

Engineering
Department



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MEETING MINUTES

TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

**MONDAY, JUNE 23, 2014
7:00 P.M.**

SECOND FLOOR TRAINING ROOM OF VILLAGE HALL

- Members Present: Chairperson Pat Lilly
Commissioner Reinhardt Schneider
Commissioner Craig LeMoyne
Commissioner Michael Taylor
- Members Absent: Commissioner Brendan McCarthy
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: Peter Lemmon, Traffic Analysis and Design, Inc.
Gretchen Cappiello, 801 15th Street
Tara Vanderkamp, 1130 Lake Avenue
Nate Vanderkamp, 1130 Lake Avenue
Robert Phillips, 1123 Lake Avenue
Deborah Smith, 1509 Spencer Avenue
Linda Dawson, 139 Linden Avenue
Martin Dawson, 139 Linden Avenue
Karin Page, 143 Linden Avenue
Rovena Rerienhale, 143 Linden Avenue
Kathleen Bandolik, 127 Linden Avenue
Matt Wolf, 111 Linden Avenue
John Reventhder, 147 Linden Avenue
Jim McCabe, 1466 Wilmette Avenue
Fran and David Dudzinski, 246 Greenleaf Avenue
Ron Gould, 401 Greenleaf Avenue

Laurie Goldstein, 822 Prairie Avenue
Brenda Schumaker, 1221 Lake Avenue
Scott Conrad, 100 Linden Avenue
Sherri Dort, 1539 Spencer Avenue
Liz Wesemann, 1516 Spencer Avenue

I. CALL TO ORDER.

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

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES; TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION MEETING OF APRIL 29, 2014.

Chairman Lilly directed the Commission's attention to the draft minutes of the Transportation Commission meeting of April 29, 2014. Commissioner Schneider moved approval of the minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner LeMoyne. The motion was approved by a unanimous voice vote.

The motion passed.

III. DISCUSSION OF TRAFFIC CONCERNS OF AREA RESIDENTS ON THE 100 BLOCK OF LINDEN AVENUE

Dan Manis, Civil Engineer, said at the April 22, 2014 Village Board meeting, the Baha'i House of Worship received approval from the Village Board to reconstruct their parking lot. During the approval process several neighbors expressed concern about parking and traffic hardships on Linden Avenue. Village President Bob Bielinski asked the Baha'i House of Worship to work in good faith with the Transportation Commission and the residents of the neighborhood to address traffic and parking problems.

Chairman Lilly asked for comments from the residents who were present at the meeting.

Karen Page, 143 Linden Avenue, said the parking lot for the Baha'i House of Worship has been closed for five years due to construction on the site. She asked when the parking lot would be open again as she believes the parking lot being closed has been the biggest issue regarding traffic and no parking on the street.

Scott Conrad, Project Manager for the Baha'i House of Worship, said the parking lot was closed at the request of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District (MWRD) whom the Baha'i House of Worship lease the land from. The MWRD closed the parking lot and parked all their construction vehicles in the lot which caused damage to the parking lot. Two weeks ago, the Baha'i House of Worship received a letter from MWRD that they have reached substantial completion. At this time, they are waiting for the permit for construction of the parking lot. They have received the permit for construction for the handicap ramp and they started construction on that project the day they received the permit.

Commissioner Schneider asked who would issue the permit for the parking lot.

Mr. Conrad said the Village of Wilmette will issue the parking lot permit. The MWRD has revised the parking lot plans during the permit process which is causing the permit process to take a little longer. The MWRD has also requested that the Baha'i House of Worship construct an embankment wall along the entire canal before the parking lot is constructed.

Commissioner Schneider asked how long the embankment wall and parking lot construction would take, once the permit is received.

Mr. Conrad said he believes all the construction will take four to five months to complete.

Kathleen Bandolik, 127 Linden Avenue, said in addition to the Baha'i project, there are two other large construction projects on Sheridan Road that are also impacting Linden Avenue. Cars and trucks park in "No Parking" areas on the street and they are not ticketed.

Police Chief Brian King asked if parking appears to be worse on the weekends.

Ms. Bandolik said weekends are worse as there are many wedding parties who come to the Baha'i to take pictures and the street is very congested.

Linda Dawson, 139 Linden Avenue, said her greatest concern is the safety factor on the street. The street is very narrow and the tour buses are very wide which may prevent a fire or emergency vehicle from coming down the street. She said the neighbors on Linden Avenue have been very patient and understanding but they are tired of not being able to park on their street.

Commissioner Schneider asked if parking in the area will still be a problem once the parking lot is completed.

Ms. Bandolik said she believes it will continue to be a problem as there are no security guards from the Baha'i to ask the buses and limos to move from the no parking areas.

Mrs. Rekenheler, 147 Linden Avenue, said she is very concerned about the drop off areas in front of the Baha'i House of Worship, as it is very congested on the weekends. She only has access from her house to the alley and many times the alley is blocked not allowing her to get out of the area. She would like to see reserved spaces for the residents to park on Linden Avenue so the alley is not blocked regularly.

John Rekenheler, 147 Linden Avenue, said he believes the neighbors in the area would benefit from some reserved parking spots on Linden Avenue. He would also like to see the "No Parking" areas enforced and believes that tour buses and limos

should not be allowed to park on Linden Avenue for safety reasons.

Martin Dawson, 139 Linden Avenue, said he does not believe all the parking issues will go away when the new parking lot is open as buses and limos were becoming a problem before the parking lot was closed. He also believes that people who are going to Gillson Park are also parking on Linden Avenue. He agrees with other neighbors that it would be helpful to have a few reserved spaces for neighbors on Linden Avenue, a time limit on parking in the area, and more regular, reliable enforcement on the street.

Mrs. Rekenheler said there are also commuters who park early in the morning on the street, take transportation and leave their cars parked all day.

Ms. Berger said the residential permit parking requirements that would allow the Village to give passes to the residents who live on the street, applies to business districts, commercial districts, public or private schools, colleges or universities or a mass transit facility so an institution or house of worship would not be qualified for residential permit parking unless there was a change to the Village Code.

Commissioner Schneider asked if the Baha'i House of Worship was considering providing security or traffic management personnel to control the problems in the area.

Mr. Gould said they still have the same number of security officers now as they have had in the past but they are not always monitoring the street. If they do see someone who is in parking violation they usually ask the person to move along or they will call the Police Department. He also noted that the tour buses and limos are not scheduled, they just show up so they are not able to plan for them.

Commissioner Schneider asked if they could have full time personnel on weekends to possibly help the parking in the area.

Mr. Conrad said they do have signage that directs visitors to their other parking lot across Sheridan Road and noted that they are concerned with pedestrian safety crossing Sheridan Road. He also said the large amount of truck traffic from construction for the past five years has caused damage and drainage problems on Linden Avenue.

Marty Wolf, 111 Linden Avenue, said she agrees with what all her neighbors have said. It has been very challenging to get in and out of her driveway onto the street with all the illegal parking on the street. She has called the Police Department many times and has seen very few tickets written for illegal parking in the area.

Chief King said on weekends the Police Department details officers to do traffic enforcement on the lakefront area and they write hundreds of tickets. The problem is when there is a warm weekend, the calls for service are relatively high.

Chief King said one of the things they could do immediately is make that zone the

enforcement for parking starting on the south end and working up to the lakefront over the next few weekends to see if more consistent enforcement will help. He also suggested that the Police Department could send an officer over to the construction sites on Sheridan Road to try to work with their employees regarding where they park during the day.

Commissioner Schneider said there were comments at the Village Board meeting from members of the Baha'i House of Worship that there are people parking in their lots that are not going to the Baha'i but they have no way to monitor that. He asked if it would be feasible in both parking lots to put a time limit on parking with signs that violators will be towed.

Ms. Bandolik said she believed that would cause more issues with parking on the street. She asked if it was possible for the Village to require permits for the buses and limos so that the Baha'i would know how many vehicles would be coming to visit on a specific day.

Chief King said there would be issues with permitting as the State Law tells them what can and cannot be regulated for the public with permits. He would like to start with enforcement first to see if that will help in the area.

Commissioner Schneider asked if it would be feasible to put time limits on street parking.

Chief King said it would be possible but might impact the neighbors on the street. He said the two large construction projects on Sheridan Road and the Baha'i parking lot being closed are causing parking issues now.

Ms. Berger said she agrees with Chief King regarding enforcement now. Once the construction projects are completed, Baha'i parking lot is open and traffic is more regulated, the residents' could submit a petition to the Commission if they still would like to see more regulation in the area.

Chairman Lilly said there seems to be a bad parking situation in the area now and he asked how they could deal with the situation right now.

Chief King said they would enforce existing regulations and have staff speak with both construction sites regarding where the employees are parking and if there are other options to park for them. He said there are regulations regarding idling vehicles and he could also try to impact that with enforcement. Chief King suggested having some police officers meet with Baha'i security staff on enforcement in the area.

Chairman Lilly said if Chief King is willing to commit to more stringent enforcement practices in the area regarding parking, vehicle idling, discussion with construction workers and meet with Baha'i security then that should help to ease the problems in the area at this time. He also asked staff to monitor commuter parking in the area.

The residents asked if they would be able to have parking restrictions for commuters.

Chief King explained the decision that came down from the Supreme Court that the public must have access to public streets unless they fall under certain conditions. There would have to be a commuter study conducted to see if Linden Avenue qualifies.

Chairman Lilly said he would also like have staff look at the signage on Sheridan Road to see if there are directional signs to the parking location across the street from the Baha'i.

Chief King summarized the direction of the Commission noting that the Police Department will start their parking enforcement campaign, deal with the idling vehicles, staff will meet with the construction personnel regarding parking, and meet with Baha'i staff regarding security issues.

Ms. Berger said engineering staff will look at signage and conduct a parking study.

Chairman Lilly said the Commission knows there is a significant issue in the Linden neighborhood and he hopes they can solve the issues in everyone's best interest. The Commission will follow up at a future meeting.

IV. DISCUSSION OF TRAFFIC CONTROL AT THE INTERSECTION OF 15TH STREET AND PRAIRIE AVENUE/SPENCER AVENUE

Mr. Manis said the Village has received requests from area residents to consider changing the intersection of 15th Street and Prairie/Spencer Avenue from a 2-way stop to a 4-way stop controlled intersection. The Village collected traffic and accident data and retained the services of Traffic Analysis and Design, Inc. (TADI) to complete a traffic study for this intersection to determine if a 4-way stop is justified.

Mr. Manis said Section 2B.07 of the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) outlined the procedures necessary to evaluate an intersection for multi-way stop control. The MUTCD is a federally regulated manual governing the placement of nationally standardized traffic control signs, traffic signal, pavement marking, etc. He said Peter Lemmon from TADI was here this evening to summarize the MUTCD criteria and results of the traffic study presented to the Commission.

Mr. Lemmon said the MUTCD applies everywhere in the United States not just the Village of Wilmette. He reviewed the report presented to the Commission noting that based on observations, installation of a traffic signal is unnecessary and is not otherwise planned; thus, all way stop control in anticipation of a traffic signal is not applicable at this location. He said there may be some other options to improve pedestrian safety in terms of signage. It is their recommendation not to install an all way stop.

Chairman Lilly asked if the weather had anything to do with the findings.

Mr. Lemmon said he had a mix of weather on the days he observed and drew the same conclusion on good and bad weather days.

Mr. Manis said staff reviewed five years of accident data and did not find any accident reports at this intersection. The data also did not indicate there were any problems with speeding on 15th Street, it has a brick paver surface and is a narrow street.

Liz Wosemann, 1516 Spencer, said she has four children under the age of 10 and none of them are allowed to go to the park by themselves because 15th Street allows parking on the west side all the way to corner, which is a sight issue. The children cannot see around cars to cross the street unless they step out into the street which is not safe as the cars speed down the street. The street is very busy.

Sherri Dort, 1539 Spencer, said between four homes on the street, there are 11 children under the age of 6. She said all the parents are very concerned about the safety of the children as the cars go down the street very fast and children are unpredictable. She does not understand why a four way stop sign would be a liability.

Mr. Lemmon said when a stop sign is installed in a neighborhood and it does not meet the MUTCD criteria, people get used to stopping, note that there is no traffic in the area and go right through the stop sign. They have also determined that if there are stop signs at every intersection, motorists tend to speed up between stop signs to make up lost time.

Chief King said he agrees with Mr. Lemmon's comments that due to safety they follow the MUTCD criteria regarding the use of stop signs.

Ms. Berger said the Engineering Department receives requests for stop signs on a regular basis for the same reason neighbors are requesting one at 15th Street. She said the purpose of stop signs is strictly for right of way control, not for speeding. She said they always follow up with a traffic study that looks at speed and volume. The threshold for whether or not there is a true speeding problem, is 7 miles per hour over the posted speed limit which is measured by the 85th percentile speed, 85 percent of the cars are travelling at or below that target speed limit. In this case, the study shows well below that.

A resident asked why there are speed bumps two blocks away and there is no school or park in that area.

Ms. Berger said that street met the criteria for speed bumps. If 15th Street has more than 1200 cars per day, then that would meet the warrant for volume or the 7 miles per hour over posted speed for the speed warrant and if they meet one or

both of those warrants then the neighbors could submit a petition to get on the list for traffic calming. It is a very difficult process to get funding for speed bumps. It took the neighboring street over 6 years to get funding for speed bumps.

Gretchen Cappiello, 801 15th Street, said she lives right at the intersection of the street. She said the street has a cut through problem but the main issue is the morning hours to cut through or drop children off at McKenzie School. She said there are children walking to school and many activities at Vatman Park so there are many pedestrian and vehicular conflicts. She would be interested in hearing whatever solutions there are for the area so everyone can work together.

Commissioner Schneider asked if it was feasible to put up signs that say "stop when pedestrians are present" at the intersections on 15th Street.

Ms. Berger said the Village Board and Transportation Commission have been concerned about pedestrian safety and have been doing a pilot study on how to make Wilmette more pedestrian friendly at intersections and crosswalks. There is also a sensitivity to the amount of signage in Wilmette so staff is taking an incremental and thoughtful approach to putting up signs that they know will be effective and compliant.

Mr. Lemmon said studies have shown that over the years motorists are becoming more aware of the "stop for pedestrian" signage and are stopping.

Commissioner LeMoyne said there is an unmarked crosswalk that goes across Prairie Avenue to Vattman Park and asked how a motorist is supposed to know to stop.

Mr. Lemmon said the crosswalk could be striped in or the crosswalk at that location could be removed and people could be encouraged to cross the street at the intersection.

Ms. Berger suggested having the crosswalk watched by an intern before monies are spent to remove the curb cuts from the crosswalk.

Chairman Lilly said the Commission was not going to recommend a 4-way stop sign for the intersection of 15th Street and Prairie/Spencer Avenues but they will include the intersection as they look at other pedestrian improvements especially since the intersection is next to a school and a park.

V. DISCUSSION OF TRAFFIC CONTROL AT THE INTERSECTION OF 12TH AND LAKE AVENUE

Mr. Manis said the Village has received requests from area residents to consider changing the intersection of Lake Avenue and 12th Street from a 2-way stop to a 4-way stop controlled intersection. The situation is similar to the previous request but there higher volumes at this intersection. Some of the warrants

came close so staff did a little more in depth traffic analysis as far as data collection.

Mr. Lemmon reviewed the data report presented to the Commission noting that they utilized pedestrian/bicycle observation and vehicular count information to evaluate the intersection. He stated that at this time, it does not appear that a traffic signal is justified at the location.

Tara Vanderkamp, 1130 Lake Avenue, said there is more traffic on the weekends in the area and it is difficult for people to navigate across four lanes.

Chairman Lilly asked if Ms. Vanderkamp sees the problem as a pedestrian issue.

Nate Vanderkamp, 1130 Lake Avenue, said they see it more as a pedestrian issue.

Ms. Vanderkamp said there is also a school bus stop at 12th Street and Lake Avenue and cars travel quite fast in the area.

Brenda Schumacher, 1221 Lake Avenue, said she believes cars that speed are a big issue in the area. She said drivers are distracted coming from the Metra station and there is a lot of activity at the intersection.

Robert Phillips, 1123 Lake Avenue, asked if there were any accident reports from cars pulling out of 12th Street into Lake Avenue turning west against traffic.

Mr. Lemmon said there were 3 accidents in 2013, 1 in 2014 and none in 2012. There was a mix of different types of accidents regarding cars turning and visibility. He said the Commission could look at visibility concerns at the intersection.

Chairman Lilly said the area between Green Bay Road and Lake Avenue is confusing regarding 2 lanes and 4 lanes. There is also a bike path and a pedestrian crossing right near the Metra station and he believes pedestrian volume is growing in the area.

Mr. Lemmon said they could review the striping on Lake Avenue to see what provides greater visibility for pedestrian crossing in the area.

Mr. Phillips said he has lived in the area for 32 years and he does not believe the pedestrian traffic has increased significantly but he does believe vehicles are travelling at a higher rate of speed. He believes the amount of car traffic will increase due to the increase of restaurants and growth of business in the Village Center. He would suggest reflective striping in the area and said the Police Department is doing a great job with speeding violations in the neighborhood.

Chairman Lilly said the Commission consensus seems to be to improve striping in the area and also look at some pedestrian improvements in the area.

VI. UPDATE ON THE COMPLIANCE ANALYSIS FOR THE “STOP HERE FOR PEDESTRIAN” SIGNS AT THE UNCONTROLLED CROSSWALK AT THE INTERSECTION OF WILMETTE AVENUE AND 15TH STREET.

Chairman Lilly asked Mr. Lemmon for an update on the final compliance analysis.

Mr. Lemmon said data was collected in October 2012, May 2013 and May 2014 as summarized in the report presented to the Commission. He said the compliance rate has increased over time as area motorists become accustomed to the new signs and as driver culture evolves to become more aware of pedestrian mobility rights. The compliance rate has gone up from 8% in 2012 to 38% in May of 2014. The hour by hour data shows only a few periods when most non-compliance took place.

Commissioner Schneider asked if Mr. Lemmon considered the numbers to be good.

Mr. Lemmon said the numbers are considered good given the location but he would like to see the numbers a little higher. He said the numbers at the Chestnut crossing near Plaza del Lago were over 60% but the signs there are more effective. He believes in another year or two there might be a more measurable benefit to the numbers at Wilmette Avenue and 15th Street and noted that the numbers have improved since 2012.

Chief King said they receive very few comments regarding the pedestrian signs but note that residents either love them or hate them. He said their goal is to encourage people to yield to pedestrians in crosswalks.

Commissioner Schneider asked if there would be guidelines regarding the placement of the enhancement signage.

Ms. Berger said they would like to have more pedestrian crossing enhancement signage but a policy still has to be developed.

VII. APPROVAL OF 2014/2015 SCHOOL CROSSING GUARD SCHEDULE

Chief King said each year the Wilmette Police Department conducts an annual assessment of crossing guard positions in the Village. Traffic Service Officer Ron Andrews is recommending no changes in the current crossing guard status. He is recommending more striping in the school areas which is included in the budget.

Chief King said that Highcrest Middle School has a unique crossing and over the years they have tried different approaches to assist with traffic flow, crossing of children safely and physical changes to the roadway. He would like to have

continuing discussions with the school officials and staff regarding the crossing there.

Commissioner Taylor asked about the protocol for school crossing guards.

Chief King said the Village of Wilmette has a very robust crossing guard program. The Village pays for crossing guards through 8th grade and noted that most municipalities do not pay for crossing guards after the primary grades. It is a very emotional issue for parents and expensive for the Village.

Commissioner LeMoyne made a motion to accept the report, seconded by Commissioner Schneider. The motion was approved by a unanimous voice vote.

The motion passed.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS.

Ms. Berger said there have been many complaints that the underpass is still closed after two years at the Gillson entrance due to work being done in the area by the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District (MWRD). Staff is working with MWRD to reopen the underpass for pedestrians and bicycles but in the meantime it has been suggested that a pedestrian crosswalk and signage be installed at the south entrance of Gillson Park. Staff is working to install these amenities.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Schneider motioned to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner LeMoyne 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 at 9:38 p.m.

Minutes Respectfully Prepared by Barbara Hirsch and Dan Manis.