

URBANA TRAFFIC COMMISSION  
Tuesday, December 10, 2013

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Michael Madigan, City Council Member, Ward 6, Chair  
Joe Smith, Senior Civil Engineer  
Pat Connolly, Police Chief

MEMBERS ABSENT:

None

OTHERS PRESENT:

Craig Shonkwiler, Senior Civil Engineer  
Mendi Gudgel, 1007 Sunnycrest Drive  
George Daigh, 1703 South Cottage Grove Avenue  
Spencer Landsman, Principal, Leal Elementary School, 312 West Oregon Street  
John Collins, Operations Manager  
Charlie Smyth, City Council Member, Ward 1

The meeting began at 4:00 p.m.

**Additions to the agenda:**

There were no additions to the agenda.

**Approval of Minutes:**

Joe Smith moved to approve the minutes of the November 12, 2013 meeting. Pat Connolly seconded the motion. The Commission voted 3-0 to approve the minutes of the meeting.

**Public Input**

Those present wished to speak to the Commission at the time the item was discussed.

**Unfinished Business**

There was no unfinished business to be discussed.

**New Business**

**Item #1- Discussion of the installation of neighborhood watch signage on Burkwood Drive between Anderson Street and Cottage Grove Avenue.**

Items #1 and #2 were discussed at the same time.

**Items #2- Discussion of the installation of the neighborhood watch signage on Sunnycrest Drive between Anderson Street and Cottage Grove Avenue.**

George Daigh discussed concerns about recent problems in the neighborhood within the last two years.

Mendi Gudgel mentioned that there had been an increase in police calls and that the type of people passing through and moving into the neighborhood had changed. She requested the installation of neighborhood watch signage in the neighborhood to let people know that the neighbors were watching and to keep the neighborhood safe. She mentioned that many times neighbors weren't communicating with each other and with the police about suspicious activities so they wanted to organize the neighborhood.

George Daigh listed several events that had occurred in the neighborhood from items stolen out of vehicles to home invasion through an unlocked door. He asked that signage be installed at four locations recommended by the City.

Pat Connolly stated that he was wholly supportive of the installation of the neighborhood watch signage and the efforts of the neighbors to organize.

John Collins recommended moving signage on Anderson Street, Larch Place and Cottage Grove Avenue closer to Colorado Avenue to provide better coverage of the neighborhood watch area.

Pat Connolly asked how the signs were purchased.

John Collins said that the signs came to the Public Works Department from the Police Department and that he didn't believe that homeowners associations paid for them.

Pat Connolly moved to install the neighborhood watch signage in the locations recommended by the City.

John Collins said that there would be two signs installed on Anderson Street, one on Florida Avenue, and two on Colorado Avenue. He confirmed that one on Larch Place would be moved closer to Colorado Avenue.

Joe Smith seconded the motion.

The motion was passed 3-0.

Pat Connolly stated that he would meet with Bob Fitzgerald to coordinate the installation of the signage.

This item does not require Council action.

Pat Connolly encouraged the residents to report activity to the Police Department.

**Item #3- Discussion the installation of stop signs at Cedar Street and Oregon Street.**

Items #3 and #4 were discussed at the same time.

**Item #4- Discussion the installation of stop signs at Birch Street and Oregon Street.**

Spencer Landsman discussed concerns about traffic around Leal Elementary School. He requested the installation of stop signs for eastbound and westbound traffic on Oregon Street at Birch Street and Cedar Street. He noted that the number of crossing guards had been reduced and that motorists and pedestrians were not paying attention to the current traffic control measures. He said that motorists were using Oregon Street as a thoroughfare and felt that the installation of stop signs would reduce congestion. He mentioned that Oregon Street was converted to a one-way street at drop-off and pick-up times. He stated that people ignored the current signage and drove against the signage designating the street as one-way. He felt that parents were not thinking about pedestrians while picking up and dropping off students without someone there to remind them. He said that new portable crosswalk signs had been installed, which he placed in the street every day.

Charlie Smyth asked how many students walked and crossed these intersections.

Mr. Landsman said that the Police Department counted 43 students, 41 of those students walked with parents.

Pat Connolly was concerned about the installation of the stop signs might create a more serious problem than not having stop signs at those locations.

Mr. Landsman said that many motorists were ignoring signs either because they were on their cell phones or otherwise distracted. He felt that they would see a stop sign even though they were currently ignoring other traffic control signage.

Discussion followed about the current location of signage.

Craig Shonkwiler stated that the City recommended the installation of stop signs based upon criteria established in the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD).

Joe Smith concurred stating that the City would observe the intersections to determine whether or not warrants were met.

Mr. Shonkwiler stated that staff used the criteria to justify where traffic control should be located and made recommendations to City Council based upon the criteria, but City Council could install the signage, if they chose to do so.

Barb Stiehl said that the City did not want to make the situation worse. She pointed out that many were observed ignoring current traffic control signage and that adding more signage might give students a false sense of security when crossing the street while the signage was being ignored by motorists.

Craig Shonkwiler said that the Engineering Division needed to conduct a study to determine if the signage was warranted.

John Collins asked that if stop signs were recommended that the installation not occur during the school year to give motorists a period to adjust to the change.

Pat Connolly asked Mr. Landsman what result he wanted.

Mr. Landsman said that he would like motorists to pay attention when driving near the school.

Michael Madigan asked if there were any measures that the City could employ.

Discussion followed about traffic control measures.

Joe Smith said that staff would look at the warrants.

Craig Shonkwiler asked if any other options could be used.

Mr. Landsman said that the school district was looking at walking school busses to encourage students to walk together.

Charlie Smyth mentioned that there were at least four sets of stop signs (Iowa Street and Carle Avenue, Orchard Street and Washington Street, Illinois Street and Coler Avenue, Oregon Street and Coler Avenue) installed in the City of Urbana that did not meet the warrants recommended by the MUTCD for providing safe, predictable traffic control..

Joe Smith indicated that none of the four sets of unwarranted stop signs were recommended by the Urbana Traffic Commission because they did not meet the criteria, but that the City Council did approve their installation, as the City Council has the prerogative to do. He recommended that this item be placed on the March 2014 agenda for the Traffic Commission meeting. He stated that this item had been requested before and did not meet the warrants, but that staff would look at the situation again. Mr. Smith also expressed concern that pedestrians would believe that the stop signs would make crossing the intersection safe and then cross without waiting for vehicles to clear the intersection or acknowledge that the pedestrians were crossing.

Spencer Landsman said that students were conditioned to stop and wait for a signal before crossing.

Joe Smith urged the school district to monitor the crossing regardless of whether or not stop signs were installed.

Spencer Landsman commented that most neighbors avoided the street during school dismissal to avoid congestion.

**Item #5- Discussion speeding vehicles on Pennsylvania Avenue, west of Philo Road.**

Barb Stiehl discussed a concern from a resident in the 1300 block of Pennsylvania Avenue regarding motorists using Pennsylvania Avenue to avoid the traffic signals at Florida Avenue and Philo Road. The resident said that the motorists were speeding during the morning rush hour.

Joe Smith mentioned that work was scheduled to improve the Florida Avenue and Philo Road intersection beginning in April 2014 with a completion date in mid-summer.

Michael Madigan asked that a letter be sent to the resident to let her know that work was scheduled and ask her to let us know if the improvements helped with the problem on Pennsylvania Avenue. He suggested that the Police Department monitor the situation between 7:00 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. if manpower was available.

**Item #6- Discussion of parking restrictions on both sides of Crystal Lake Drive, east of Cunningham Avenue.**

Items #6 and #7 were discussed at the same time.

**Item #7- Discussion of parking restrictions on both sides of Maple Street, north of Park Street.**

Joe Smith said that this problem had been brought to the Traffic Commission before. He mentioned that he drove on those streets and did not see any problems with parked vehicles blocking access to the street.

No action was taken.

The meeting adjourned at 4:48 p.m.

The next scheduled meeting will be held on January 14, 2014\* 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

*\*Since there was no unfinished business to be discussed at the January meeting, the meeting was cancelled. The next meeting of the Urbana Traffic Commission will be on Tuesday, February 11, 2014 at 4:00 p.m. at the Urbana Public Works Department, 706 South Glover Avenue, second floor conference room.*