

Engineering
Department



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MEETING MINUTES

TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2013

7:00 P.M.

SECOND FLOOR TRAINING ROOM OF VILLAGE HALL

- Members Present: Chairperson Cathy Albrecht
Commissioner Pat Lilly
Commissioner Steve Santacruz
Commissioner Brendan McCarthy
Commissioner Reinhardt Schneider
Commissioner Craig LeMoyne
- Members Absent: None.
- Staff Present: Brigitte Mayerhofer, P.E., Director of Engineering Services
Dan Manis, Civil Engineer II
Kyle Perkins, Deputy Police Chief
- Guests Present: Judith Allen, 219 14th Street
William Berndt, 1409 Maple Avenue
Jack and Ellie MacGregor, 1410 Maple Avenue
Ken Fidel, 127 16th Street
Josephine Ziaya, 1512 Maple Avenue
Adam Smith, 1461 Wilmette Avenue
Emily and Mike Denesha, 1215 Gregory Avenue
Rosemary Naphin, 1430 Isabella Street
Jennifer Tan, 1324 Maple Avenue
Annie Heffron, 1303 Maple Avenue
Rich Cozzola, 1506 Wilmette Avenue
Keith and Barb Clayton, 1321 Maple Avenue
Ed and Marilyn Zieserl, 1325 Maple Avenue
Cathy Donnelly, 128 16th Street
Benjamin Phillips, 327 Oak Circle

Valerie Kennedy, 1415 Maple Avenue
Lora Schaefer, 1409 Maple Avenue

I. CALL TO ORDER.

Chairperson Albrecht called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES; TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 11, 2013.

Chairperson Albrecht directed the Commission's attention to the draft minutes of the Transportation Commission meeting of January 30, 2013. Commissioner Schneider moved approval of the minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Lilly. The motion was approved by a unanimous voice vote. **The motion passed.**

III. DISCUSSION OF TRAFFIC CONCERNS IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD BOUNDED B ISABELLA STREET AND WILMETTE AVENUE AND 16TH STREET AND PARK AVENUE.

Dan Manis, Village Civil Engineer, reviewed the report presented to the Commission noting that the neighborhood is comprised of low volume residential/local streets and includes six uncontrolled four-way intersections. Uncontrolled intersections are those that do not have traffic control signs to regulate the right-of-way. This requires motorists to follow the right-of-way rule and yield to vehicles and pedestrians already in the intersection or yield to vehicles on the right when approaching at approximately the same time.

Mr. Manis said the Village receives regular inquiries from residents in this neighborhood regarding safety concerns over speeding, traffic volume, and frequent near misses at the uncontrolled intersections. This prompted Village staff to collect traffic data within the subject neighborhood to determine if traffic speeds and volumes met the minimum thresholds included in the Village Traffic Calming Policy and/or the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control (MUTCD) devices that would warrant the placement of traffic calming measures or traffic control signage.

Mr. Manis reviewed the results of the data in the report that determined the subject neighborhood does not meet the minimum requirements of village adopted policies and federal traffic guides for the implementation of traffic calming measures or traffic control signage. Village staff does recognize that there are opportunities to increase the available intersection sight distances at several of the uncontrolled intersections to improve the ability of a motorist to follow the right-of-way rule. This can be accomplished through the use of pavement marking to limit the distance vehicles park to the intersection, working

with homeowners to reduce the amount of sight obstructing vegetation, and prohibiting fences at the corner of properties at intersections.

Commissioner Albrecht asked if fences and vegetation was an issue for the subject intersections.

Mr. Manis said fences and vegetation are not an issue at 13th and 14th Street intersections but at the 15th Street intersection there are more narrow side yard setbacks and it is a little more build up near the intersection.

Commissioner Schneider noted that there is probably more traffic on the asphalt streets rather than the brick streets in the area.

Commissioner Albrecht asked which intersections had accidents in the past few years.

Mr. Manis said there have been six accidents in the past three years in the subject areas and two of the accidents were at 13th Street and Maple Avenue.

Ms. Mayerhofer noted that if traffic calming was implemented in the subject neighborhood it would impact other neighborhoods in the area.

Commissioner Albrecht asked if there were residents attending the meeting who would like to comment on the traffic concerns.

Emily Deneesha, 1215 Gregory, asked what type of data was collected and when during the year it was collected.

Mr. Manis said they only collected data on vehicle traffic during the month of October and first week of November.

Ms. Deneesha said she believes there is more traffic during the summer months.

Mr. Manis said more people are out walking during the warmer months and they believe they have a better vehicle count in October as the days become shorter and cooler and more people are using vehicles rather than walking.

A resident said he has had a few near misses with accidents in the area due to construction traffic as motorists go around the construction traffic without focusing on other vehicles. He believes signs should be considered for the area as they are not that costly and will remind residents of the rules of the road.

A resident who lives near the intersection of 14th and Maple Avenue said he believes part of the issue is that motorists do not yield if there is not a stop sign.

A resident said she lives near the intersection of 13th and Maple Avenue and she has observed that motorists driving in the area drive through the streets and just assume that the cross street traffic will stop as there are no yield signs.

Ken Fidel, 127 16th Street, said every other street in Evanston has stop signs posted and that works very well. He would like to see at least some yield signs posted in the area.

Barb Clayton, 1321 Maple, said she has lived in the area for 30 years and believes the problem has progressed since construction was completed on Wilmette Avenue. She would prefer that stop signs are posted rather than yield signs.

A resident said she lives near 16th Street and Maple Avenue and walks quite a bit in the neighborhood. She believes the new signage on Wilmette Avenue is causing motorists to stop for pedestrians so she believes more signage in the area is necessary.

Ben, 327 Oak Circle, said he has only been in the area for a year but has already had a near miss accident and has also seen near miss accidents in the area.

Commissioner Albrecht asked if there was traffic accident data going back farther than three years.

Mr. Manis said he did check for accidents going back five years and there were 9 accidents in the area in the past five years, five accidents on 15th Street, three accidents on 14th Street and one accident on 13th Street.

Commissioner Schneider asked what type of signage is currently south of Isabella in the City of Evanston.

Mr. Manis said every street has stop control in one direction, they alternate direction, and every intersection has two way stop.

Ms. Mayerhofer said the downside of stop signs in low volume areas is that there is a tendency of drivers to roll through the stop signs, and stop signs are not intended to slow down traffic.

A resident said she personally feels safer driving in Evanston due to the controlled intersections.

A resident living at 16th and Gregory said she believes signage for "children playing" would slow traffic in the area.

Ms. Mayerhofer said too much signage in an area would be impossible for motorists to take in and we must be judicious in what information is given to drivers. She said the narrow streets, tree canopy and parking in the streets slows down motorists.

Commissioner Santacruz said it seems that speeding through the intersections is more of a concern to residents in the area. He asked what the parking restrictions are near the intersections of the streets.

Mr. Manis said the Village Code says there is no parking 20' from the intersection.

A number of residents stated that construction trucks park too near the intersections which block the view of motorists.

Commissioner Albrecht asked if any of the streets in the area were a designated walking route to schools.

Mr. Manis said the designated school walking route starts at Maple Avenue and 15th Street going north.

Commissioner Schneider asked what is the effectiveness of a yield sign versus a stop sign.

Deputy Chief Perkins said yield signs are not really effective as they are very difficult to enforce. The Police Department believes that if we do not go by what the traffic warrants from data collected, it has much larger implications Village wide.

Commissioner Schneider said he does not believe signage will prevent accidents and too much signage is distracting to motorists.

Two residents expressed concern with the intersection at 14th Street and Wilmette Avenue.

A resident noted that there are signs on Isabella that do not permit a right turn onto Prairie or Park which causes more traffic on 14th Street.

Deputy Police Chief said the signage was installed at those intersections to keep traffic on the main streets rather than cutting through on side streets. He said any type of signage installed will have consequences for other streets in the Village.

Commissioner Albrecht asked for comments from the other Commissioners.

Commissioner LeMoynes said when he looks at the intersection of 15th Street and Maple Avenue and there are 1100 vehicles going through there with 1200 being the threshold for the study, he believes it warrants looking further for solutions in that area.

Commissioner McCarthy said he would like to see something done in the area whether it is striping or addressing parking.

Commissioner Lilly said he is concerned about placing too many stop signs in the Village but he is aware of the higher volume of traffic which causes problems in the area, specifically the problems on 15th Street.

Commissioner Albrecht said she likes to follow the warrants as that is the structure for signage. She notes that volume data provided does not warrant placing signage

in the area. However, she believes the accident history is a concern for her as well as the walking route in the area. She believes yield and stop signs do help vehicle traffic.

Commissioner Schneider said having heard all the residents' comments, it seems that 15th Street at Maple and Gregory Avenues might warrant signage but would the signage then be diverting traffic to other streets in the area.

Commissioner Santacruz said he is not sure if signage would help with accidents but he also believes there seems to be some issues of higher volumes of traffic in the area.

Ms. Mayerhofer said staff would review the data again and propose a plan for the Transportation Commission to consider.

Lauren Schaeffer, 1409 Maple, said she believes the accident history would be a lot higher but residents in the higher are putting on the brakes to avoid accidents at intersections in the area.

Ed Zieserl, 1325 Maple Avenue, stated that he is in favor of stop signs.

Commissioner Albrecht said they have listened to residents' concerns and the Commission is asking staff to review the traffic data from the area, address the concerns expressed by residents, and put together a plan to bring back to the Transportation Commission to approve.

Commissioner Albrecht noted that there was a resident who had a concern with the pedestrian signage at Wilmette Avenue and Prairie Avenue.

A resident asked if the type of pedestrian signage at Wilmette and Prairie Avenues would be something to be considered for 15th Street and Maple Avenues.

Ms. Mayerhofer said the intent of the pedestrian signs is to change the behavior of drivers and crosswalks. She said a grant was received to purchase the specific signage at Wilmette Avenue and Prairie Avenue.

A number of residents expressed concern with the crosswalk at Wilmette Avenue and 14th Street, noting that cars do not stop or slow down.

Deputy Chief Perkins said they try to educate residents and school children to make sure all cars have stopped before stepping into an intersection.

A resident expressed her concern about the amount of traffic on Wilmette Avenue and how difficult it is to cross the street. She tries to cross at the light at Park and Wilmette Avenue as she is confused by the new pedestrian sign at Prairie and Wilmette Avenue.

Mr. Manis said another compliance study will be done in the future to determine how the new pedestrian signage is working at Prairie and Wilmette Avenue.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner LeMoyné moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner McCarthy. The motion was approved by a unanimous voice vote. **The motion carried.** No further discussion occurred on the motion.

The meeting was thereafter adjourned.

Minutes Respectfully Prepared by Brigitte Mayerhofer and Dan Manis.