

Minutes of the Transportation Commission Meeting held on Wednesday, June 14, 2006 at 7:00 p.m. in the Second Floor Training Room at Village Hall, 1200 Wilmette Avenue, Wilmette, Illinois 60091.

Members Present: Clayton Weaver, Chairperson
Jim Grosh
Paul Chouinard
Cathy Albrecht
Mark Wagstaff

Members Absent: Eileen Miller-Girson
Rachel Nocera

Staff Present: Linda Reilley, Engineering Assistant
Brian King, Deputy Police Chief

Also Present: Martin McConahay, Wilmette School District 39
Steve Reinhart, 2301 Schiller
Nancy Blake, 2300 Birchwood
Scott Perusen, 415 Prairie
Michael Spook, 2245 Schiller
Van Economic, 601 Hunter
John & Nancy Hoagland 2301 Birchwood
Melvyn & Mary Schwartz, 2244 Birchwood
Ed Hungler, 2240 Birchwood
Rob Faurot, 2307 Schiller

Chairman Weaver called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

1. Review of Minutes

Motion to approve the April 26, 2006 minutes.

Motion by: Commissioner Chouinard

Second: Commissioner Grosh

Approved by unanimous voice vote

2. Review of the Bike Task Force Meeting Minutes

Ms. Reilley updated the Commission on the Five Village Multiuse bikepath proposed for the abandoned Union Pacific railroad line. She stated that a meeting would be held on June 20, 2006 with the Village of Glenview, Village of Northfield and the Village of Northbrook to discuss a feasibility study and grant funding.

**3. 400 Block of Prairie Avenue, Request for Permit Parking
8 AM – 10 AM**

- Chairman Weaver introduced the petition and asked for resident comments. Mr. Scott Preusen, 415 Prairie Avenue, explained that he circulated the petition. He said the current restriction makes it difficult for the residents of the 400 block of Prairie Avenue to utilize the street for their own cars.
- After brief discussion by the Commission, there was consensus that the request was justified.
- **Motion to approve the request for Resident Permit Parking on the 400 block of Prairie Avenue from 8 AM to 10 AM, Monday through Friday.**
Motion by: Commissioner Grosh
Second: Commissioner Chouinard
Action: Approved by unanimous voice vote.
- Ms. Reilley indicated the signs will be installed within the next two weeks. She will contact everyone via mail with information on how to obtain their permits.

4. Hunter Road (Lake Avenue to Illinois Road) Petition for traffic calming

- Chairman Weaver introduced the petition and asked the petitioners to provide a brief description of the request. Ms. Reilley explained this item by reviewing the materials that were in the agenda packets. Commissioner Weaver opened the floor for resident comments.
- Robert Faurot, 2307 Schiller Avenue, stated that there is a perceived speed issue that vehicles exceed the speed limit on a regular basis. Vehicles are traveling too fast for the environment. Residential density has changed since the opening of Highcrest School. There is an increase in foot traffic with children walking and riding to Highcrest. He questioned if the lane configuration changes on Lake Avenue will increase the traffic and speed on Hunter Road. There is a perceived loss of the neighborhood feeling. He asked the Commission to bring safety and serenity to Hunter Road between Lake and Illinois Road.
- Nancy Hoagland, 2301 Birchwood, stated there is a large amount of traffic on Hunter Road from Lake Avenue to Wilmette Avenue. She asked that the speed limit be reduced to 25 mph and that the calming measures taken on Hunter Road north of Lake Avenue be applied to Hunter Road south of Lake Avenue.

- Steve Reinhart, 2301 Schiller, has observed that vehicles speed to catch the light at Lake Avenue. The northbound lane is not quite two full lanes. It is about a lane and a half. He has witnessed vehicles trying to pass on the left and right. He has noticed that when cars are parked on Hunter that it does slow traffic and that traffic calming be considered on this section of Hunter Road. He also stated that Hunter Road is wider as you go northbound and that vehicles try to pass.
- Commission Chouinard indicated the Hunter Road alignment shifts approximately 100 feet south of the intersection. The road is wider near the intersection with Lake Avenue.
- Chairman Weaver asked if parking was allowed on both sides of Hunter Road. Ms. Reilley confirmed that the west side of Hunter Road is posted "No Parking Anytime" and that the parking on the east side varies with "No Parking" on school days during specific hours.
- Nancy Blake, 2300 Birchwood, asked what exactly is being done on Hunter Road, north of Lake. Ms. Reilley explained the striping plan and the raised crosswalk on Hunter at Thornwood.
- Chairman Weaver replied to the comment concerning parking. One of the most effective traffic calming techniques available is on-street parking.
- Commissioner Chouinard stated that the focus is Hunter Road from Lake Avenue to Illinois Road, but the real speeding problem is between Illinois Road and Wilmette Avenue.
- Nancy Hoagland, 2301 Birchwood, stated that Hunter Road should be consistent all the way to Wilmette Avenue. There are two schools that are being served along this road.
- Commissioner Albrecht acknowledged that Hunter Road is a collector street and that the speed limit is 30 mph. Does Hunter Road north of Lake Avenue function differently than Hunter Road south of Lake Avenue? Deputy Chief King commented that the speeds are higher north of Lake and that Hunter Road serves the Kenilworth Garden area. There is a significant amount of cut-through traffic that utilizes this area to avoid the traffic light at Lake Avenue and Ridge Road.
- Commissioner Albrecht followed up by asking if the traffic volume south of Lake Avenue is the same as the traffic north of Lake. Chairman Weaver stated that the average daily traffic volume north of Illinois (1500) is half the average daily traffic volume south of Illinois (3000) and they do function as two completely different streets. The traffic on Hunter Road (north of Lake) varies from lighter volumes at the north end to higher volumes closer to Lake Avenue because of the cut thru traffic on the east-west streets. The speeds were higher than 37 mph and Hunter Road is wider.

The Commission suggested changes that will visually narrow the street such as striping an edge line and center median striping.

- Nancy Blake asked why Hunter Road north of Lake was looked at for traffic calming. Chairman Weaver stated it was not the collector classification that prompted the Commission's review of north Hunter Road, because collector streets are designed to carry higher volumes of traffic. Rather, the speed and volume of cars traveling through the east/west local streets in the Kenilworth Gardens area was higher than we like to see for local streets. The Commission decided to manage traffic on Hunter Road as a first step to managing traffic in the surrounding neighborhood. The Commission decided not to install speed humps because Hunter Road is a collector street and speed humps would impede emergency response times.
- Nancy Blake stated that the speed limit on Lake Avenue was lowered to 30 mph and that maybe the rules should be changed to lower the speeds on collector streets.
- A resident stated that speed is the issue rather than volume.
- Commission Albrecht asked if the time of day or year makes a difference in the traffic, to which an anonymous resident stated no.
- Chairman Weaver stated that we are all very sensitive to the children and the close proximity of the school and park facilities.
- The Commission discussed the parking on Hunter Road and striping in a parking lane. Commissioner Wagstaff is concerned about the speed and volume of traffic south of Illinois at the school.
- Brian King stated that the peak traffic time is before school starts and after school dismisses.
- Commissioner Wagstaff asked if this area has the flashing school zone lights and wanted to know if the flashing school zone lights were effective on Lake Avenue. Deputy Chief King stated the flashing lights are very effective when they are first installed, but over time, they lose their effectiveness.
- An anonymous resident stated he has concerns about the visibility of the traffic light at Lake and Hunter. He stated there should be a lens change to the signal so that the light cannot be seen from a distance. He explained that drivers traveling northbound on Hunter from Illinois Road can see the green light at Lake Avenue and speed to make the light.
- Deputy Chief King stated that the Police Department would be in favor of reducing the speed limit to 25 mph if coupled with an engineering improvement.
- Nancy Blake, 2300 Birchwood, stated again that the speed limit on Lake Avenue was lowered to 30 mph. Hunter Road should not be treated the same as Lake Avenue. The speed limit on Hunter should be reduced to 25 mph. Ms. Blake wanted to know what other streets in Wilmette are posted 30 mph.

- Linda Reilley responded that when the Village-wide speed limit on local roads was reduced to 25 mph, the collector streets were kept at 30 mph.
- Martin McConahay, School District 39, said that the Commission is sensitive to child safety. Any or all suggestions would be welcome additions. He asked that speed humps not be placed on Hunter because of the school buses. The safety of pedestrians and children is a year round concern not just during the school year. The summer programs have just as many children except the students are much younger and less supervised.
- Commissioner Albrecht stated speed around Highcrest School is a concern. She suggested that striping be considered as a first alternative, especially since it seemed to work so well on Wilmette Avenue.
- Chairman Weaver asked the Commission for comments and suggestions.
- Commissioner Wagstaff stated he would like to see a striping plan for Hunter Road for discussion at the next meeting. A request for the accident data was also made.
- Chairman Weaver stated volume is not a concern as much as the perception of speed and safety. The Commissioners concluded that there needs to be some visual narrowing of the road.
- Chairman Weaver asked staff to contact Cook County to see if the lenses for the traffic signal at Lake Avenue and Hunter Road could be changed to an optical programmed signal on the Hunter Road legs of the intersection.
- Commissioner Chouinard motioned to table any traffic calming remedies until Hunter Road north of Lake Avenue is completed and follow-up traffic data is collected. The Commission discussed the timing of implementing changes to Hunter Road.

- **Motion to table until traffic calming remedies on Hunter Road north of Lake Avenue is completed and follow-up traffic data is collected.**

Motion by: Commissioner Chouinard
Seconded by: Commissioner Wagstaff
Action: Commissioners Grosh, Chouinard and Wagstaff voted aye.

Chairman Weaver and Commissioner Albrecht voted nay.

Motion was approved by majority vote.

Chairman Weaver stated that the edge striping is easily reversible and should be implemented as soon as possible.

Motion amended to ask the Engineering Department to prepare a plan for edge striping on Hunter Road from Lake Avenue to Wilmette Avenue and to include parking where parking is appropriate. This will be brought back at the next meeting in July.

**Motion by: Chairman Weaver
Seconded by: Commissioner Wagstaff
Action: Approved by unanimous voice vote**

4. Romona School Traffic Study

- Chairman Weaver asked Linda Reilley to give a brief review of the Romona School traffic study prepared by T Y Lin. Ms. Reilley stated that there are nine recommendations that were made in the study. The recommendations include:
 - a) Both Romona Road and Central Avenue should be kept two-way, while maintaining the prohibited left-turn movement to Central from northbound Romona.
 - b) Widen Romona Road four feet to the west between Wilmette and Central Avenues, and add a two-foot planted buffer strip and a new five-foot sidewalk behind the new curb line. This would still retain ten feet of public right-of-way between the west side of the new sidewalk and the west right-of-way line on Romona Road. To protect the new planting strip and to slow down motorists, the new curb should be constructed as a vertical curb with standard driveways instead of the current mountable curb.
 - c) To better define a central drop off/pick up area, and to improve the accessibility to the school's main entrance, it is recommended that a 6-foot curb-attached sidewalk be installed along the west side of the existing landscaped buffer area separating Romona Road from the school frontage road. The existing trees should be maintained with the use of tree grates.
 - d) Along this new sidewalk, the area north of the existing Romona Road crosswalk should be designated as a drop-off and pick-up area. This will provide over 200-ft. of available vehicle queuing space. To ensure that vehicles do not encroach into the Romona Road crosswalk, traffic cones should be used and configured such that their placement

simulates the effect of a curb bulb. They should be signed to prohibit stopping and standing adjacent to the cones.

- e) The frontage road could be made less confusing and more usable if the sign below the “Do Not Enter” sign was changed to read “Except buses and Special Education Drop-offs / Pick-ups.” In addition, the special education zone should be extended north of the main entrance to the back of the school bus holding area (currently signed “No Parking – Bus Area”) using permanent or movable signs reading “Special Education Drop-off / Pick-up Zone.” The staff assigned to escorting students to and from their cars would have to force parents to the head of the line in order to collect and return the children.
- f) Better enforcement of the current prohibitions of morning drop-offs and afternoon pick-ups on the west side of Romona Road north of Central Avenue, since the narrowness of Romona Road precludes standing on both sides of the street.
- g) On Central Avenue, better enforcement is needed of the 20-foot clear zone in front of the Romona Road stop sign. Changing the sign to read “No Standing, Here to Corner” would help. In addition, the sidewalk along the south side of Central Avenue needs to be cleared of encroaching bushes.
- h) The parking regulations for the drop-off/pick-up area on the east side of Romona Road south of the school driveway entrance should be changed to “15 Minute Parking – 8:30-9:30 am and 2:30-3:30 pm.” This would provide for needed overflow parking for parents attending parent-teacher conferences or PTO meetings during the day, while still allowing the after school pick-up parking.
- i) To help meet the current shortage of school staff parking, a revision to the school parking lot is suggested. While this would not provide a major increase in parking, every little bit helps. A longer-term solution might be to extend the current lot to the east, which would require eliminating a small portion of the current playing field space.
- j) The outreach effort should be continued and intensified to try to get more parents to walk their children to school instead of

driving. Not only would this help reduce the auto congestion, it will also be healthier for both the parents and their children. It is suggested that tying this effort into Walk Your Child to School week in October would make the most sense.

- Mr. McConahay, School District 39, stated changes in the drop off and pick up for kindergarten and special needs students would begin with the new school year. They will utilize the north end of the building to help alleviate the congestion at the south end. In addition, the school district will hire additional para-professionals to help direct the children to and from school.
- Mr. McConahay said the most significant proposals are to widen the street and pave the island. He said there isn't funding in the 2007 budget to build the sidewalk. He felt that the School District and the Village should commit together to get the larger infrastructure improvements completed. He stated the School District wants to make this work and they want to do their part. He said the School District was in favor of the one-way concept because it has worked well at the other elementary schools. He said the sidewalk and the street widening would be a great safety benefit.
- Chairman Weaver commented that regardless of what is implemented, there will be queuing in the first block near the school. Drivers that want to travel northbound will be trapped in the middle of the street without the extra width in that block.
- Deputy Chief King concurred that drivers are trapped, because the street is very narrow.
- Commissioner Chouinard stated that in order to alleviate the congestion the parking on the east side of Romona Road should be consistent with the time restriction that currently exists on the west side of Romona from Central to Washington. He suggested the signage should be "No Parking from 8:15 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. and 2:45 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday – Friday on school days" on the east side of Romona Road from Central Avenue to Wilmette Avenue instead of the recommended 15-minute parking.
- Commissioner Grosh confirmed that there is congestion in front of the school.
- Mr. McConahay stated because of security concerns all of the students cannot be directed to enter at the north door. Moving the special needs and kindergarteners to the north entrance should help with some of the congestion down at the south end.
- Chairman Weaver stated that the arrival times are the same but there is some overlap. Mr. McConahay indicated the kindergarten starts about 10 minutes earlier.
- Commission Albrecht suggested having additional school personnel available to encourage cars to utilize the entire north staging area.

Mr. McConahay stated the school will comply with the suggestion. Commissioner Wagstaff commented that the school would not be hiring a new person, but just extending someone's duties who already works there.

- Deputy Chief King said the Police Department will work with the school to help educate the parents.
- Commissioner Grosh asked if students were encouraged to ride their bikes to school. Mr. McConahay said no, but they try to encourage parents to walk their kids to school. Commissioner Albrecht informed the Commission that kids cannot ride their bikes to school until May of the second grade of school year.
- Commissioner Chouinard asked Mr. McConahay if the new sidewalk at the median would cause a problem for snow removal. Mr. McConahay said it might be a problem, but not insurmountable. He said the school gets help from the Village with plowing of sidewalks.
- The Commission discussed widening Romona Road and moving the sidewalk location on the west side. Chairman Weaver asked for a motion.
- Mr. McConahay stated that it would be a tough sell for the school to come up with money for things that they usually don't budget for like a sidewalk if the Village isn't going to do anything along that line. It would be better if both governmental agencies work together toward a good solution. A narrow street with carriage walks and a low curb is a bad situation. The only safe sidewalk is one that is separate from the curb. We worked together when engineering changes were made at Harper School.
- Chairman Weaver stated that it is not the purview of the Commission to define how expensive roadway projects are built. The question is if we think the recommendations are good ones. We can certainly suggest that the Village and the School District get together and distribute the cost in an equitable way.
- Mr. McConahay responded by saying that all the ideas are valuable, but the ones that will improve safety the most are the roadway widening and the sidewalk.
- Commissioner Albrecht suggested implementing the easier solutions first to see if traffic flow will improve.
- Commissioner Wagstaff proposed to keep the two-way configuration and Commissioner Chouinard concurred.

- **Commissioner Albrecht moved that the Commission support the recommendations of the T Y Lin Romona School traffic study dated June 14, 2006, provided that the widening of Romona Road be held off until the other changes have been completed.**

Approved at the July 12, 2006 Transportation Commission Meeting

Motion by: Commissioner Albrecht

Second: Commission Grosh

Discussion: Commissioner Chouinard amended the motion to change the "15 minute parking" regulations for the drop-off/pick-up area on the east side of Romona Road south of the school driveway entrance to "No Parking from 8:15 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. and 2:45 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday – Friday on school days."

Action: Approved by unanimous voice vote

5. Old Business / Pending Matters / Next Meeting

Deputy Chief Brian King stated that any Commission members interested in a ride along with a Police Officer could contact him and he would make the arrangements.

The next meeting is scheduled for July 12, 2006.

Feedback

- None

Motion to adjourn.

Motion by: Commissioner Chouinard

Second: Commissioner Wagstaff

Action: Approved by unanimous voice vote

The meeting adjourned at 10:10 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Linda Reilley.