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MEETING MINUTES

TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2016

7:00 P.M.

SECOND FLOOR TRAINING ROOM OF VILLAGE HALL

- Members Present: Commissioner Brendan McCarthy
Commissioner Susan Barton
Commissioner Libby Braband
Commissioner Isaac Gaetz
Commissioner Jill Hayes
- Members Absent: Chairman Pat Lilly
Commissioner Michael Taylor
- Staff Present: Brigitte Berger-Raish, P.E., Director of Engineering and Public Works
Russell Jensen, P.E., Village Engineer
Brian King, Police Chief
- Guests Present: Peter Lemmon, P.E., Kimley Horn & Assoc.
Garth Gustafson, 15 Prairie Avenue
Gretchen Cappiello, 801 15th Street
Mario Scozia, 1210 Lake Avenue
Jon Marshall, 822 Prairie Avenue
Lorene Thomas, 2228 Elmwood Avenue
Lauren Barlow, 2118 Elmwood Avenue

I. CALL TO ORDER.

Commissioner McCarthy called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. and welcomed those in attendance.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES; TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION MEETING OF MARCH 9, 2016.

Commissioner McCarthy directed the Commission's attention to the draft minutes of the Transportation Commission meeting of March 9, 2016. No comments were offered. Commissioner Braband moved approval of the minutes. The motion as seconded by Commissioner Gaetz. **The motion was approved by a unanimous voice vote.**

III. APPROVAL OF THE 2016/2017 SCHOOL CROSSING GUARD REPORT PRESENTED BY THE POLICE DEPARTMENT

Police Chief King, presented the annual school crossing guard report which did not recommend any changes for the 2016 / 2017 school year.

Commissioner Hayes moved to keep the crossing guard schedule the same for school year 2016 / 2017. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Barton. **The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.**

IV. 2015-2016 TRAFFIC CALMING SUMMARY

Village Engineer, Russ Jensen, presented the summary of eligible traffic calming candidates conducted since the fall of 2015 to the present, based on requests from constituents for consideration. There have been about 20 requests for studies initiated by residents, via our website. Staff conducts studies noting traffic volumes, speed and traffic accident history to determine if these locations are eligible for traffic calming. In the distributed packet is a list of eligible candidate locations: 100 block of Prairie Avenue, 1900-2200 blocks of Kenilworth Avenue, 1900-2000 blocks of Thornwood Avenue, 1900-2200 blocks of Elmwood Avenue, 2000 block of Greenwood Avenue, 300 block of Sunset Drive, 2000 block of Schiller Avenue and the 800 block of Park Avenue.

Mr. Jensen indicated traffic calming locations are eligible to move forward as stand-alone projects, however budget funding has not been provided since the 2008 recession. The other means to move them forward has occurred in conjunction with road construction. If the eligible candidate receives resident consent and a recommendation of the Transportation Commission, they are incorporated into the road program without the need for separate funding. Also included in the packet is information for identifying road program eligibility.

Director of Engineering and Public Works, Brigitte Berger-Raish advised that because the Village Board has not approved a separate line item budget for traffic calming for FY 2017, that doesn't mean that next year they won't. Right

now the sole funding mechanism is rolling the traffic calming measure into the road program, which could change next year. It was a difficult budget year and the Village Board focused more on roads and sewers, rather than discretionary spending.

Commissioner McCarthy asked when the Village notifies the residents that a street may be re-established as a brick street.

Mr. Jensen responded that the Village reaches out to residents generally the year before construction as staff programs the street in the program.

Lorene Thomas, 2228 Elmwood, asked what types of traffic calming devices are available.

Mr. Jensen responded that examples include speed bumps, lane striping, curb bump-outs and lane meandering. A lot of calming effects are visually driven.

Ms. Berger-Raish advised that signage and striping and moving parking around are more economical options. The more structural the measure the more expensive – e.g. needing to hire a contractor to move curb.

Ms. Thomas, 2228 Elmwood, said she has seen a huge increase in traffic when the configuration on Lake Avenue changed and a couple other changes nearby. Can we put a sign saying no-right-turn during certain hours to help alleviate the congestion for SB traffic on Ridge onto Lake?

Ms. Berger-Raish responded that traffic has to go somewhere, so restricting traffic on Elmwood will likely push traffic to the north. We can look at the whole neighborhood solution for Kenilworth Gardens because it's certainly all tied together. The Commission would not recommend restricting turning movements without understanding the impacts to the surrounding neighborhood.

Ms. Thomas recommended to redirect the traffic anyway because they've been dealing with this traffic for over 10 years. Our street isn't a neighborhood street any longer, it feels more of a through-street.

Commissioner Barton said that Elmwood does stand out as having a very high 85th percentile speed. Have we done any targeted enforcement?

Chief King thought the Lake and Ridge intersection may be targeted for re-engineering.

Ms. Berger-Raish advised there are no plans for intersection changes to Lake and Ridge.

Ms. Thomas asked if there's something we can do to prevent neighbors from parking all over the place and to keep traffic from driving down the street. Any suggestion that's not a re-configuration of the street or new signage?

Chief King indicated the volume of traffic is a bigger issue than speed.

Mr. Jensen advises that traffic studies are done during weekdays for 3 days in a row to determine peak issues which are typical of morning and evening rush hour.

Chief King indicated in terms of the speed, he asked for the data and it shows a very large number of vehicles travelling over 75 mph which means the sensors may have malfunctioned. We can put sensors down in the spring and to obtain better readings.

Commissioner Hayes inquired about striping the parking lanes. Visually, striping creates a narrowing effect which can slow traffic.

Ms. Thomas asked the Village to do what it can in a cost-effective manner to make it safer. There are families with little kids on our street.

Ms. Lauren Barlow, 2118 Elmwood, asked a question to the Police Chief regarding ticketing speeding offenders. She wanted to follow up because she has not heard back from Police. What do those sensors do?

Police Chief Brian King advises said the sensors track car volume and speed. Road sensors are more successful to do a survey on the road, whereas the trailer is more visible enforcement. We are going to do something in the interim based on peaks and we will do some targeted enforcement to start the perception so drivers slow down.

Garth Gustafson, 157 Prairie, has been on Prairie over 25 years and has seen a lot of changes. Traffic volume gets worse every year, particularly when Green Bay Road was reconfigured and during the rush hours. Traffic lights along Green Bay Road exasperate the problem. He sees traffic coming down Prairie from Park to get around Green Bay Road to avoid those 2 traffic lights and continue southbound or northbound. Primarily it is worse at night. His question is can the Village alleviate the project by changing the traffic light pattern?

Ms. Berger-Raish said that it's actually better than it was. We received a federal grant to redo the signals at Lake, Central and Wilmette in 2009. The signal timing was changed to be more efficient. We had to get an order through the Illinois Commerce Commission to get the signals re-timed because the signals are coordinated with the railroad.

Mr. Gustafson said we should close off streets like Prairie to eliminate cut-through traffic. We could do the same at Park and farther west because people look for ways to save time. He asked if we would consider cameras and signs (e.g. no right turn on red), and this should alleviate some of the problem to give us back our neighborhood streets again.

Police Chief King said he has observed cut-through traffic in that neighborhood because people are trying to avoid the train. Most of the violators are from the neighborhood. He indicated the violation rate today is lower than it used to be prior to 2009.

Commissioner Gaetz said he used to live in Old Town, Chicago, where streets do not follow the Chicago grid. The result is there aren't many people cutting through the streets in that neighborhood. It does seem to work.

A brief discussion ensued regarding the operation of the traffic signals on Green bay Road.

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

Mr. Jensen indicated the Village received a resident request to re-review traffic control (specifically a 4-way stop) at the intersection of Lake Avenue and 12th Street. The previous request was made in 2013 which also was for a 4-way stop. The Village engaged Traffic Analysis & Design, Inc. (TADI) who determined the all-way stop control warrant criteria was not met. These findings were presented to the Transportation Commission at their meeting on June 23, 2014, and the Transportation Commission consensus was to improve striping in the area and look at some pedestrian improvements in the area.

The Village retained the services of Kimley-Horn and Associates to evaluate the traffic control and roadway configuration options for the intersection of 12th Street and Lake Avenue and Lake Avenue from the railroad tracks east to Wilmette Avenue. Mr. Peter Lemmon of Kimley-Horn is here to present his findings.

Mr. Lemmon said he reviewed the traffic count data from this past year and re-checked the warrants to see if the volumes met the different criteria for an all-way stop. The volumes do not meet the criteria to satisfy the warrant requirements. They also looked at crash history and whether an all-way stop or traffic signal would have resulted in fewer accidents.

We began to identify some of the key issues and came up with some ideas. He showed a diagram to the attendees. Currently, there is approximately 21 feet in

each direction to create 4 lanes. In the new concept, the 4 lanes would be merged to 2 lanes at the intersection of 12th. This effectively starts to slow down traffic due to the narrowness.

Commissioner McCarthy mentioned that consolidation of the Green Bay trail and separate pedestrian crossings across Lake Ave. at 13th Street into one crossing might be better if the traffic lanes are narrowed from two to one.

Mario Scozia, 1210 Lake, said he lived here for 27 years and after the work on the Edens Expressway, everyone found Lake Ave. to be a shortcut. Most drivers aren't Wilmette residents. He does not want to add a traffic light. A problem already exists west-bound by the RR tracks as it narrows down and it's a nightmare in the morning. A stop sign solution may be better.

Mr. Lemmon said going westbound, merging into the one lane is probably within 100-150' past the BP station where everyone is trying to get down to one lane. We have 475' there to complete this transition.

Commissioner Braband commented this is a low-cost solution. There's street parking in front of a townhome area which is new on Lake Street.

Mr. Lemmon said the parking will slow traffic down. The 45-to-1 taper is based on speed, which is an IDOT standard. The eastbound narrowing goes down to an 11' travel lane. The westbound side will remain the same to prevent vehicle stacking. Most (80-85%) traffic is using the center lane anyway, and the queue forms up mostly in the inside lane first.

Commissioner Hayes inquired about turns from eastbound Lake to 12th Street.

Mr. Lemmon said that during his observations, on occasion right hand turns needed to yield to a pedestrian crossing 12th Street. For traffic turning left, there were fewer conflicts observed with pedestrians.

Commissioner McCarthy asked for any other thoughts from the Commission.

Ms. Berger-Raish said that if the Commission recommends to move forward on an incremental basis to do striping, we would send letters with diagrams to the all the impacted neighbors. It's not that expensive, but it's more than our 2017 budget allows. However, we can recommend to approve the additional costs in 2017 without waiting another calendar year.

Commissioner Braband made a motion for staff to propose the Lake Avenue road diet striping plan to the Municipal Services Committee for funding and implementation in 2017. Commissioner Barton seconded. **The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.**

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

Mr. Jensen said that the intersection has east-west control. The request is for a four-way stop. Some concerns brought up by the residents about the previous review and study include a lot of pedestrian traffic was unaccounted for because of the park and previous counts had not taken into account the high pedestrian activity during the weekends. Again, staff asked Kimley Horn to look at the information collected so far and to give us recommendations – should we consider a 4-way stop or something else? Staff completed a 6-day count (Tuesday through Sunday) to get the vehicle counts over a weekend. Kimley Horn supplemented the vehicle counts with pedestrian counts for merging purposes and to assess if the combination was more significant. The merged volumes do not warrant a 4-way stop at the intersection. At this point, the recommendation is not to change the existing traffic control.

Commissioner Hayes said the previous counts were from November. She heard from several residents that November isn't representative of the issue of concern. The Village counts should include September or October when school is in session and park activity counts in May is because youth soccer starts in April. She agrees the data doesn't show it, but supports additional counts.

Mr. Lemmon said that improving visibility is better than stop signs. Maybe we can stripe some of the parking to have clear lines of sight to make the crossing shorter.

Chief King said he agrees that recounting is necessary. The studies are clear and the violation rates are higher so pedestrians are less safe.

Mr. Lemmon said that even if the counts doubled, we still wouldn't fulfill the criteria to install a 4-way stop.

Bob Dixon, 1539 Lake, said parents should pay more attention to their children crossing the street for park access.

Gretchen Cappiello, 801 15th, said the parking was moved back in front of our house which was a big improvement. She wanted to go back to 2013 after the Village installed the highlighted traffic crossing at Lake. There was some talk of looking to see if additional signage can be added to highlight the crosswalk. Currently the crosswalk is a dark paver. Everyone is rushing down 15th to school. Drivers don't recognize when pedestrians have the right-of-way. Please consider adding better markings for the crosswalk.

Ms. Berger-Raish said the challenge of crosswalks on brick pavers is you can't stripe them.

Mr. Lemmon said we can recommend a sign with a downward arrow. It's a trade-off – do you fill with asphalt instead? Raising visibility is the issue. Also, children and seniors are more vulnerable, so we need to pay special attention to them. There isn't a discount on the warrants for age or size. However, lines of sight can be improved to account for them. Part of this comes down to culture – over time in Wilmette we are becoming more used to pedestrians in the crosswalks. People now are getting used to pedestrians in the roadway. Additional stop signs aren't the right solution.

Jon Marshall, 822 Prairie, said he lives at the southeast corner for 18+ years. This intersection has many close calls, being right next to the park, in the afternoon hours and weekends. Children are going to the park and to school. Drivers use Prairie to cut through the neighborhood on their way to work, and they save themselves 3 traffic lights. They speed through and take the corners very quickly. It's scary to see a lot of close calls. Please take into account how much of the traffic count are children.

Commissioner McCarthy asked the Commission for their opinion.

Commissioner Braband said she would like speed data on 15th because some people are talking about speed being the issue. Maybe we need more direct and targeted enforcement.

Commissioner Gaetz asked if another crosswalk guard can be added.

Police Chief King said this would require pulling a guard from a different location which is a complicated process.

Commissioner Braband said that we are creating an informational video to highlight how to not be in a hurry so much. We are collecting data real-time around schools and violations. It'll be shown at curriculum night and notices will be posted on walls. It's an educational tool to show the nanny, grandma, grandpa, and the children - to remind drivers to be safer drivers. We are seeking grant money and PTO money.

Commissioner Braband made a motion recommending to make visibility enhancements, targeted enforcement and education. Commissioner Hayes seconded. **The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.**

VII. TRAFFIC CONTROL AT THE INTERSECTION OF LAKE AVENUE AND 16TH STREET

Mr. Jensen indicated a resident requested traffic control on Lake Avenue and 16th Street by means of a traffic control signal or 4-way stop. The study analysis does not support either of those measures. No previous outreach was on file regarding this location. The communication from the resident lacked additional information on why the request was being made.

Commissioner Braband said she lives on Greenwood and 15th/16th and she doesn't see what the issue is at this intersection.

Ms. Berger-Raish said that there were 3 resident e-mails opposed to this request.

Bob Dixon, 1539 Lake, said he has lived there for over 25 years and sees no issue at this intersection.

Commissioner Braband said there is no way to coordinate signals. The train comes at its schedule. There's already a backup issue on Lake Ave and this would exacerbate the situation. This request is not supported.

Ms. Berger-Raish indicated no motion is needed.

Lauren Barlow, 2118 Elmwood, said there are many vehicles using Elmwood and she has seen school buses going 40 mph. Perhaps shortening the length of the red light at Lake and Ridge would be a solution to the Elmwood traffic.

Commissioner Braband said she'll speak to the District transportation coordinator to discuss the speeding bus situation.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

Ms. Berger said that Phase I engineering was stalled about a year on Locust Road, so construction will be postponed to late 2018. She added that for the Skokie-Hibbard Federal Grant project, the IDOT letting is scheduled for March 2017 and there is a summer construction start for that intersection project. The Central Avenue STP project is estimated at \$3 million and the Phase I open house had 100 participants. In the spring, the results of the open house survey questionnaires for pedestrian and bike accommodations will be shared.

V. NEW BUSINESS

None.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner McCarthy moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Braband. 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 8:54 p.m.

Minutes Respectfully Prepared by R. Jensen