



# VILLAGE OF WILMETTE

1200 Wilmette Avenue  
WILMETTE, ILLINOIS 60091-0040

## MEETING MINUTES

### TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2010

7:00 P.M.

SECOND FLOOR TRAINING ROOM OF VILLAGE HALL

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Members Present: Chairman Clay Weaver  
Commissioner Jim Grosh  
Commissioner Mark Wagstaff  
Commissioner Eileen Miller-Girson  
Commissioner Cathy Albrecht  
Commissioner Keith MacKenzie  
Commissioner Paul Chouinard

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Brigitte Mayerhofer, P.E., Director of Engineering Services  
Linda Reilley, Engineering Assistant  
Brian King, Police Chief  
Ron Andrews, Traffic Coordinator

Guests Present: Bob and Tina Schultz, 511 15<sup>th</sup> Street  
Kaci and Chris Smith, 1507 Highland Avenue  
Didier Glattard, 1514 Highland Avenue  
Dorothy Wicht, 1517 Highland Avenue  
Charlie Martin, 1522 Highland Avenue  
Lynn McKay, 1526 Highland Avenue  
Ed Meade, 1612 Highland Avenue  
Betsy Sillars, 1507 Washington

### CALL TO ORDER.

Chairman Weaver called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

**I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES; TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION MEETING OF JUNE 9, 2010**

Chairman Weaver directed the Commission's attention to the draft minutes of the Transportation Commission meeting of June 9, 2010. Commissioner Grosh moved to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Wagstaff. The motion was approved by a unanimous voice vote. **The motion passed.**

**II. PETITION FROM THE 1500 BLOCK OF HIGHLAND AVENUE**

Ms. Mayerhofer introduced this item with a slide presentation which is attached hereto and made part of the meeting minutes. She summarized the actions items as follows:

1. Change the parking requirements on the 1500 block of Highland Avenue from "No Parking 6:30 AM to 8:30 AM" to "No Parking 9:30 AM to 10:30 AM, Monday thru Friday, Except by Permit."
2. Change the 1500 block of Highland Avenue to one-way eastbound during school pick up and drop off hours and / or implement westbound turn restrictions from 15<sup>th</sup> Street to Highland Avenue during these times. Staff also recommends reviewing a one-way northbound option for 15<sup>th</sup> Street from Wilmette Avenue to Washington Avenue.
3. Replace the all-way stop at 15<sup>th</sup> and Highland Avenue with speed humps.

In addition, the Village received a resident request for the following:

4. Make the intersection of 15<sup>th</sup> and Washington Avenue an all-way stop controlled intersection. Currently, 15<sup>th</sup> Street stops to Washington Avenue.

Chairman Weaver opened the floor for resident comments. Kaci Smith, 1507 Highland Avenue, began with a special thanks to Linda Reilley for her assistance with the process. She stated the parking change is being requested because of the nuisance caused by cars that park on the 1500 block of Highland for extended periods. She indicated 3 to 4 cars routinely park in front of her house. The congestion makes Highland difficult to access for emergency vehicles. The requested 9:30 to 10:30 restriction would allow the area to be used for pick up and drop.

Chairman Weaver asked if many parents park and leave cars, to which several residents said they do. Commissioner Albrecht asked where the crossing guards are located to which the residents stated Wilmette and 15<sup>th</sup>, Wilmette and Prairie and Highland and Ridge Road.

Tina Schultz, 511 15<sup>th</sup>, reiterated the parking issues that were discussed earlier in the year. She

said there are 80 professionals at McKenzie School, but only 60 off-street parking spaces.

Ms. Smith indicated the 1500 block of Highland is the only block with available parking after 8:30 AM. Central Avenue is no parking 6:30 AM-8:30 AM unless by permit. Ms. Schultz noted portions of 15<sup>th</sup> Street are two hour parking.

Chairman Weaver stated the two requirements for resident permit parking. The first is that 60-percent of the neighbors have to sign the petition. This requirement has been met. The second is that 70-percent of the available spaces have to be utilized on an average day. And, of the utilized spaces, 30-percent have to be parked by non-residents of the block. This requirement is not met because much of the on-street capacity is available. Mr. Charlie Martin, 1522 Highland, asked what time of day the survey was taken, to which Ms. Reilley indicated between 9:30AM and 10:30 AM.

Chairman Weaver suggested that the Commission discuss each issue before making any decisions. He asked for comments on the proposed turn restrictions.

Ms. Smith stated she has pictures from last fall showing the intersection of Highland and 15<sup>th</sup> as very congested with turning cars, kids crossing the street and parked cars. She indicated cars routinely park in the crosswalk. Fred Meade, 1612 Highland, said the parked cars on Highland belong to McKenzie staff. He also noted that many parents drop off their kids and then hang out on the parkway. Many others park, take their kids to school and then go to the train station. Mr. Bob Schultz, 511 15<sup>th</sup> Street, stated some people just park and walk to the train station.

Ms. Smith stated it has been divine intervention that kids have not gotten hit. She observes speeding through stop signs.

Chairman Weaver said the Commissioner's packets include traffic and speed counts. He noted the data does not support a speeding issue on 15<sup>th</sup> Street and the problem seems to be related to congestion.

Ms. Smith stated some cars park for two hours during drop off. This jams things up because there is nowhere to go. Ms. Schulz indicated the parked bus also backs up the street. Ms. Smith noted the bus on 15<sup>th</sup> no longer turns down Highland Avenue, which is positive. An anonymous resident stated a one-way northbound movement would be similar to Prairie Avenue and create a circular pattern around McKenzie School. Another anonymous resident indicated the Commission has previously discussed parking with McKenzie staff. Chairman Weaver concurred indicating they asked for on-street parking permits. Ms. Schultz asked about the plan to carve out parking from the southern alley. Ms. Mayerhofer indicated the School District is not pursuing this option, citing what she believes were zoning and financial concerns.

Officer Andrews asked the residents if the problem exists in the morning and afternoon. The

residents agree that the congestion occurs during both times of the day.

The Commission discussed the drop off conditions on Prairie Avenue and Central Avenue. Ms. Schultz said the queue on Prairie extends down to Washington, noting more parents drive their kids than before. Chairman Weaver asked what happens on Central, to which Ms. Mayerhofer indicated there are not any known concerns on Central.

Commissioner Albrecht asked about the crosswalks on 15<sup>th</sup> Street to which an anonymous resident stated there are crosswalks at Central and Highland.

Commissioner Weaver asked if making 15<sup>th</sup> Street one way northbound would create a hardship. Betsy Sillars, 1507 Washington, indicated she would be affected. She noted people don't stop for pedestrians at 15<sup>th</sup>. She stands and waits long time. She has no problem with a one-way configuration, but asked that on-street parking remain.

Chairman Weaver asked if there is a preference for a true one-way street or turn restrictions. Chief King indicated one-way is smoother, but turn restrictions are less obtrusive.

Ms. Smith responded to the comment about losing parking and noted there is parking on at least one side of the street. Commissioner Albrecht noted that some parents also drop students off in the southbound direction.

An anonymous resident stated any changes in traffic flow might move the problem from Highland to Washington. Commissioner Chouinard observed that nothing happens on Central. He surmised that the Highland congestion is because of location to the entrance of the school.

Commissioner Chouinard asked the one-way configuration solves the parking problem. Some residents said yes, but others said the congestion on Highland would still be there.

An anonymous resident stated Prairie Avenue is one-way and still extremely congested.

Chairman Weaver stated there is parking shortage for the entire West Village Center. This is something the Village Board is aware of and working to resolve. An anonymous resident stated parking is available at Howard Park, but nobody wants to park and walk.

Chairman Weaver introduced the next issue which is speed humps or other traffic calming on 15<sup>th</sup> Street in lieu of stop signs. Ms. Smith noted there is a strong disregard for stop signs. She indicated most violators are moms in minivans. She said a safety solution is needed. A resident indicated the average speed on 15<sup>th</sup> is 18 mph, which does not support a safety problem. Ms. Smith asked about other times of day. Ms. Mayerhofer noted the 85-percentile speed is 28.4mph in the southbound direction and similar in the northbound direction.

Chairman Weaver indicated stop signs are not an effective way to control speed. Ms. Smith

said cars aren't stopping so someone will get hurt. Ms. Schultz indicated her home faces 15<sup>th</sup>, and she does not notice a speeding issue. She does not want a speed hump in front of her home.

Chairman Weaver noted the idea of a raised intersection in which the roadway and crosswalks are raised approximately 3" to 4". Ms. Schultz thought this was a good idea. Ms. Smith said whatever works. An anonymous resident asked if this would replace the stop signs to which Ms. Mayerhofer stated it would not. She noted stop signs serve a different purpose.

Mr. Meade asked about adding a crossing guard at 15<sup>th</sup> and Highland. He said there is problem with cars driving through stop signs while drivers talk on cell phones. Chief King indicated the Police Department provides extra enforcement during the first few weeks of school. He noted the request for enforcement far exceeds the number of available officers, however if there is a high violation rate at the stop signs, he is compelled to assign additional enforcement. Commissioner Chouinard asked if this intersection could be added to the rotation. Chief King noted it would be added.

Commissioner Albrecht asked about the official school walking route, noting her belief that Harper School pays for a crossing guard. Officer Andrews stated someone is out there every morning. Chief King stated the Commission approves the crossing guard schedule every May. There are currently four crossing guards assigned to McKenzie School. Wilmette, in general, has a very high number of crossing guards for a community of our size.

The group discussed the possibility of adding a volunteer to assist at Highland and 15<sup>th</sup> Street. Mr. Meade asked about the cost for guards, to which Chief King noted the budget is approximately \$200,000 per year for all of the guards. Ms. Schultz asked if we need two guards on Wilmette Avenue. Chief King noted they are there because of uncontrolled intersections and Wilmette Avenue is a high volume street. Ms. Mayerhofer stated the engineering department is conducting a pedestrian crossing study on Wilmette Avenue to improve safety. This may result in a consolidation of crossings.

Chairman Weaver stated the final issue is the intersection of Washington and 15<sup>th</sup> and the request for an all-way stop. The resident who made the request was not present. Chairman Weaver noted there are stringent warrants for an all-way stop and none of the warrants are met. Ms. Smith asked about the times kids go to school. Ms. Mayerhofer indicated the volume warrants are based on the highest eight hours in an average day. Chairman Weaver stated the volumes are very low. Ms. Schultz noted the curve makes Washington tricky. Commissioner Albrecht drove the neighborhood tonight and was surprised there was not an all-way stop at 15<sup>th</sup> and Washington. She noted the stop at Prairie and Washington is effective.

Chief King said the consequences of installing unwarranted stop signs are higher midblock speeds and a false sense of security for pedestrians. He would like to see an incremental approach to making changes, to see if the initial turn restrictions have a positive impact on

traffic flow.

Mr. Meade stated if 15<sup>th</sup> Street is northbound only, parents will switch to Wilmette and turn left which is a difficult turn. He asked if that will cause a problem on Wilmette Avenue.

The Commission discussed the one-way configuration on 15<sup>th</sup> Street and what the resulting traffic patterns will be. Staff indicated there is less southbound traffic than northbound traffic on 15<sup>th</sup> Street. Commissioner Chouinard stated the proposed changes will not increase traffic, but redirect traffic patterns. Mr. Meade said 15<sup>th</sup> Street will get worse, while other residents indicated traffic flow will improve.

Chairman Weaver asked the Commission for comments or recommendations.

Commissioner MacKenzie stated the front of McKenzie School is the designated drop off area. He suggested Central Avenue is underutilized and can be a feed to the school in the eastbound direction. If 15<sup>th</sup> Street is also used as an official drop off zone, then the cars parking on the west side of the street are facing southbound which is the wrong direction. He suggested moving all the parking to the east side and making Highland Avenue westbound only to funnel cars away from the school.

Commissioner Chouinard pointed out that the only way to get students into the drop off zone on 15<sup>th</sup> Street, south of Highland Avenue is from Central Avenue or Wilmette Avenue.

The Commission further discussed the feasibility of making 15<sup>th</sup> Street a functioning drop off and pick up zone. Ms. Schultz stated if this happens a crossing guard needs to be present at 15<sup>th</sup> and Highland. Commissioner Albrecht suggested that other schools have hired guards. Chairman Weaver said ideally the curb lane should be the moving lane. Commissioner MacKenzie stated parking should then be eliminated on the west side of 15<sup>th</sup> Street.

Mr. Meade said Prairie doesn't operate that well because if someone gets out of the car, the entire street is blocked.

The Commission discussed the impact of moving and / or eliminating some of the on-street parking spaces. Several residents were not in favor of this, because they are frequently used. Commissioner Chouinard clarified that they would only be made no parking during school drop off and pick up times. Chief King noted that many parents and volunteers use the four spots on the east side of 15<sup>th</sup> Street.

Ms. Smith suggested Highland Avenue should be one-way eastbound so that the direction of flow is toward the school. She said this is a more natural flow pattern. The Commission reviewed the District map and where most parents were coming from. Commissioner MacKenzie suggested one-way northbound on 15<sup>th</sup> Street could push more traffic to Prairie Avenue.

Mr. Meade said if more people use Washington and Prairie, there will be a problem. Ms. Schultz said she has lived there for 20 years and suggests trying one change at a time, because you can't predict what people will do.

After additional discussion, the Chairman suggested the Commission vote on one issue at a time.

Motion to change the parking requirements on the 1500 block of Highland Avenue No Parking 6:30 AM to 8:30 AM to No Parking 9:30 AM to 10:30 AM, Monday thru Friday, Except by Permit. Motion made by Commissioner Albrecht and seconded by Commissioner Miller-Girson. **The motion was unanimously denied as the Village Code requirements for resident permit parking were not met.**

The next motion for consideration is to replace the all-way stop at 15<sup>th</sup> and Highland Avenue with speed humps. 15<sup>th</sup> Street does not meet the requirements per the Traffic Calming Policy for speed humps. The motion was made by Commissioner Chouinard and seconded by Commissioner MacKenzie. **The motion was unanimously denied because the Commission determined the all-way stop should remain in order to help control pedestrian traffic through the intersection.**

The third motion is to make the intersection of 15<sup>th</sup> and Washington Avenue an all-way stop controlled intersection. The motion was made by Commissioner Chouinard and seconded by Commissioner Grosh. **The motion was unanimously denied as the MUTCD warrants for an all-way stop at 15<sup>th</sup> and Washington were not met.**

The final motion is to implement the following turn restrictions during school times:

- “Do Not Enter, during school times” sign for southbound 15<sup>th</sup> Street at Washington Avenue;
- “No Left Turn” from northbound 15<sup>th</sup> Street to westbound Highland Avenue;
- “No Right Turn” sign from eastbound Highland Avenue and the alleys between Washington and Highland Avenue to southbound 15<sup>th</sup> Street; and
- “No Thru Traffic” signs on both ends of the east /west alleys between Washington and Highland Avenue and 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> Streets.

The motion was made by Commissioner MacKenzie and seconded by Commissioner Miller-Girson. **The results of the roll call vote are seven in favor of the motion and zero against the motion. The motion carries.**

Chairman Weaver asked how these changes will be monitored. Staff indicated they will continue to work with school staff on any additional changes that will improve traffic flow. Commissioner Albrecht suggested notifying the school before implementing any signage changes. Ms. Mayerhofer stated they would be notified along with the rest of the

neighborhood. Commissioner MacKenzie also suggested the school should have someone to assist with moving cars through the drop off / pick up zone.

**III. OLD BUSINESS**

None

**IV. ADJOURNMENT.**

At 9:50 p.m., Commissioner Wagstaff moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Chouinard. The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote. **The motion carried.** No further discussion occurred on the motion.

The meeting was thereafter adjourned.

Minutes Respectfully Prepared by Brigitte Mayerhofer, P.E., Director of Engineering Services