy, the Traffic Commission would not have to approve the installation of the signs, but that the signage would be reported to the Traffic Commission.

Item #6- Report for the removal of bus parking on Michigan Avenue adjacent to the Urbana Middle School.

Craig Shonkwiler shared a request from the Urbana Middle School principal who asked that the bus loading zone signage along Michigan Avenue, west of Vine Street, be re-signed to allow parking for faculty and staff only during the hours school was in session and allow parking for others the rest of the time. Mr. Shonkwiler asked for direction from the Commission as to whether or not a parking petition should be distributed to those living in that area. He said that the parking could be allowed by permit. He expressed concern about the impact on the current situation where parents come to that area to drop off and pick up students.

Michael Madigan asked that those in that area directly across from the bus loading zone receive a notice about the suggested changes in parking and include a request for input from them. He said that residents could express their views if they wished to do so.

Craig Shonkwiler said that he would talk to the principal to find out where faculty and staff members were currently parking and develop a plan, which would be included in the notice, to present to the residents and Traffic Commission for input. He clarified that the notice would go to the five houses directly across from the current loading zone and the one house to the west of the loading zone.

Michael Madigan would prefer not asking the school district to circulate the petition since this is a request from an agency, not a request from a resident.

Item #7- Update on sign policy.

Craig Shonkwiler presented a draft of the sign policy for review. He said that the policy reflects discussion from the last Traffic Commission meeting by indicating that the Traffic Commission would focus primarily on approval of the installation of regulatory signs and that non-regulatory sign installation would be reported to the Commission, not approved by the Commission. He stated that according to the City Code of Ordinance, the City Engineer had control over what was placed in the right-of-way, but regulatory signs change the schedules in the Local Traffic Codes, so decisions about those signs would require Council approval. Mr. Shonkwiler stated that non-regulatory signs would be reported to the Traffic Commission, but would not require their approval. He said that the Operations Manager and City Engineer would decide sign location. He created a document to help members of the Traffic Commission better understand what type of action would be required. Mr. Shonkwiler said that he would further define each sign category and bring the policy back for approval.

Michael Madigan asked for examples of the different types of signage.

Craig Shonkwiler explained some types and said that he would include more examples as part of the policy.

With no other business at hand, the meeting was adjourned at 4:56 p.m.

The next regularly scheduled Traffic Commission meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 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