



VILLAGE OF WILMETTE

1200 Wilmette Avenue
WILMETTE, ILLINOIS 60091-0040

MEETING MINUTES

TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

WEDNESDAY, MAY 9, 2012

7:00 P.M.

SECOND FLOOR TRAINING ROOM OF VILLAGE HALL

Members Present: Chairperson Cathy Albrecht
Commissioner Mark Wagstaff
Commissioner Pat Lilly
Commissioner Paul Chouinard

Members Absent: Commissioner Santacruz

Staff Present: Brigitte Mayerhofer, P.E., Director of Engineering Services
Dan Manis, Civil Engineer II
Brian King, Chief of Police
Ron Andrews, Police Traffic Coordinator

Guests Present: None

I. CALL TO ORDER.

Chairperson Albrecht called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES; TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION MEETING OF FEBRUARY 8, 2012.

Chairperson Albrecht directed the Commission's attention to the draft minutes of the Transportation Commission meeting of February 8, 2012. Chairperson Albrecht moved approval of the minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Chouinard. The motion was approved by a unanimous voice vote. **The motion passed.**

I. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF THE ANNUAL SCHOOL CROSSING GUARD REPORT

Officer Andrews reviewed his report presented to the Commission noting that the enforcement around Romona School was having trouble mainly in the afternoon. He met with the principal and they decided to focus on enforcement and educating the parents next year.

Chief King said there are a high number of citations at Romona School. He added that a group of parents asked the principal for help with stopping enforcement.

Chairperson Albrecht asked if Highcrest School needed new signage to which Officer Andrews said he believed that more advanced signage would help draw the driver's attention.

Ms. Mayerhofer noted that it is already a four way stop controlled intersection and a designated school zone. She believes that too much signage can cause further confusion, and suggested that the intersection striping could be freshened up.

Commissioner Chouinard asked if one crossing guard was enough, adding that there is a lot of traffic and perhaps having another guard would be a benefit. Chief King noted that two guards can sometimes create more confusion. He said that in the past there were two guards and the feedback was that it was too hard to manage.

Commissioner Chouinard asked if the guards were moving the children in a one step process. Chief King replied they were being crossed in a one step, diagonal process. Officer Andrews added that it is not crossing the children that are the issue, but traffic disobeying the signs.

Commissioner Chouinard asked if providing another guard would make people aware that this intersection is under authority. Officer Andrews replied that two guards at a small intersection can cause conflicts and potentially cause more safety issues.

Chairperson Albrecht noted her continued concern about the crossing guard start time for the Illinois Road and Hunter Road intersection. She indicated the 8:00 a.m. crossing guard start does not benefit the Junior High students who travel in large numbers through this area between 7:30 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. Her concern is primarily the volume of children and the diagonal crossing. She stated there are many parents and school representatives who share this concern. She would like to ask the crossing guard to be there for an extra half hour in the morning to cross the children. Previous discussions with the Police Chief regarding this concern indicated that this age group of children is not typically in need of crossing guards. Chairman Albrecht continued to discuss a written letter from parents concerning the safety of the children. She noted that three years ago there was an accident involving a student but other than that there were not many accidents. She also noted that every year since being on this Commission this discussion has come up.

Chief King noted that the Village has a \$200,000 crossing guard budget, however, it is not just the cost of the crossing guards. He added that he has observed this intersection himself and noted that there is a higher pedestrian volume between 7:30 a.m. and 7:45 a.m. and higher traffic volume between 7:45 and 8:00 a.m.

Chairperson Albrecht noted that when kids are in a pack it is more dangerous than an individual child crossing alone. Junior High students must be in their chairs by 8:00 a.m. There is the confusion of cars and children rushing through the intersection close to 8:00 a.m.

Commissioner Chouinard asked if the Commission wanted to keep discussing the issue year after year.

Commissioner Lilly mentioned the Illinois and Hunter intersection is unique. His initial reaction is that the children are young and the intersection can get very busy.

Chairperson Albrecht noted from 7:40 to 7:50 is the heaviest crossing in the shortest amount of time. She said the Junior High is a different dynamic because it is so early.

Commissioner Chouinard asked to clarify if the morning is more of a concern in the afternoon. Chairperson Albrecht responded that the morning is more of a concern because the afternoon has more coverage.

Commissioner Chouinard asked what the approximate cost of additional hours would be to which Chief King responded that the approximate cost of the additional hours would be approximately \$3,000.00.

Commissioner Lilly made a motion to increase the hours of the crossing guard at the Hunter Road and Illinois Road intersection, to 7:30 a.m. Commissioner Chouinard seconded the motion. The motion was approved with three ayes and one no vote.

Chief King said the crossing guards will contact Officer Andrews to report any problems with traffic, and noted that enforcement is performed at the beginning of the school year.

Chairperson Albrecht asked if the volume at the intersection of Wilmette Avenue and Skokie Boulevard decreased. Officer Andrews indicated that it increased noting that it peaks during the nicer weather and drops dramatically during the cold months.

Chief King noted that the Wilmette Avenue and Skokie Boulevard intersection has a high accident history. He said the primary cause is typically drivers violating the signs.

Commissioner Lilly asked if our crossing guard presence is higher than the Village of Skokie to which Chief King responded that our community is probably on the high end of providing crossing guards.

Chairperson Albrecht asked if the substitute crossing guards are paid only when called to work, to which Officer Andrews indicated yes.

Chief King noted Officer Andrews has done a really nice job coordinating the pool of substitutes.

Chairperson Albrecht asked for an update on the Municipal Services Committee meeting. Ms. Mayerhofer updated the Commission on the sign implementation for the pedestrian crosswalk pilot program. The Municipal Services Committee is supportive of the signage, as well as the pilot program aimed at developing a policy. Ms. Mayerhofer hopes to have something in June or July for Wilmette Avenue.

Commissioner Chouinard asked if we do not have an accident history what is the basis for implementing these signs. Chief King added that even though there is not an accident history, there are quality of life issues, and the need for safe walking routes to school.

Commissioner Lilly suggested counting the number of pedestrians.

Chairperson Albrecht asked about the status of the striping on Sheridan Road to which Ms. Mayerhofer said the striping started May 8, 2012.

Commissioner Wagstaff asked about the pedestrian sign giving the false sense of safety to the pedestrian. Ms. Mayerhofer noted the key would be to change the behavior of the driver. Resident sentiment is that driver behavior is different in Evanston as a result of these signs.

Commissioner Wagstaff said hopefully this will increase the number of pedestrians walking.

Ms. Mayerhofer explained that is why there is need for a policy so there is a balance.

Chairperson Albrecht asked about placing an article in the newsletter. Ms. Mayerhofer said an article was submitted for consideration.

Commissioner Lilly spoke about an article in the Tribune he read that only 1 in 27 people in Chicago know the law.

Chief King responded that there is a difference in the way laws are written.

Ms. Mayerhofer noted that the spirit of the sign is to stop for pedestrians.

Commissioner Lilly noted his own opinion on the law would be to yield not stop for pedestrians.

Commissioner Chouinard made a motion to accept the school crossing guard report prepared by the Police Department for the 2012/2013 school year. Commissioner Lilly seconded the motion. The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

II. OLD BUSINESS

Chairperson Albrecht asked if there was any other business.

A Commissioner asked how the parking and circulation changes around McKenzie School are going, to which Chief King said he has received very few complaints.

III. ADJOURNMENT.

At 7:48 p.m., Commissioner Wagstaff moved to adjourn the meeting. 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 Kathy Goodman, Engineering Department Secretary