

Final Minutes of the Transportation Commission Meeting held on Thursday, July 27, 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
Eileen Miller-Girson

Members Absent: Rachel Nocera

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

Also Present: Glenn "Max" McGee, Superintendent,
Wilmette School District 39, 615 Locust Road
Belle Lerner, 511 Romona Road
Barb Johns, 442 Alpine Lane
Shelden L. Epstein, 624 Knox Avenue
Mark Buehmann, 810 Romona Road
Jodi Urkov, 2928 Washington
Liz Berge, 2550 Laurel Lane
Wendy Schuman, 207 Valley View Drive
Judi Weinstein, 236 Locust Road
Leo & Lisa Eatman, 2343 Meadow Drive

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

1. Review of Minutes

Motion to approve the July 12, 2006 minutes.

Motion by: Commissioner Chouinard

Second: Commissioner Miller-Girson

Approved by unanimous voice vote

2. Romona School Traffic Study—Continued Discussion

- Chairman Weaver introduced this item by updating the Commission on the meeting that took place on July 13, 2006 between Wilmette Staff and School District 39 representatives to discuss a possible one-way solution on Romona Road to assist with school drop-off and pick-up circulation. Ms. Mayerhofer briefly reviewed the contents of the agenda packets and stated the purpose of the special meeting tonight is to review an option of one-way southbound from the Regina School private driveway to Wilmette Avenue. She stated that after much deliberation, this option has merit and while not perfect, will address many of the Commission's and School District's concerns.
- Mr. LaPlante of TY Lin International was introduced and provided a history of the Romona School study, including some of the reasons why there are more traffic problems now than in 2000 when the original study was completed. Namely, there are more cars because enrollment has increased and the cars are bigger than they were six years ago. He provided an explanation for why the one-way northbound configuration was not the best solution. He stated that changing the geometry of the street may be a long term option, but is very costly in the short term. It will also impact the vegetation that residents have planted in the right-of-way. The roadway as it currently exists, however, is too narrow to comfortably allow three lanes of cars (one parking lane and two driving lanes) which is why there are vehicles that drive and park on the sidewalk. He reviewed the advantages and disadvantages of the one-way southbound proposal which are as follows:

Advantages of One-Way Southbound from Regina Drive to Wilmette Avenue

- Less costly than the originally recommended alternative of widening the west side of Romona Road for one or two blocks;
- Minimal disruption to the neighborhood traffic movements, north of Regina School;
- Better usage of the intended loading and unloading island in front of the school;
- Actual loading and unloading will take place on the left side of the vehicle, making it easier and more efficient for drivers to buckle and unbuckle the young children in their backseat car seats; and

- Better egress to the south and west, where the majority of the school's service area is located. This proposal may reduce the number of vehicles that either cut-through the Regina School private drive or use Romona Road driveways to turnaround.

Disadvantages of the One-Way Southbound from Regina Drive to Wilmette Avenue

- Access to the school will be more complex for Romona School parents and buses;
 - Requires the buses to access the school in the southbound direction.
 - Significant commitment is needed by the School to communicate and facilitate this change in traffic circulation; and
 - Does not eliminate the possibility of drivers parking or driving on the sidewalk.
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- An anonymous resident asked where busses will be coming from. Mr. LaPlante stated they will enter the frontage road in the southbound direction. She indicated the bus drivers are chronic speeders.
 - Mr. LaPlante continued his presentation by saying there is not enough parking in the school's parking lot, which also adds to the on-street congestion.
 - Mark Buehmann, 810 Romona Road, stated there will be an increase in traffic volume on Romona Road and the already dangerous speeding problem will get worse.
 - Mr. LaPlante indicated the traffic flow is just being reversed from how it is now, so the traffic volumes should not increase. The exception is related to the free bussing change that may bring in additional cars. Mr. LaPlante said the speeding problem is a separate issue which is unaffected by this plan. He suggested putting up the speed trailer for a short time or more enforcement.
 - **ACTION:** It was requested that a 20 mph school zone be established from the just north of the Regina School private driveway to Wilmette Avenue. This will be done in time for the start of the fall school session.
 - Mr. Buehmann, 810 Romona, expressed his concern of cars cutting through Locust to get to Romona Road. Superintendent McGee explained that the Locust entrance was not a straight and convenient cut-through.
 - Another resident asked for flashing beacons. Mr. LaPlante suggested starting with the school zone, speed trailer and more enforcement first, before flashing beacons are installed.

- Barb Johns, 442 Alpine, stated she is very concerned about added congestion on Locust Road, which already suffers from a traffic problem. Chairman Weaver indicated an option for parents coming from the east is to use Knox and Central, instead of Locust. She stated Central is parked on both sides and also congested. Commissioner Chouinard suggested going farther north and using the large drop-off zone adjacent to the Romona School frontage road.
- Lisa Eatman, 2343 Meadow Drive, said she is concerned with the all-way stop at Wilmette and Locust, because people often do not obey the stop signs.
- Sheldon Epstein, 624 Knox, indicated Washington is the only option for him to leave his street. He said all of the problems are caused by 10-percent of the parents. He indicated he is dissatisfied with the consultant's report because it lacks traffic data on the surrounding streets. He summarized his comments by saying the new traffic pattern will not change the bad behavior of some parents.
- Superintendent McGee and Chief Carpenter agreed that driver behavior can change, as evidenced by the recent reconfiguration at Central School. Mr. McGee continued to say that traffic will be easier to enforce with the one-way configuration and an aggressive education campaign will help. Mr. McGee also stated he has not received many complaints about school busses speeding and all future complaints should be directed to him.
- Mr. Epstein stated the plan requires the neighbors to accept more traffic than they have now. He stated emergency response time will be a problem on Washington with all of the expected congestion.
- Liz Berge, 2550 Laurel Lane, suggested another problem is to determine where the snow and leaves will be pushed. The School district will need to find another location for snow and leaf storage other than the center median. Although it is not perfect, Ms. Berge supports the proposal.
- Mr. LaPlante strongly urged the School District to support a student walking to school campaign as was recommended in the 2000 study. Several residents agreed that walking would be more likely if the private sidewalk between the Regina School and Romona School border were improved. Superintendent McGee agreed to talk to Regina School to discuss the possibility of improving the sidewalk.
- Ms. Belle Lerner, 511 Romona Road, stated she was behind the original northbound proposal. She thinks the current southbound configuration is a good idea. She also stated that she and many of her neighbors would support geometric improvements to the street, even if it meant removing some of the existing vegetation.

- Leo Eatman, 2343 Meadow Drive, asked if eminent domain was ever considered by the Village Board.
- Wendy Shuman, 207 Valley View Drive, indicated she supports the plan and pointed out that this is not a typical neighborhood school because of the large Glenview population.
- Lisa Eatman, 2343 Meadow Drive North, agreed that there is a lack of data and suggested that many parents did not know about this meeting.
- Mr. Epstein suggested leaving things the way they are and stepping up enforcement.
- Chief Carpenter indicated that school times are typically the officer's busiest times of the day. An expectation of full-time or near full-time officer presence is unrealistic. Chief Carpenter stated that he is committed to assigning additional staff to help out the first week of school, however.
- Mr. Epstein stated he would like to take pictures of the violators, including license plates, and send the information to the Police Department for their follow up. Chief Carpenter indicated this was fine to do, as long as there are not any confrontations while taking pictures.
- Chairman Weaver opened the floor for Commissioner's comments.
- Commissioner Grosh asked Superintendent McGee if the school had plans to add on-site parking. Mr. McGee stated the school is working on a major capital plan and that adding more parking on school property is being considered.
- Commissioner Miller-Girson said the debriefing after one month is an important element to the plan. **ACTION:** Mr. LaPlante suggested bringing this back to the Commission in October for a follow-up review.
- Commissioner Albrecht stated the key to success at Central School was adding staff to assist with vehicular and pedestrian circulation during school access peak times. **ACTION:** Superintendent McGee indicated he agreed that this was an important element and assured the Commission that staff will be added at Romona School as well.
- Commissioner Chouinard suggested it is important that the parking times be uniformly consistent. He added that he does not support deferring any changes for another year because of lack of data. He stated that no decision is neutral, because there will always be an impact to some party, but on balance, he believes this to be the best proposal the Commission has seen. Commissioner Chouinard stated he believes the congestion will be on Central, more than on Washington, Pine and Highland, because it is a more direct route. He agrees with making Romona Road from the Regina School private driveway to Wilmette a 20 mph school zone and suggested the bus company may want to look at alternate routes. He

suggested informing new owners of the possible future plan to widen the west side of Romona Road, so that they are prepared for the change. Lastly, he believes parking on the south side of Central Avenue might impede traffic flow.

- Chairman Weaver asked if there is a concern for parked cars that may be on the street when the one-way configuration goes into affect. It was determined that the residents rarely park on the street, so this should not be a problem
- Commissioner Wagstaff asked when the sidewalk in the median will be paved to which Superintendent McGee indicated the week of August 14.
- Chairman Weaver indicated that one benefit of this proposal is that if it does not work, there is not a large economic loss other than a few signs. A discussion ensued concerning the south side of Central Avenue being no parking. **ACTION:** The Commission agreed that making this an additional zone for pick-up and drop-off is necessary because parents are likely to use it for that purpose anyway.
- Chairman Weaver asked if it is possible to add the LED lights around the four way stop at Wilmette and Locust. Ms. Mayerhofer indicated that while there is not a policy on the placement of lit stop signs, this would be a good candidate.
- Judy Weinstein, 236 Locust, stated the bushes at the corner of Central and Romona School need to be trimmed. **ACTION:** Staff will coordinate the trimming with the Village's Code Enforcement Officer, Mike Kennedy.
- Superintendent McGee thanked the Commission and staff for the special meeting and their leadership through this process.

Motion to approve the proposal to make Romona Road one-way southbound from the Regina School private driveway to Wilmette Avenue during peak school access times, per the memorandum from John LaPlante dated July 21, 2006. The proposal includes making the south side of Central Avenue from Knox to Romona Road no parking.

Motion by: Commissioner Grosh
Second: Commissioner Miller-Girson
Action: Approved by unanimous voice vote.

3. Old Business / Pending Matters / Next Meeting

The August meeting is cancelled. The next meeting is scheduled for September 13, 2006.

Feedback

- None

Motion to adjourn.

Motion by: Commissioner Miller-Girson

Second: Commissioner Wagstaff

Action: Approved by unanimous voice vote

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Brigitte Mayerhofer