

**Minutes of the Transportation Commission Meeting held on Wednesday, January 12, 2005 at 7:00 p.m. in the Training Room at Village Hall, 1200 Wilmette Avenue, Wilmette, Illinois 60091.**

---

Members Present: Alan Swanson, Chairman  
Neil Ferrari  
Amy Panici  
Barbara Lusky  
Clay Weaver

Members Absent: Eileen Miller-Girson  
Jim Grosh

Staff Present: Brigitte Mayerhofer, P. E., Director of Engineering  
Linda Reilley, Engineering Assistant II  
George Carpenter, Police Chief  
Ron Andrews, Traffic Coordinator

Also Present: Kathy Jackson, 918 Locust  
Suzanne Franklin, 905 Ottawa  
Martin McConahay, School District 39  
Julie Olson, 2828 Blackhawk  
Judy Schnecke, 1420 Forest  
Monica Lawyer, 812 Ashland  
Suzie Van Cleave, 730 Ninth Street  
Abbey Roos, 1120 Seneca

Chairman Swanson called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**1. Review of Minutes**

**Motion to approve the August 11, 2004 minutes.**

**Motion by:** Commissioner Lusky

**Second:** Commissioner Ferrari

**Discussion:** None

**Action:** Approved by unanimous voice vote

**2. Pedestrian Issues at the Lake / Locust and Lake/ Illinois intersections**

- Chairman Swanson welcomed everyone and asked Ms. Mayerhofer to summarize the information in the agenda packets. *(This information has been attached to the minutes for permanent record.)*

- Ron Andrews of the Police Department read a statement on his observations of children safety at the intersections in question.
- It was clarified that there are four similar intersections that are also of concern because of high traffic and pedestrian flow: Wilmette/ Ridge, Wilmette/Hunter, Illinois/Hibbard and Wilmette/Locust.
- Chairman Swanson asked Chief Carpenter what happens if a crossing guard calls in sick. Chief Carpenter responded by indicating that once a location is established as having a crossing guard, then the Police Department has an obligation to ensure the crossing is always staffed.
- A discussion of school sponsored crossing guards at Harper and Romona Schools ensued.
- Ms. Julie Olson, 2828 Blackhawk, presented on behalf of the petitioners. Ms. Olson provided a summary of the information in the packets. She represents a large group of concerned parents, who have school age children that cross these intersections every day. She said that on occasion, the parents act as crossing guards, because the danger is so great. The School District and Civics and Safety group are involved and supportive of the effort to improve safety. School District 39 has written a letter to Cook County, who responded indicating the study area is focused east of Hunter Road. Ms. Olson stated that she was concerned to hear this, because Lake and Locust and Lake and Illinois are just as dangerous as Hunter and Ridge. Ms. Olson recited the pedestrian crossing and accident statistics that were provided in the packets. She said that aggressive drivers often turn left in front of children crossing Lake Avenue and that there have been a number of near misses and one incident involving a child since 2000. She acknowledged that the County and Village have installed “No right turn on red” signs at these locations and instituted school zone and school crossing signs. There is still more that needs to be done, however. The petitioner’s recommendations include adding crossing guards, changing the signals to eliminate left turn conflicts, the addition of flashing school zone beacons and active enforcement.
- Martin McConahay, Director of Operations for School District 39, stated that the Superintendent supports everything previously stated and that classrooms continue to be added to accommodate the growing number of middle school children. He stated 400 students participate in early morning programs. Mr. McConahay concluded by stating the School District offers their assistance to help address this important concern.
- Ms. Judy Schnecke, 1420 Forest, stated that she also echoes all of the prior statements. She said that Lake Avenue has some of the fastest traffic in the Village, which faces our youngest citizens.

She stated that the School District recently implemented a one-way fare to ride the bus. The effectiveness of this program will be evaluated for next year.

- Ms. Abbey Roos, 1120 Seneca, stated that much of the traffic is heading to New Trier West. She continued by saying there is excessive traffic at these locations all year round.
- Monica Lawyer, 812 Ashland, asked how construction will affect school children crossing Lake. Chairman Swanson stated the County is responsible for the contract and will institute a “maintenance of traffic” plan during construction. Ms. Mayerhofer stated the Engineering Department would work with the County and the contractor to address these concerns.
- A discussion occurred regarding the option of programming an “all red” signal phase into the morning peak hours. The residents and Commission concurred that this would improve safety. The Village will ask the County to consider this change.
- Ms. Schnecke asked if the Village would support modifying the signals to be split-phase. Chairman Swanson stated that split phase signals are not a viable option, because the result would be traffic congestion similar to Green Bay Road.
- Commissioner Ferrari asked Ms. Mayerhofer who pays for the flashing beacons. Ms. Mayerhofer responded that the County’s policy is that the beacons be locally funded.
- Commissioner Panici asked if the buses that travel through Lake and Locust could be re-routed. Mr. McConahay stated he would look into that possibility. Commissioner Panici asked if the School District could consider a later school start time. She also suggested adding school crossing striping on Lake Avenue, similar or what is on Wilmette Avenue. Commissioner Panici also asked if mandatory bussing for students north of Lake Avenue was an option. Lastly, she stated she would like to see the “all red” be instituted.
- Commissioner Lusky stated she concurred with the “all red” option and the flashing lights, but that we should be cautious to see how the construction improvements could affect safety.
- A discussion ensued concerning the State’s designation of a transportation special hazard area, such as north of Lake Avenue. Mr. McConahay stated this process takes a minimum of three months and likely longer.
- Ms. Olson reiterated that the intersection of Lake and Locust is a very unique case that should be given special consideration.
- Commissioner Panici asked the Police Department if they have a recommendation. Chief Carpenter stated although safety is the primary goal of the Department, in this case, there are other locations that should be considered before a decision is made.

- Chairman Swanson explained the Village's proposal to the County concerning making Lake Avenue one lane westbound between Green Bay Road and Ridge Road. He stated that as traffic volumes increase to the west, reducing the westbound traffic to one lane becomes more difficult. He emphasized that although there are homes on Lake Avenue, it is not classified as a residential street. Although the development has remained steady in and around Wilmette, the traffic volumes have slowly increased over the past twenty years. Chairman Swanson stated that adding left turn lanes on Lake is the ultimate solution to reduce left turn accidents, however, when this was offered to the residents, they rejected widening the road as an option. He endorsed the idea of one-way fare. He also agreed that re-routing the busses, adding school zone striping and an "all red" phase were good ideas. Chairman Swanson concluded by saying he is not sure if this situation is unique, until more information is gathered and reviewed.
- A resident asked why there is a crossing guard at Lake and Hunter for Highcrest. Commissioner Panici responded by saying the guard in this location serves Harper School, not Highcrest. She stated that the Commission has not added new crossing guards for years.
- Commissioner Ferrari summarized the discussion by stating there are several categories that should be considered. He stated there may be some things that can be done quickly, including the striping. Secondly, there are the items that have financial impacts that need to go to the Village Board for approval. Lastly, he said the Commission may want to review the school crossing guard policy.
- Chairman Swanson stated that with respect to crossing guards, he appreciated the parents' offer to organize a list of substitutes, but suggested a trained school employee may be a better option.
- Staff was directed to collect peak hour traffic volumes, pedestrian data and accident data for the four intersections previously mentioned. This information will be presented to the Commission for consideration at a future meeting.
- Ms. Mayerhofer stated she would survey other communities concerning their crossing guard policies. Chief Carpenter stated he would look at the bibliography in the crossing guard manual to make sure the references were still applicable and update them if necessary.

### 3. Old Business

- The next meeting will include finalizing the traffic calming plan for the residents of Kenilworth and Thornwood Avenues.

**Motion to adjourn.**

**Motion by:** Commissioner Ferrari

**Second:** Commissioner Lusky

**Action:** Approved by unanimous voice vote.

The meeting adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Brigitte Mayerhofer.