

URBANA TRAFFIC COMMISSION
Tuesday, August 11, 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:

John Collins, Operations Manager
Nicole Allen, 23 Montclair Road

The meeting began at 4:00 p.m.

Additions to the agenda:

There were no additions to the agenda.

Approval of Minutes:

Pat Connolly moved to approve the minutes of the July 14, 2015 meeting. Craig Shonkwiler seconded the motion. The Commission voted 3-0 to approve the minutes of the July meeting.

Public Input

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

New Business

Item #1- Discussion of the installation of Neighborhood Watch signs in south Urbana.

Barb Stiehl explained that she received a call from a resident in the South Ridge subdivision regarding an e-mail received by the resident stating that Neighborhood Watch signs were to be placed in the southeast Urbana area. Since the resident was unable to attend the Traffic Commission meeting, he asked if the signs could be located near the entrances of the South Ridge, Myra Ridge and Deerfield Trails subdivisions and not placed on every street within the area. Based upon the resident's request, Ms. Stiehl asked if the signs could be placed on Marc Trail and Trails Drive off of Philo Road and on Susan Stone Drive and Myra Ridge Drive off of Windsor Road.

Pat Connolly asked if the plan was to place signs on each individual street.

John Collins stated that he had not received a request to install the signs in that area.

Chief Connolly asked who provided the information about the sign installation.

Ms. Stiehl stated that Joe Smith, a resident in the South Ridge subdivision, received an e-mail from the neighborhood homeowners' association regarding the installation of the signs. Since Mr. Smith was unable to attend the meeting, he asked Ms. Stiehl to request that the signs be installed at the entrances to the subdivisions.

Chief Connolly stated that he recalled that the Traffic Commission had only discussed the location of Neighborhood Watch signs one time since he had been on the Commission and to his recollection that discussion was to determine the location of the signs. He said that since the current Police Department staff member began working on the Neighborhood Watch program, signage had been placed in five different areas without seeking approval from the Traffic Commission.

Ms. Stiehl mentioned that the Traffic Commission had been approving the locations of the Neighborhood Watch signs since the Neighborhood Watch program was introduced to the City of Urbana in 1983.

Chief Connolly suggested that Michelle Carr, who coordinated the Neighborhood Watch program, come to the next meeting to discuss how the program worked.

Ms. Stiehl stated that signage in the right-of-way was approved by the Traffic Commission.

Craig Shonkwiler said that Traffic Commission would provide a forum to discuss the effectiveness of the location of signage.

Michael Madigan stated that sign location could be vetted at a department level and not go to Traffic Commission.

Chief Connolly said that the Police Department representative has been dealing directly with the Public Works Department to get the signs installed.

Mr. Madigan said that Police and Public Works should be able to agree on the location of signs without pulling people into a meeting.

Mr. Shonkwiler agreed that Police and Public Works could determine the location of the signage, but the Traffic Commission provided the formality of the signage being agreed upon by the body that was responsible for the City's traffic control. He recommended developing a policy to deal with signage in the right-of-way.

John Collins asked if there was a policy in place for the Neighborhood Watch program.

Pat Connolly stated that if the neighbors said that they wanted a sign, then the signs should be installed.

Mr. Madigan asked for a policy to be developed for signage in the right-of-way to be discussed at the next meeting.

Unfinished Business

Item #2- Discussion of speed study results on Montclair Road.

Craig Shonkwiler discussed the results of a speed study conducted in October 2014 on Montclair Road between the hours of 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. Mr. Shonkwiler stated that the mode was 29 and 32 miles per hour in the morning, the mean was 30.5 miles per hour, and the median was 30.2 miles per hour. For the afternoon traffic, he explained that the mode was 30 miles per hour; the mean was 30.6 miles per hour and that the median was 29.9 miles per hour. He discussed the purpose of using the 85th percentile in determining speed limits. He added that the 85 percentile in the morning was 34 miles per hour and in the afternoon it was 35 miles per hour. Mr. Shonkwiler suggested further observations of traffic on Montclair Road. Specifically, he recommended placing tubes on the street to gather a more comprehensive look at traffic speeds and volume for more than one day. He also requested the assignment of STEP on the street to slow traffic and to enforce the speed limit.

Nicole Allen mentioned that STEP was assigned to Montclair Road in the winter so she was not sure that the Police presence had as much of an impact on slowing traffic as did the weather.

Mr. Shonkwiler recommended STEP enforcement between 7 a.m. and 8 a.m. and between 5 p.m. and 6 p.m. based upon the speeds observed during the speed study.

Ms. Allen asked about the possibility of lowering the speed limit to 25 miles per hour. She expressed concern about the vehicles travelling over 40 miles per hour. She said that many on the street were in favor of the traffic calming discussed at an earlier meeting. She added that many of the residents would be willing to participate in a cost-sharing program.

Mr. Shonkwiler explained that the option of the chicane, which was presented at an earlier meeting, was mentioned to be helpful, but he added that the City of Urbana had no current policy for installing traffic calming devices nor did the City have any funding source for the construction of the devices. He said that a policy needed to be developed that established guidelines for the determining where traffic calming devices would be installed. As part of the guidelines, Mr. Shonkwiler suggested that minimum traffic volumes would be established, funding sources (the City, the residents or some combination) would need to be defined and impacts on emergency response would need to be considered. He recommended setting tubes out on Montclair Road in either September or October to gather traffic data. He said that Engineering Division staff would research a traffic calming policy internally, and then staff would bring the policy to the Traffic Commission and City Council.

Nicole Allen asked how citizens could stay involved in the process. She asked if the 25 mile-an-hour speed limit would be a possibility. She felt that by reducing the speed limit by 5 miles an hour, motorists would drive at speeds closer to 30 miles per hour.

Craig Shonkwiler said that a 25 mile-per-hour speed limit would typically be imposed based upon the conditions of the road (visibility concerns, narrow width of the road or an 85th percentile at or near 20 miles per hour). Mr. Shonkwiler mentioned that the City of Champaign had used speed tables as a traffic calming device. He said that the device had not been used often since there were not many locations that met the criteria

required per their traffic calming policy. Mr. Shonkwiler asked that the STEP detail be assigned after the more comprehensive speed study was completed.

With no other business at hand, the meeting was adjourned at 4:52 p.m.

Since the next regularly scheduled Traffic Commission meeting would fall on the Tuesday following the Labor Day holiday, the Traffic Commission meeting was postponed until Tuesday, September 15, 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