

Minutes of the Transportation Commission Meeting held on Wednesday, June 8, 2005 at 7:00 p.m. in the Training Room at Village Hall, 1200 Wilmette Avenue, Wilmette, Illinois 60091.

Members Present: Amy Panici, Chairperson
Paul Chouinard
Eileen Miller-Girson
Mark Wagstaff

Members Absent: Jim Grosh
Clay Weaver

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

Also Present: None

Chairperson Panici called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

1. Review of Minutes

Motion to approve the May 11, 2005 minutes.

Motion by: Commissioner Miller-Girson

Second: Commissioner Wagstaff

Discussion: None

Action: Approved by unanimous voice vote

2. Review of Bike Task Force Meeting Minutes

- Ms. Reilley provided an update on the events of the Bike Task Force including a discussion of the Badge Grant secured by the Police Department, which helps to fund various safety-related programs. Brief mention was made of the five-Village bike trail proposed for the abandoned Union Pacific Railroad line on the west end of town. Although this project is in its infancy, Dominick Gatto of Wilmette has taken the lead in assisting Wilmette and the adjacent Villages in applying for a grant to conduct a feasibility study for a possible bike trail. The cost of converting rails to bike trails is suggested to be \$1 million per mile.

3. Role and Activities of the Transportation Commission and the Bike Task Force

- Chairperson Panici welcomed open dialogue during the discussion of the items on the agenda and explained that the purpose of this meeting is to discuss many of the traffic-related projects, requests and manuals/policies that the Commission is confronted with from time to time.
- Chairman Panici turned the discussion over to Ms. Mayerhofer who described the role of the Bike Task Force (BTF) as being a sub-Committee of the Transportation Commission. The Commission will review the BTF's minutes each month and may be asked to approve their initiatives from time to time.
- Chairperson Panici mentioned the development of the Village-wide bike map, which is a significant accomplishment.
- Ms. Reilley discussed the history of the BTF and explained that it has been active since 1992. In addition to the physical benefits of bicycle riding a discussion ensued concerning the environmental benefits of getting people out of their cars and on bikes.
- Commissioner Chouinard asked if the trend of bike-related accidents has gone down over the past years. Police Chief Carpenter recalled that the accident rate has been consistent and ranges between 10 and 15 accidents per year.
- Commissioner Wagstaff asked about the connection to Evanston's bike system, to which Ms. Reilley stated Evanston has a bike route plan as well and is working on its implementation.
- Commissioner Panici suggested eliminating the striped "T's" and "L's" on the south end of Poplar Drive so that the bicyclists had more room on the road.
- Ms. Mayerhofer mentioned the proposed bike connection between Forest Avenue and Lake Avenue through the fire station property.

4. Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD)

- Ms. Mayerhofer explained the purpose and function of the MUTCD as the Village's guide to traffic-related signage, striping and traffic signals. She explained that stop sign requests are frequently made to Village staff and the Commission. A discussion ensued concerning the warrants for stop signs and that stop signs are specifically prohibited in the MUTCD as a tool to slow traffic.
- Chief Carpenter stressed the importance of following the MUTCD because unwarranted stop signs are a liability for the Village and can actually do harm if drivers disregard them.
- Ms. Mayerhofer stated that the Village Code allows the Police Chief and Village Engineer to assign stop sign placement,

however, from time to time the Commission is asked to review such signage requests.

- Commissioner Wagstaff mentioned that he has been confronted regarding the need for a stop sign on Central at 10th Street. A brief discussion regarding Central School bus staging ensued and the Commission concurred that it would review this and other Central School related issues at the meeting next month.
- Chairperson Panici stated the role of the Commission is often to educate the public on the proper use of stop signs.

5. Village Code Street Classification

- Ms. Mayerhofer reviewed the street classifications in the Village Code. She stated that although certain streets may have a residential land use, they function differently from a traffic perspective. Chairperson Panici reiterated that the goal of the traffic calming initiative is to encourage use of the collector and arterial streets, rather than the local residential streets.

6. Traffic Calming Policy

- The Committee reviewed the traffic calming policy and discussed the eligible voting area. Commissioner Panici explained that a former Trustee tried to expand the voting area to include the streets surrounding the affected block, but the proposed amendment was not supported by the majority of the Village Board.
- Commissioner Chouinard asked if the 60-percent requirement was looked at cumulatively if a pair of streets is being considered for calming. Chairperson Panici indicated that each street has to meet the 60-percent approval independently, but that we would likely not approve traffic calming on one street knowing the adjacent street would inherit the additional volume.
- Chairperson Panici concluded the discussion by asking the Commissioners to review the policy in greater detail and recommend changes as necessary.
- The Engineering Department is currently updating the traffic counts for the streets eligible for traffic calming.
- Ms. Mayerhofer concluded the discussion by stating the Village is a pioneer in traffic calming in the Chicagoland area and our policy is a model for other communities.

7. Green Bay Road Traffic Study

- Ms. Mayerhofer provided a summary of the information in the packets and then the Commission reviewed each intersection beginning with Lake Avenue.
- The Commission discussed the possibility of moving the bus stop on the northwest corner of Lake and Green Bay Road to west of the gas station curb-cut. A discussion concerning the pedestrian crossing on the west leg of the intersection took place. Ms. Mayerhofer stated a small triangular island is proposed so that pedestrians will not have to cross five lanes of traffic. This will require land acquisition from the gas station property.
- Commissioner Wagstaff asked about the length of the left turn storage bay from eastbound Lake Avenue to northbound Green Bay Road. Ms. Mayerhofer indicated that the storage length was minimized to try to accommodate the businesses and parking on the south side of Lake Avenue.
- Commissioner Chouinard asked what the plan was for Lake Avenue, west of Green Bay Road. Ms. Mayerhofer stated westbound Lake Avenue will merge to one lane west of the alley. Chairperson Panici asked why there are two lanes through the intersection. Ms. Mayerhofer stated two lanes provide the needed capacity through the Green Bay Road intersection.
- The Commission discussed the Central Avenue and Green Bay Road intersection and the rerouting of the westbound Central Avenue Pace bus. The bus has a difficult time turning left onto Green Bay Road from the Metra Station, so the buses are proposed to travel west on Central Avenue to south on Park Avenue. Chairperson Panici asked if the buses will be able to maneuver the right turn from southbound Park Avenue to westbound Wilmette Avenue. Ms. Mayerhofer stated the curb radius may need to be modified and that this would be considered during the design phase.
- The Commission discussed Wilmette Avenue and Ms. Mayerhofer explained that there will be only one through lane for eastbound Wilmette Avenue, but two through lanes for westbound Wilmette Avenue. This is because the dedicated right turn lane for eastbound Wilmette Avenue to southbound Green Bay Road is proposed to remain.
- A discussion ensued concerning the bicycle crossing at Wilmette Avenue and the confusion it poses to pedestrians. (Note: After the meeting, Commissioners Chouinard and Wagstaff and liaison Mayerhofer looked at the pedestrian crossing and determined that there is a sidewalk on the south side of Poplar Avenue to greet pedestrians crossing Wilmette Avenue.)

- Commissioner Wagstaff asked what the plan was for Linden and Oakwood Avenues. Chairperson Panici explained that there are not any changes planned to those intersections. Commissioner Wagstaff expressed his concern with the lack of a safe pedestrian crossing across Green Bay Road between Oakwood and Isabella.
- Ms. Mayerhofer concluded the discussion by explaining the process for the Green Bay Road improvements, which is to first receive approval by the Illinois Commerce Commission. This will take at least six months and then the project will move forward to the design phase. Construction is planned for 2007.

8. Transportation Commission Meeting Guidelines

- Staff liaison Reilley discussed the meeting guidelines and explained that they have been in existence since the inception of the Commission. The meetings are currently being managed in the manner described in the guidelines.
- Chairperson Panici asked if copies of the guidelines could be available for the public. Staff will comply with the Chairperson's request.

9. Old Business / Pending Matters / Next Meeting

- Chairperson Panici asked if parking changes were made on Oakwood, one block west of Green Bay Road. Staff indicated that no changes have been made. Chief Carpenter will initiate a letter to the residents of the block soliciting comments on changing the parking requirements to eliminate the morning restriction.
- The next meeting is scheduled for July 13, 2005. A discussion of Central School is currently on the agenda.

10. Feedback

- None

Motion to adjourn.

Motion by: Commissioner Wagstaff

Second: Commissioner Miller-Girson

Action: Approved by unanimous voice vote

The meeting adjourned at 9:04 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Brigitte Mayerhofer.