

Engineering
Department



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MEETING MINUTES

TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

**TUESDAY, APRIL 29, 2014
7:00 P.M.**

SECOND FLOOR TRAINING ROOM OF VILLAGE HALL

- Members Present: Chairperson Cathy Albrecht
Commissioner Pat Lilly
Commissioner Brendan McCarthy
Commissioner Reinhardt Schneider
Commissioner Craig LeMoyne
Commissioner Michael Taylor
- Members Absent: Commissioner Steve Santacruz
- Staff Present: Brigitte Berger, P.E., Director of Engineering Services
Dan Manis, P.E., Civil Engineer II
Brian King, Police Chief
- Guests Present: George Hossfeld, 512 Romona Road
Bernie Hossfeld, 512 Romona Road
Melinda Sharkan, 625 Romona Road
John Hardt, 735 Romona Road
Sally Gold, 621 Romona Road
Stephen Tilley, 811 Romona Road
Richard Frank, 801 Romona Road

I. CALL TO ORDER.

Chairperson Albrecht called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES; TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION MEETING OF JANUARY 8, 2014.

Chairperson Albrecht directed the Commission's attention to the draft minutes of the Transportation Commission meeting of January 8, 2014. Commissioner McCarthy moved approval of the minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Schneider. The motion was approved by a unanimous voice vote.

The motion passed.

III. DISCUSSION OF TRAFFIC CONCERNS OF AREA RESIDENTS RELATED TO ROMONA ROAD BETWEEN WILMETTE AND LAKE AVENUES.

Dan Manis led the discussion. There have been numerous resident requests to study the area and determine if it met the warrants in the traffic calming policy. In general, the Village's traffic calming policy states that a perceived problem should be further studied if one of the following objective criteria are met:

- Traffic volume greater than 1,200 vehicles per day (VPD) on a local street; or
- 85th percentile speed more than 7 miles per hour (mph) over the posted speed limit; or
- Excessive accident experience related to unreasonable volumes or speeds.

Note: 85th percentile speed is the speed at or below 85% of the vehicles travel and is widely used in the field of traffic engineering to characterize reasonable and prudent driving behavior.

Dan Manis noted that:

- Traffic volume is between 1000 and 1200 vehicles per day and street is bounded by two collector streets on either end and therefore functions like a collector street.
- 85th percentile speeds range from 30 to 34 mph and are slightly higher on the north end of the block
- accident history is low (4 accidents over the past 5 years)

Residents requested traffic calming for this area to slow the speeds. Dan Manis highlighted two techniques the Village has used in the past including speed humps and pavement marking.

Summary: The traffic volumes and accident data suggest that there is not a cut-through or inherent safety problem with the functionality of the street. The speed data, however, does exceed the 7 mph over the posted speed limit threshold warranting further study per the Village's Traffic Calming Policy. Currently, there are no funds in the 2014 Village budget allocated for traffic calming improvements. Since the economic downturn in 2008, revenue generated for infrastructure has been allocated toward road, alley and brick projects, sidewalk and curb repairs, and other maintenance initiatives. Given these competing

priorities, it is most likely that future traffic calming measures will be implemented as part of routine street resurfacing projects.

Commissioner Brendan McCarthy asked the dates of traffic study. Dan Manis responded the dates were April 8-11. He noted studies are conducted on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. School was in session.

Resident Sally Gold, 621 Romona, stated she lives across from the playground near Regina commented that she has seen many dangerous things. First, cars are parked illegally for pick up and drop off of children preventing cars from passing through and preventing her from being able to get out of her driveway. She made a point that she visited her grand-daughters school where the rule is there is no parking allowed close to the school. That school also has incentive programs encouraging children to walk to school. Secondly, there are too many signs on the street and no one abides by them. Third, the one-way traffic rule/sign prohibiting traffic going north on Romona is very restricting and doesn't make sense especially when school is not in session. Staff will ask public works to remove the cover over "on school days". Lastly, Ms. Gold noted that larger vehicles are more of a hazard. For example, garbage pick-up day, the truck comes when the kindergarteners are dismissed from school. Someone could get hurt on the street.

Resident Steve Tilly, 811 Romona, wanted to add he is more concerned with speed. He is afraid to have his daughter walk to Romona School. On two occasions, he's seen cars drive over the curb just to get around other cars. He drives three blocks because he doesn't feel comfortable. This is a problem and noted there is a speed issue during school hours.

Resident John Hart, 735 Romona, echoes concern for the south end school traffic because Regina school also dumps out into Romona. There is a problem with speeding on the north all times of the day with volume being higher during school times. He notes the street is very straight and there are essentially two schools. Sidewalks are up against very shallow curbs. We have a lot of distracted drivers that don't mix well with a lot of pedestrian traffic. John Hart asked the Commission address these issues affecting safety and parking concerns.

Brigitte Berger said we could move the sidewalks back with a 66 foot of right of way and get about 16 feet of additional parkway. She also noted the state has a Safe Routes to School grant which this project could be a candidate for.

Resident Richard Frank, 801 Romona, a resident for 10 years, comments that the period in which traffic was measured follows the down turn of construction. When construction was booming truck traffic was using Romona as a cut-thru.

Resident George Hossfeld, 512 Romona, is an emergency physician and home during the day. When parents are picking up and dropping off children, it's an act of faith to get out of their driveway.

Commissioner Schneider asked if we've ever considered having people out there directing traffic.

Chairperson Cathy Albrecht stated yes. But notes, in the morning it's easier to keep traffic going during drop off, however, during pick up, you have to wait for your child to be picked up and traffic does not flow easily during that time.

Chief Brian King discussed enforcement. Notes the population at that school is higher than it has ever been. Also, the culture at Romona School is that children are so heavily scheduled that picking up their child to get them to their next after school activity is so predominant right now and brings about more traffic. To improve on traffic, Chief Brian King suggests the garbage hauler could change hours and public works could modify leaf collection during the times that makes more sense.

Resident George Hossfeld continues to add he does not witness any speed issues. The reason he is attending this meeting is he did not attend a meeting in the past and the result was a one-way street where people ended up parking in front of his driveway. The current situation is much worse for him and his wife than prior. He doesn't want any speed bumps. Mrs. Hossfeld states getting out of her driveway is a problem. People have no courtesy nor common sense. She says with regard to speeding, you'd almost have to put a speed bump every few feet.

Chair Albrecht mentioned speeding is more north. Both Chair Albrecht and Ms. Berger say speed bumps are not the best way to tackle this issue.

Commissioner Schneider asks if removing "on school days" from sign is sufficient for the Hossfelds to improve their situation or do they want the "right turn only" sign completely eliminated?

Resident George Hossfeld says he would take whatever. He just doesn't want to see it get more congested and states speed bumps would only make the situation worse.

Commissioner Craig LeMoyne asked if removing the restriction on Central and Romona (if you're heading south on Romona, you can't turn west on Central) would solve the problem. Residents said no.

Commissioner Craig LeMoyne asked what happens if cars are doing something illegal. Chief King stated every school gets heavy enforcement at least once. Any complaints typically come from principal which prompts them to give warning to parents first. Next, officers are placed on site to continue enforcement. And lastly tickets are given if not compliant.

Mr. Hossfeld stated some houses have no curb. He has a tiny curb. Due to small curbs, people park in front of his driveway repeatedly and say they did not know

it was a driveway. It is usually worse at pick up between 3:00pm and 3:25pm. And it's 4pm before you can go around because of the signage.

Ms. Sally Gold also added congestion is also in the morning around 7:30am due to Regina kids. At times she has to wait 10 minutes before she could back out. When they are let out, it is a "free for all" and Regina drivers are inexperienced drivers.

Chair Albrecht mentioned it may be time for the Romona principal to send out a letter to improve this problem. Chief Brian King agrees to implement a "Be A Good Neighbor" program. Perhaps get some parent volunteers to discourage people from blocking driveways.

Resident Mr. Tilly mentioned he has received those letters in the past but also states people do not listen.

Resident Richard Frank made a comment to paint a yellow stripe on the driveway. If you make it consistent, perhaps it would improve the situation.

A resident asks if we've tried carpooling. Chair Albrecht stated it's an issue of compliance.

Consensus is we should ask the school to implement a "Be A Good Neighbor" program. Chief Brian King states we will meet with the school to initiate program and follow up with enforcement.

Commissioner Schneider asked all night parking on at least one side of the street would make a difference. Ms. Berger stated she doesn't think it would help especially with the daytime issue. There aren't two lanes available because the road is too narrow. You can't park and get two-way traffic through. There are lots of techniques we can do including curb extensions or pavement resurfacing, it just takes time and money.

Resident Sally Gold made a suggestion when walking a child. What if the pedestrians were to walk only on the EAST side of the street?

Resident George Hossfeld mentioned the large parking lot behind Romona School. He wanted to see if they can use that parking for parents picking up their children.

This was done in the past but created a different problem with school buses taking up too much room in the streets.

A resident mentioned there is no stop sign going eastbound on Washington.

Ms. Berger stated we can take care of that immediately. Ms. Berger also noted that we will not stop traffic on Romona because the traffic volumes on the side streets don't come close to meeting requirements for an all-way stop.

Ms. Berger mentioned that the Safe Routes to School Grant could help with sidewalk reconfiguration but probably not with the road work.

Commissioner Schneider drew the Commission's attention to page four of the recommendation packet asking what the Village plans on doing with the list of candidates for traffic calming measures; particularly on Elmwood, Chestnut and Greenwood (all between Hunter and Ridge).

Ms. Berger noted these streets had high speeds and/or high cut through volumes which means they technically met the traffic calming warrants for some form of traffic calming. On Elmwood, specifically, it's cut through and speed. However, nothing has been designed as of yet. The stop sign that is there is for right-of-way control only. Stop signs do not change the speed issue.

Chairperson Cathy Albrecht briefly summarized meeting:

- Traffic calming has to wait until there is money
- Look at changing the signage by adding an "on school days" plaque below the hour restrictions sign to improve access so we're not prohibiting traffic for no reason
- Speaking to the garbage company so it does not pick up during heavy school times
- Speaking to the school to implement a "Be A Good Neighbor" program
- Public Works could do leaf collection at non-school times
- Any other school issues will have to be addressed at another meeting
- It is encouraged for residents to speak to the school directly

IV. OLD BUSINESS.

Ms. Berger stated that a group called the Active Transportation Alliance in Wilmette came to the last Village Board meeting to inform the Village Board of their bike initiatives. They were directed to the Municipal Services Committee, but at some point they may be deferred to the Transportation Commission. This bike advocacy group wants the Village to adopt a "complete streets" ordinance which means any time you rehabilitate a street it should be built for cars, pedestrians and bikers as well.

Ms. Berger thanked Pat Lilly who will be the next chairman of the Commission.

Ms. Berger mentioned the Commission may also get information about a traffic circle that's proposed by the state and county at Illinois and Hibbard. It would be the first traffic circle in Wilmette. So far, the concept of a circle has not been embraced by the school at that location. IDOT still wants to have a public hearing and collect public comment. Residents are encouraged to attend. The number one concern about the traffic circle is that it's difficult for pedestrians to maneuver.

Ms. Berger also mentioned the reduction of signage campaign has started so residents may notice fewer signs in the Village.

Ms. Berger also thanked Chair Cathy Albrecht for eight productive years of service.

Commissioner Michael Taylor was introduced and welcomed to the committee. Michael has lived in Wilmette for four years and is originally from Washington D.C.

V. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Brendan McCarthy motioned to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Reinhardt Schneider seconded the motion. 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 Ms. Janet Guavita and Mr. Dan Manis.