



1200 Wilmette Avenue
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Engineering and
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MEETING MINUTES

TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

**TUESDAY, AUGUST 11, 2020
7:00 P.M.**

**Village Hall – Broadcast only (Village Hall is closed due to the Village President’s
Declaration of Local Disaster and Public Health Emergency Order) ¹**

Members Present:

Chair Libby Braband
Commissioner Isaac Gaetz
Commissioner Benjamin Schmitt
Commissioner Randall Tyner
Commissioner Jill Hayes (Chair pro tem)
Commissioner Andrew Levy
Commissioner Nathan Kebede

Members Absent:

None

Staff Present:

Brigitte Berger-Raish, P.E., Dir of Eng and Public Works
Dan Manis, P.E., Village Engineer
Danielle Horn, P.E., Project Manager
Kyle Murphy, Police Chief

Guests Present:

I. CALL TO ORDER.

Chair Braband called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. Brigitte Berger-Raish, Director of Engineering and Public Works, took the role of the Commissioners.

¹This meeting was held remotely by the Transportation Commission over Microsoft Teams. The meeting was broadcast live at <https://www.youtube.com/user/villageofwilmette/live> and on Channel 6 and then published on the Village’s website. Members of the public were able to make public comment in advance of the meeting by emailing their comments to publiccomment@wilmette.com or comments could be made during the meeting through YouTube live and provided to the Commission. There was also the option to participate in the meeting via a PC, mobile device or phone.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 18, 2020 TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION MEETING

Chair Braband directed the Commission's attention to the draft minutes of the Transportation Commission meeting of February 18, 2020.

Commissioner Tyner moved to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gaetz. There were no changes noted to the minutes. **The motion was approved by a unanimous voice vote.**

III. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF THE MASTER BIKE AND ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Due to a larger number of comments received prior to the meeting, Ms. Berger-Raish, Director of Engineering and Public Works; Dan Manis, Village Engineer; and Danielle Horn, Project Manager, read through comments received prior to the meeting before continuing with Item III.

Brigitte Berger-Raish, introduced the item with an overview of the plan, including why we are preparing a plan. Ms. Raish emphasized how the plan is not a permanent document. There will be additional studies, as the plan is not an engineering level document. She also presented an overview of the process moving forward.

Ms. Berger-Raish introduced the discussion on the Vision Statement. Commissioner Levy presented an alternate recommendation for the Vision Statement.

Commissioner Hayes expressed a concern with making a drastic change in the Vision Statement at this point in the process since it was presented to the public during the engagement process. She did like the way Mr. Levy expanded on the first sentence.

Commissioner Levy felt like the focus of the previous statement was on roads, but believes bringing in transit, sidewalk and trails opens up the possibility of how we should be thinking about an active plan. It also did not call out the idea of adjacent communities.

Chair Braband added that the network serves residents and visitors. Additional conversation ensued about modifying the proposed Vision Statement. Commissioner Schmidt expressed concern with bulking it up.

Commissioners distinguished between a Vision Statement and incorporating facts. Discussion ensued on modifications and the wording of the Vision Statement, including the desire to give more teeth to it and to provide future policy-makers a clear vision.

Commissioner Schmitt expressed concern over incorporating the "visitor" element to give the false impression that they have more power than they do.

Commissioner Levy expressed the advantage of expressing connectivity to other communities.

Ms. Berger-Raish continued review of other modifications as requested by the commissioners. The Commissioners agreed to the following for the wording of the Vision Statement:

“The Village of Wilmette commits to building a safe, inviting, context-sensitive transportation network for all users. We visualize Wilmette as an accessible community for people of all ages and abilities where any transportation mode, including walking, biking, and driving, is expected on the transportation network, welcomed through secure, comfortable, and convenient design and reflected in Village policies and programs.”

Commissioner Levy commented how revision 4, the change to go back before the Commission, is good.

Ms. Berger-Raish returned the floor to Chair Braband for additional discussion and/or public comment.

Commission Gaetz recommended removing the word underpass or changing to overpass to remove stress from that section based on letters received.

Chair Braband mentioned that a lot of the concerns such as drainage, feasibility, the alignment on Lawler vs. Lavergne, and whether an under or overpass, etc., will all come out with an engineering study later on. Ms. Berger-Raish agreed with leaving the flexibility for the future, as it would be reactive to take it out at this point. She reiterated that a lot more work would be done before getting to the point of approving something like this.

Jacque Henrickson with CivilTech Engineering explained that the plan was shown to residents at the Open House and received positive feedback on it from residents local to the area. A big opposition was not received at that point.

Commissioner Gaetz stated that the emphasis seems to be on underpass or tunnel throughout the document and may be less alarming if it was changed using both terms, overpass and underpass, so that it doesn't appear biased towards one or the other. The suggestion was made to name it a pedestrian crossing instead.

Commissioner Hayes inquired why Glenview was not considered as the crossing to go in with a grade crossing instead. Ms. Henrickson noted distance and proximity to the school were reasons for the placement. She also cited to provide a separate facility pedestrians and bicyclist to connect to the planned bike route network. It would provide for a connection to the planned Skokie-Valley Trail to the west. If the crossing was at Glenview Road, it would be outside of Wilmette.

Discussion ensued about why Lawler was chosen over one of the other streets in the area. Ms. Berger-Raish mentioned how this is a good example of how when

we get to the implementation, we will have a Transportation Commission meeting and invite the entire neighborhood and have a discussion about Lawler versus Lavergne or other locations and make a decision from there. Commissioner Hayes suggested mentioning in the plan that the route could be vetted through a future process.

Item IV, Public Comment, was moved up prior to taking action on the plan.

Ms. Horn stated that no additional comments came in through the YouTube channel, and no additional comments were received through the public comment address.

Mary Jean Mendizabal and husband, Robert Shaw, of Leamington and Wilmette Avenue – They are 7 year residents of Wilmette. Their kids attend Avoca West and have lots of friends on the other side of the Edens. They would like to go to the other side of the Edens and are looking forward to the proposed plan. They support the crossing of the Edens, whether a bridge or tunnel to allow them to cross safely and meet up with friends. They stated that it is extremely dangerous to allow kids to cross Glenview Road because the cars are coming extremely fast.

Jeremy Frisch, Birchwood and 20TH Street – He encouraged the Commission to find ways to prioritize bikes over parking. He understands the concerns of residents and businesses in the area to keep their parking, but the parking is part of the street and should be owned by all residents of Wilmette who want to use the street. He encourages the Commission to rethink any shared lanes such as painted bike lanes because they give a false sense of security. He would like buffered or protected bike lanes to be used instead. This is an opportunity for a great network with Green Bay Trail and North Branch on either side of Wilmette with a connection in between to the schools. There is room for improvement.

Cynthia Doucet of Lawler – She is one of the residents near Edens, and passed out over eighty flyers and posted on Next Door. She stated that no one was aware of this before. As the plan gets closer with cost estimates, safety and monitoring, drainage, etc., she would like to have these things communicated to them for peace of mind.

Alan Dordek, 606 Lawler – No one looked at the Lawler street when the plan was named. Hibbard is more logical. No one would like this in their yard. He is against taking the narrow streets because it would be made more constricted.

Kenneth Scott, 748 Lawler – Mr. Scott and his wife, Jenna, went to new Trier and have a perspective of living in the area. They fully support the comments by all neighbors and believes the concerns need to be fully addressed as a neighborhood.

Ms. Horn read an email that came in from Kenneth and Jennifer Scott.

Chair Braband asked Ms. Berger-Raish to explain the additional steps that would go on before moving forward, given the concerns that the Lawler neighbors expressed.

Ms. Berger-Raish shared how this is a really aggressive plan with a lot of components. This is a long-range plan, maybe five to ten years, especially given the limitation on grant money and budget. Staff will look at the Capital Improvement Program and overlay it with the master plan to set priorities for the next five years. For example, the Village currently has plans for the Skokie-Lake intersection. Once that connection is built, the next logical would be a Lake Avenue crossing. This is how the plans would work together. Staff would give the Transportation Commission recommendations to the improvements moved forward. Ms. Berger-Raish continued to explain the timeline and steps forward given the funding, including more public engagement.

Ms. Berger-Raish mentioned that for the last public meeting, staff mailed out a letter to every resident along a proposed route, which also will take place before implementation. She encouraged residents to sign up for the Village's E-News.

Chair Braband asked for a motion. Commissioner Levy moved to approve the plan. Commissioner Tyner seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a unanimous voice vote.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT

Occurred as part of Item III prior to taking formal action on the active transportation plan.

V. OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Manis gave an update on traffic calming speed zone signs. Looking at installing them on Kenilworth where speeding requests have come on.

Mr. Manis announced that there will be a public informational meeting for the Skokie-Lake intersection improvements on July 23. The Village is looking at making the intersection more accommodating for pedestrians and adding a multi-use trail north of lake. The anticipated schedule is next year for implementation.

Ms. Berger-Raish gave an update on the Central Avenue and Downtown Streetscape project. Construction will start this week, and the detour goes into effect next week through December. The detour will resume in March with 1 way west-bound traffic.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Kebede moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Tyner and approved by unanimous voice vote. **The motion carried.** No further discussion occurred on the motion.

The meeting was thereafter adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Minutes Respectfully Prepared by Danielle Horn, P.E.