

URBANA TRAFFIC COMMISSION
Tuesday, June 4, 2013

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Joe Smith, Senior Civil Engineer
Pat Connolly, Police Chief

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Michael Madigan, City Council Member, Ward 6, Chair

OTHERS PRESENT:

Karie Wolfson, 1011 West Springfield Avenue
William Renfro, 1303 West Tremont Street
Carol Ammons, Council Member, Ward 3, 1108 North Busey Avenue
Bennie Drake, 909 North Linview Avenue
Renee Renfro, 1303 West Tremont Street
Dorothy Carter, 1505 North Romine Street
Barbara Thomas, 1508 North Romine Street
John Collins, Operations Manager
Steve Fay, 2021 South Boudreau Drive
Myra Stevens, 2021 South Boudreau Drive

The meeting began at 4:03 p.m. Pat Connolly chaired the meeting in Mr. Madigan's absence.

Additions to the agenda:

Discussion about speeding in Crystal Lake Park and along Bradley Avenue was entertained. No action was taken by the Commission since these items were not on the agenda. At the request of a citizen wishing to speak to Item #1, this item was moved to the end of the agenda so the citizen could have an opportunity to attend the meeting.

Approval of Minutes:

Joe Smith moved to approve the minutes as read. Pat Connolly seconded the motion. The Commission voted 2-0 to approve the minutes of the May 7, 2013 meeting.

Public Input

William Renfro discussed his concerns about traffic speeding through Crystal Lake Park.

Pat Connolly stated that the Urbana Police Department had authority to enforce speed limits within the park. He asked Mr. Renfro for specific information about speeding.

Mr. Renfro noted that the incidents occurred from mid to late morning near the Champaign County fairgrounds.

Chief Connolly said that Mr. Renfro could call 9-1-1 and let them know if speeding was occurring, especially if children are playing nearby. He stated that the Police Department would proactively enforce the speed limits within Crystal Lake Park.

Barbara Thomas discussed animal feces on sidewalks. She was concerned that dog owners were not clearing sidewalks.

Pat Connolly stated that wild geese have been creating problems throughout the City. He said that Urbana Park District employees had authority to enforce rules within the park, but some of the problem may be the result of the wild geese.

William Renfro discussed his concern with speeding on Bradley Avenue. He noted that eastbound motorists in the right traffic lane were racing to merge as the traffic lanes reduced from two lanes to one lane. He added that many did not heed the merge lane warning sign and tried to pass on the right when others were trying to turn right onto Romine Street.

Renee Renfro asked if flashing yellow lights could be used to warn motorists of the merge lane. She felt that motorists were not paying attention to the signage.

Discussion of vehicle right of way followed.

This item will be discussed at a later Traffic Commission meeting.

Unfinished Business

None

New Business

Item #1- Discussion of parking restrictions on Romine Street between Beardsley Avenue and Bradley Avenue.

Carol Ammons discussed concerns about traffic flow on Romine Street. In particular, Ms. Ammons stated that mass transit busses were unable to travel on Romine Street between Beardsley Avenue and Bradley Avenue when vehicles were parked on both sides of the street. She stated that sometimes busses were unable to turn from Bradley Avenue onto Romine Street until northbound traffic had cleared Romine Street.

Barbara Thomas said that cars were parking too close to the intersection.

Joe Smith recommended moving the No Parking Here to Corner signage for parked vehicles on Romine Street near Bradley Avenue farther south to allow more room for bus traffic.

Pat Connolly said that the City would monitor the situation. He asked that this item come back to the Traffic Commission after it had been reviewed.

Item #2- Discussion of handicapped parking within the metered parking area on Springfield Avenue near Goodwin Avenue.

Karie Wolfson explained that since the counseling program had moved to 1011 West Springfield Avenue it was difficult for clients with mobility issues to easily access their facility. She mentioned that the three visitor and one handicapped spaces located in Lot B21 at Lincoln Avenue and Springfield Avenue were not near the front door of their facility. She said that there was one metered space near their front door. Ms. Wolfson asked if they could have that space specifically designated as a handicapped space.

Joe Smith asked if there was an accessible ramp near that metered space. He said that he would look at the location.

Ms. Wolfson said that there was a driveway near the building and that the space was next to that.

Joe Smith asked if a van with a lift would be able to use that space.

Ms. Wolfson said that there would not be sufficient space to accommodate a van with a lift.

Pat Connolly stated that parking space rentals were handled by the Parking and Facilities Supervisor, Vince Gustafson. Chief Connolly suggested Ms. Wolfson contact him to discuss the leasing of the space.

Barb Stiehl stated that anyone displaying a handicapped placard could use a metered space without paying the meter. She said that might be helpful to those visiting their facility.

Ms. Wolfson thought that solution would be helpful. She stated that she would contact Mr. Gustafson about renting a metered space.

Item #3- Discussion of the installation of Neighborhood Watch signs in the 900 block on North Linview Avenue.

Bennie Drake discussed the process that the neighborhood group completed to form a Neighborhood Watch group. As Watch Captain, Mr. Drake asked for the installation of Neighborhood Watch signs in the 900 block of North Linview Avenue. He said that he would be returning to request signage on Coler Avenue and Busey Avenue.

Pat Connolly said the Neighborhood Watch program was extremely helpful in deterring crime because people knew they were being watched.

Joe Smith recommended the installation of the signs on Linview Avenue. He stated that there was one resident who, although in favor of the installation of the signage, asked that the sign not be installed on his property since he already had signage there. He asked for the locations of the signs to be installed on Coler Avenue and Busey Avenue.

Pat Connolly encouraged neighborhoods to become involved in the program.

Dorothy Carter explained that at one time there were Neighborhood Watch signs on her streets, paid for by the residents, which were no longer there. She asked how those signs could be reinstalled.

Pat Connolly stated that the signs were installed for those groups that were still active. He suggested that Ms. Carter contact Preston James at the Urbana Police Department.

Joe Smith moved to install Neighborhood Watch signs in the 900 through 1200 blocks of Linview Avenue, the 900 through 1200 blocks of Busey Avenue and on the west side of Coler Avenue in the five locations designated by the Police Department.

Pat Connolly seconded the motion.

The Traffic Commission approved the motion 2-0.

This item does not require Council approval.

Dorothy Carter expressed concern about a property that had grass growing around it and abandoned vehicles.

Chief Connolly recommended that she contact the Police Department about the vehicles and Public Works about the tall grass.

Mr. Renfro asked for a flashing yellow light to let motorists know that eastbound lanes on Bradley Avenue merged since people don't see the signs. He added that patrolling works. He mentioned that traffic from the apartments created problems.

Joe Smith said that the City would look at possible signage solutions.

Barbara Thomas pointed out that the street is marked to indicate that the lanes go to one lane.

Joe Smith said that the City would look at accidents and visibility at the intersection of Bradley Avenue and Romine Street.

Renee Renfro was concerned about traffic in the area since there was a mix of pedestrian traffic and vehicular traffic.

Pat Connolly said that he would ask for additional STEP enforcement in that area.

Item #4- Discussion of the installation of stop signs on Florida Avenue at Cottage Grove Avenue.

Myra Stevens said that she went to school at Wiley Elementary School and rode her bike to school. She said that she was almost hit one time. Ms. Stevens asked the Traffic Commission to install stop signs on Florida Avenue at Cottage Grove Avenue.

Steve Fay said that the installation of stop signs on Florida Avenue at Cottage Grove Avenue would help students who travelled to the school. He mentioned that there was additional traffic at that intersection since the CUMTD stopped at the intersection for passengers at the Urbana Middle School and Urbana High School.

Joe Smith pointed out that bicycle lanes would be installed on Florida Avenue this summer resulting in reduced vehicle lane widths on Florida Avenue, which might reduce vehicle speeds on that street. He suggested that a stop sign warrant study be conducted in the fall after the bicycle lanes had been installed and school was in session.

Pat Connolly mentioned that stop signs were not used to slow traffic, but to designate right of way at that location.

Joe Smith said that he would set up a video camera to look at the intersection.

No action was recommended until the results of the study have been reviewed.

Discussion followed about upcoming Traffic Commission issues.

The meeting adjourned at 4:50 p.m.

The next meeting will be held on July 2, 2013 at 4:00 p.m. at the Urbana City Building, 400 South Vine Street, second floor conference room.

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara Stiehl
Recording Secretary