

**Minutes of the Transportation Commission Meeting held on Wednesday, March 14, 2007 at 7:00 p.m.** in the Second Floor Training Room at Village Hall, 1200 Wilmette Avenue, Wilmette, Illinois 60091.

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

Members Absent: Rachel Nocera  
Eileen Miller-Girson

Staff Present: Brigitte Mayerhofer, P.E., Director of Engineering  
Linda Reilley, Engineering Assistant  
Brian King, Deputy Police Chief

Also Present: Joel Wineberg, 556 Hunter  
Tom & Nancy Cooper, 1304 Central  
Debora Morris, 1215 Washington  
Jack Pressman, 1211 Washington  
Aaron Alt, 722 Park  
Ramaa Krishnan, 1217 Washington  
Michael Sopko, 2245 Schiller  
M. Mallin, 411 Maple  
Nancy & John Hoagland, 2310 Birchwood  
K. Kolbe, 2346 Greenwood  
Linda Stremmel, 57 Crescent  
Vicki Foreman, 1523 Spencer  
Rob Faurot, 2307 Schiller  
Nancy Blake, 2300 Birchwood  
Joe Slezak, 1215 Washington

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

**1. Review of Minutes**

**Motion to approve the February 21, 2007 minutes.**

Motion by: Commissioner Albrecht

Second: Commissioner Grosh

Discussion: None

**Action: Approved by unanimous voice vote**

**2. Central School Traffic Review**

- Commissioner Albrecht introduced this item by describing the congestion that occurs during the afternoon pick up on Central Avenue. She indicated Village staff and representatives from Central School have had recent discussions regarding poor traffic circulation during the afternoon pick-up period from 2:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. A new traffic circulation plan was implemented for Central School during the 2005/2006 school season. 9<sup>th</sup> Street became the drop-off and pick-up staging area for the school buses and Central Avenue became the drop off and pick-up staging area for parents. The parent staging area has been observed to extend as far east as 7<sup>th</sup> Street. Central Avenue is not wide enough to accommodate parking on both sides of the street, a staging lane for parents and two-way traffic. The current situation is forcing westbound cars staging for pick-up to utilize the westbound through lane. The result is that westbound through vehicles often try to by-pass the congestion by driving into the on-coming traffic lane.
- Commissioner Albrecht indicated an option that has been discussed is prohibiting parking on the north side of the 800 block of Central Avenue from 2:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. on school days. She stated that although Central School does not have available parking for their staff and parents on school property, there is available parking on 10<sup>th</sup> Street adjacent to the school and on the south side of Central in the 800 block. There is also parking available on 9<sup>th</sup> Street, south of Central Avenue.
- Ms. Mayerhofer indicated the 700, 800 and 900 blocks of Central Avenue were notified in writing of the meeting to discuss the possible elimination of parking.
- Commissioner Chouinard asked if the parking restriction should extend to the 700 block as well. Commissioner Albrecht stated that the idea is to start with the smallest area and expand later if necessary.
- Ms. Mayerhofer also indicated there will be extensive communication between the school and the parents outlining the pick up and drop off procedures and that the Police Department will help enforce the changes. Commissioner Albrecht discussed the plan to use the back pack express and fliers as methods for communication.
- Chairman Weaver stated cars could use 8<sup>th</sup> Street for staging as well. He indicated it is important for parents to know they can't park and leave their vehicle in the staging lane.
- Commissioner Wagstaff asked if this was a seasonal problem to which Chairman Weaver indicated he observed this problem on the 72-degree day last week.
- The Commission discussed the times that the congestion occurs and all were in agreement that the period is abbreviated.
- Deputy Chief King indicated the Police Department's support in enforcing the double parking issue until the no parking restriction is in place.

**Motion to recommend that the 800 block of Central Avenue be designated as “No Parking from 2:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. on school days.”**

**Motion by: Commissioner Chouinard**

**Second: Commissioner Albrecht**

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

**3. 700 Block of Park Avenue Petition for Resident Permit Parking**

- Ms. Reilley opened the discussion by indicating the residents of the 700 block of Park Avenue submitted a petition for permit parking. She indicated they have met the requirements as outlined in the Village Code. Ms. Mayerhofer referenced the aerial map of the area which illustrates various parking designations in the area. She stated that between the residents, business owners and their patrons, there are competing interests for parking.
- Commissioner Chouinard noted he will recuse himself during the vote because he owns a property in the block in question.
- Chairman Weaver noted the status of the proposed parking structure in the area between the Library and the Post office. Several residents indicated that the Village has been discussing the construction of a parking structure for years and they are doubtful it will ever happen.
- Commissioner Chouinard stated the recent approval of the former North Shore Ford Development is the impetus for the Village to address parking.
- An anonymous resident questioned why a parking structure was not built in the Metra lot a couple of years ago.
- Jack Pressman, 1211 Washington, stated he is a business owner on Washington. He stated there are thriving businesses on the block, but parking is the primary problem. He urged the Commission to address the parking needs of the businesses.
- Aaron Alt, 722 Park, indicated he represents the petitioners requesting resident permits. He stated many of his neighbors have been ticketed because of the two-hour restriction.
- Chairman Weaver asked how far west one has to go for open parking, to which Ms. Reilley stated that resident permit parking extends to 15<sup>th</sup> Street.
- Several business owners complained about the construction in the area and the fact that several public spaces are being used by construction vehicles. Ms. Mayerhofer asked if anyone approached Mr. Arons about using the open parking lot on the northwest corner for construction vehicles. Deputy Chief King indicated he would talk to Mr. Arons.
- Ramaa Krishnan, 1217 Washington and owner of the yoga studio, indicated she holds two-hour workshops, so the parking restriction

on Park doesn't work, unless her patrons move their car after two hours. Linda Stremmel, 57 Crescent, stated she is a customer of the Washington Street businesses and reiterated the concern about lack of parking.

- Melanie Mallin, 411 Maple, indicated the current situation is not business friendly. She stated that walking five blocks is not acceptable and that the businesses are trying to survive, but need solving the problem parking.
- Commissioner Chouinard asked if there was any opposition to the petition being discussed tonight. There was no opposition stated.
- The group discussed the opportunity for businesses to get permits just like residents. One of the residents mentioned that Kenilworth and Winnetka provide business parking permits. Ms. Mayerhofer stated the current Village Code does not allow business-related permit parking. She stated this would be a significant change to the code that would have far-reaching impact. It would require time to review and a change in the Village Code by the Village Board of Trustees.
- Diane Fisher, client of Lotus Bloom Yoga studio, stated a short term solution is necessary. The problem needs to be addressed right now.
- Vicki Foreman, 1523 Spencer, is also a client of the yoga studio and understands the parking needs on all fronts. She asked about the available lot across from the proposed Starbucks.
- Debora Morris, 1215 Washington, explained the history of the parking lot in question and indicated it was purchased by the owner of the Jaguar Dealership several years ago. She stated many of her clients can't walk very far.
- Commissioner Chouinard asked about how many spaces were available on Washington compared to number of spaces that are needed. Ms. Mayerhofer stated that the business owners could be surveyed to find out what their parking needs are.
- The Commission discussed whether or not the petition for resident permit parking should be approved. Ms. Mayerhofer clarified that the current request is for permit parking and keeping the two-hour time zone for all other cars. Any change from this approval would need to be re-noticed.
- Brian King stated that there are problems enforcing a zone mixed with residential permits and two hour parking. Ms. Reilley stated this type of mixed zone exists elsewhere in Wilmette, but is not common. The Commission also discussed splitting the zone by only making one half of the street as resident permit parking.
- Chairman Weaver talked about opening up parking on Washington, west of Park. He stated any changes on Green Bay Road would need to be carefully considered.

- Aron Alt, petitioner, stated his neighbors support the Washington businesses, but he cannot represent any of their views if there were a change proposed to the petition.
- Commissioner Albrecht stated she supports the petition. Commissioner Wagstaff indicated that this type of request may have been denied in the past because of the enforcement concern and therefore should not be perpetuated.
- The Commission discussed the options related to the petition and Chairman Weaver stated the three options are approve it, deny it or table it to a future meeting.
- Ms. Mayerhofer indicated that a review of all of the parking needs in the area should be conducted. Business owners and employees, their patrons and residents all have different parking needs. Once we determine what those needs are, we can determine what the parking shortfalls are.
- Commissioner Grosh asked the businesses to describe what time of day their peak parking need occurs.
- Chairman Weaver asked for volunteers on the Commission to work with the businesses on a parking study. Commissioner Grosh volunteered and will work with the Engineering and Police Departments. A tentative meeting was set up for Monday, March 19 at 9:00 a.m.

**There not being consensus on the petition for the 700 block of Park Avenue, there was a motion to table.**

**Motion by: Commissioner Grosh**  
**Second: Commissioner Wagstaff**  
**Abstain: Commissioner Chouinard**  
**Oppose: Commission Albrecht**  
**Action: Approved by a three to one vote.**

#### **4. Hunter Road Speed Limit Reduction – Results of IDOT Study**

- Ms. Mayerhofer presented the results of the study to determine if the speed limit on Hunter Road from Lake Avenue to Wilmette Avenue should be reduced from 30 mph to 25 mph. The study is based on IDOT's *Policy on Establishing and Posting Speed Limits, May 2002*. The study included review of accident rates, pedestrian conditions, parking, access points and roadway geometry. Based on current conditions, Hunter Road does not qualify for a speed limit reduction. Ms. Mayerhofer concluded indicating many residents were concerned about pedestrian safety and that at the last Commission meeting, staff was asked to look into funding the construction of a raised intersection at Hunter and Illinois Roads through a state grant.

- An anonymous resident stated that mid-block speeding is the problem. He stated it is a quality of life issue for the residents who live on the block. 25 mph is a much more appropriate speed limit.
- Ms. Blake asked why Wilmette Avenue is 25 mph near the Village Center. Ms. Mayerhofer stated all of the speed limits in the Village Center are 25 mph.
- Joel Wineberg, 556 Hunter, indicated the problem is that no one walks to school anymore. There are many cars in a small area. He said reducing the speed limit is not the problem. There needs to be more enforcement.
- Commissioner Albrecht reminded everyone the speed limit during school times is 20 miles per hour.
- Deputy Chief King indicated that the Police Department cannot enforce speed limits that are artificially low and not supported by an engineering study. He indicated that speed enforcement is the Police Department's number one request. Deputy Chief King indicated the Police Department is putting their resources in other areas with a higher violation rate.
- Nancy Hoagland, 2310 Birchwood, indicated that the Hunter Road residents have been very vocal about this issue, so they are clearly concerned about it. She referenced a letter from School District 39 supporting the speed limit reduction. Lastly, she indicated the policy on speed limit reduction are guidelines only and there is discretion.
- K. Kolbe, 2346 Greenwood, stated she does not let her kids walk because of the unsafe conditions. She has observed many parents speed taking their kids to either Harper School or Highcrest.
- Commissioner Albrecht stated she understands the resident's concerns, but this issue has been reviewed by the Municipal Services Committee, the Commission and staff. All indications are that the speed limit should remain 30 mph. Lowering the speed limit does not mean people would follow it.
- Nancy Blake, 2300 Birchwood, said there is an inequity because Linden is also a collector street, but it has a 25 mph speed limit. Staff indicated the Linden Avenue speed limit was reduced because of the high crown.
- John Hoagland, 2301 Birchwood, recognized the Commission and staff for dedicating so much time to this issue. He indicated putting up new signs is an easy thing to do and that the Commission is just "digging their heels in."
- Ms. Mayerhofer stated that lowering the speed limit would not solve any of the issues raised by the residents. It would only increase the speed limit violation rate and create an unrealistic expectation of enforcement. Lastly, it would create a false level of security for the residents and pedestrians.

- Chairman Weaver indicated that physical changes to the roadway are most effective when managing speed.
- A discussion ensued concerning raised crosswalks and striped crosswalks. The residents asked for a mid-block crosswalk at Birchwood. Ms. Mayerhofer stated that crosswalks that are mid-block, unprotected are do not lead to a natural destination are not recommended. The reason the crosswalk exists north of Hunter is because of the staffed crossing guard.
- Chairman Weaver stated that drivers tend to drive according to the condition of the street and the speed they are comfortable with. An anonymous resident stated he did not believe that to be true.
- Nancy Blake stated data for the record that included pedestrian activity during off-peak times. This includes:
  - 1800 kids enrolled in park district activities (two times per week)
  - 300 kids for WINGS (two times per week)
  - 350 kids for Baseball (two times per week)
  - 226 kids in band (Monday)
  - 141 kids in band (Tuesday)
  - 236 kids in band (Wednesday)
  - 146 kids in band (Thursday)
  - 168 kids in band (Friday)
  - 857 kids in after school enrollment (Highcrest)
  - 100 PTO after school
  - 25 kids in Youth Connection
  - 58 in Wolves basketball
  - 96 in interscholastic sports
  - 550 in basketball
  - 535 young children who use the pool
- Mrs. Hoagland read a letter dated November 21, 2006 from School District 39 in support of a reduced speed limit.
- An anonymous resident asked why speed humps were installed on Kenilworth and Thornwood. Chairman Weaver explained the traffic calming policy and the difference between collector streets and local residential streets. He stated those two streets were eligible for traffic calming because they carried more than 1200 vehicles per day and the 85-percentile speeds were greater than 7 miles over the posted speed limit.
- Ms. Blake asked how the Commission addressed the 1000 + school children in the area. Chairman Weaver stated that physical roadway changes are most effective.
- A discussion ensued concerning the location of schools and their vicinity to collector and arterial streets.
- Ms. Blake asked about the traffic counts for Illinois Road to which Ms. Reilley indicated we took counts but have not yet given them to the Commission.

- Commissioner Chouinard asked where the concept of the raised intersection came from. Ms. Mayerhofer stated it was briefly mentioned at a previous Commission meeting and at the last Municipal Services Committee meeting. She stated that given the resident's concerns, it may be premature to pursue the state grant to construct one, however.
- Ms. Blake discussed the way the crossing guard crosses children at Hunter and Illinois, which is at an angle. She stated the current method is "illegal, dangerous and it teaches young children the wrong way to cross." She said if two crossing guards are needed then they should be provided.
- Commissioner Chouinard stated he recalls an earlier discussion about this. Deputy Chief King indicated that it was not illegal to cross this way, if there is a crossing guard present. Commissioner Chouinard stated his observance of this crossing is that the guard had complete control of the activity and perceived it to be safe.
- Chairman Weaver stated that perhaps the Commission should look at longer hours for the guards. Ms. Mayerhofer stated this could be done in conjunction with the May approval of crossing guards.
- Ms. Blake reiterated that that the crossing situation is very unsafe because drivers anticipate that children will cross in a conventional manner. If a child crosses diagonally at this intersection (outside of crossing guard hours) then there is an opportunity for an accident.
- Mr. Hoagland asked Ms. Mayerhofer what the cost of the raised intersection would be to which Ms. Mayerhofer indicated \$50,000 or more. He noted several questions about the concept and indicated he is not in favor of it. Several other residents in the audience agreed. Ms. Blake noted she is in favor if it.

**5. Safe Routes to School Grant Program – Update**

- The Commission discussed whether or not to proceed with the grant process. Ms. Mayerhofer suggested that given the dissent among several of the residents, perhaps this issue should be set aside for future discussion. The Commission agreed.

**6. Old Business / Pending Matters / Next Meeting**

- None
- Next meeting is scheduled for April 11, 2007

**Motion to adjourn.**

**Motion by: Commissioner Albrecht**

**Second: Commissioner Wagstaff**

**Action: Approved by unanimous voice vote**

The meeting adjourned at 10:05 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Brigitte Mayerhofer