

WEST LAFAYETTE TRAFFIC COMMISSION

WEST LAFAYETTE CITY BUILDING

WEST LAFAYETTE, INDIANA

TIME: 5:00 pm, Tuesday, May 21, 2013

PLACE: Lower Level Conference Room

PRESENT:

Dave Buck	Eddie VanBogaert	Vicki Burch
Chris Leroux	David Downey	Jim Knapp
Karen O'Farrell	Andrew Hirsch	Larry Wood
Kumares Sinha	Kathleen Mills	Boudewijn van Gelder
Larry Preo		

VISITORS:

Ben Anderson	Kristi Smith	Michael Susong
Aaron Madrid	Thomas Moffett	Michael Dick
Robert Schmidt	Tim Balensiefer	Susan Schechter
Sophia Voravong		

Chairman Sinha brought the meeting to order and determined there was a quorum. Mr. Preo made a motion to approve the minutes from the March 19, 2013 meeting. Mr. Hirsch seconded the motion and the minutes were approved as written.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Several people came to the meeting today to discuss the 3 feet safe distance bicycle ordinance. The following people made public comments:

1. Susan Schechter – Susan lives in Lafayette and works in Purdue Research Park. She bikes to work most days and is in support of the ordinance. She wanted to commend West Lafayette for their excellent bicycle facilities. She feels the ordinance is a great step forward in protecting the cyclists.
2. Aaron Madrid – Aaron is one of the founders of Bicycle Lafayette and is in support of the ordinance as well. He feels the bicycle ordinance is important because it reinforces that bicycles belong on the road the same as any other vehicle. He thinks it will also help promote motorists and bicyclists to work together to make the roads a better place and West Lafayette a more bicycle friendly community. He feels like the biggest issue with cyclists and drivers is that it comes down to respect on both parts, but with this ordinance and education, the community can work together. He stated a motorist was struck and killed in Lafayette recently, and because of this, a proposed ordinance will be going before the Lafayette City Council next month.
3. Michael Dick – Michael wanted it to be known that he supports Aaron's statements.
4. Ben Anderson – Ben stated that awareness is a good thing, but with so many new people coming into our community each year because of Purdue, they will most likely not know about the ordinance and it will be hard to enforce it. He questions whether we need this ordinance or simply more awareness and education. He believes the police will have a hard time enforcing this ordinance, especially if Lafayette and Tippecanoe do not have something similar in place.

End of Public Comment

OLD BUSINESS:

Update on Current Projects:

Northwestern Avenue: Mr. Buck stated that for the segment of road from Yeager going south to Lindberg, we have received bids for road work and Milestone Contractors was the lowest bid. Work has already begun. Milestone has been restricting traffic down to one lane each direction in the middle of the road with a double yellow center line, and they have been working on the outside of the road in that area putting in new storm structures and curbs. Mid to late June, they will be moving traffic out onto the edges of the road so they can work in the middle of the road.

At this same time, INDOT has hired Rieth-Riley Construction Co. to do concrete curb repairs, pavement repairs, handicap ramp installations, and concrete patching for anything currently signed US 52 north of our project at Lindberg Road up to US 52. They are also taking care of the overpass. Currently, they are patching the road and it will get overlaid later this summer. They are also working their way from River Road all the way up to US 52 patching and redoing curbs and sidewalks.

Several utility companies have also been doing main replacements along Northwestern Avenue at the same time these other projects are going on. In the Hills and Dales neighborhood, along Northwestern Avenue, Indiana American Water is installing a new water main on the west side of the street. Vectren is also replacing some mains in this area.

Chairman Sinha asked if all of the work going on was coordinated through the city. Mr. Buck stated that the city has worked with INDOT, the developments and the utility companies to make sure everyone hits the completion date of the July 4th holiday so that INDOT can come in to the city's portion of Northwestern and start paving.

Mr. Preo asked Mr. Buck why there were lane restrictions at the roundabout at Yeager and Northwestern if the road work was being done near the intersection of Lindberg and Northwestern. Mr. Buck stated the restriction was put in place because there was not adequate room to taper vehicles down to one lane prior to entering the road construction near Lindberg and Northwestern. It was done as a safer way to channel traffic into one lane.

NEW BUSINESS:

Bike Month Proclamation: Mr. Hirsch announced that May has been proclaimed as Lafayette/West Lafayette Bike Month. Mr. Hirsch stated that two ceremonies were held recently, one in Lafayette and one in West Lafayette, proclaiming May as "Bike Month". Representative Sheila Klinker presented Mr. Hirsch with a certificate from her office commemorating the day. Mr. Hirsch stated Mayors Dennis and Roswarski, as well as Representative Klinker, are very supportive of what the community is doing to support bicycling efforts in our cities.

Ordinance No. 12-13, An Ordinance Establishing A Safe Passing Distance Between Motor Vehicles and Bicycles: Chairman Sinha introduced this topic by stating he had done some research on passing ordinances. There are twenty-two states that have 3 feet as a safe distance for passing. Pennsylvania has a 4' ordinance and Virginia has a 2' ordinance. If interested, this information can be found at the National Conference of State Legislators website at <http://www.ncsl.org>.

Ms. Burch asked Deputy Chief Leroux if he knew how many car/bicycle accidents there have been in the city due to cars driving too close. Deputy Chief Leroux did not know at this time, but he will pull the crash data and get back with her. Ms. Burch also asked what is the "3 feet rule" and what is the responsibility of the bicyclist to follow it. Mr. Hirsch stated it is 3 feet from the cyclist. Ms. Burch thinks it would be a good idea to include bicycle safety and awareness information in the student packets that are handed out in the fall. Ms. Burch also felt that having signs up as you enter the city limits would be a good idea, too. Mr. Knapp added that Purdue is also pushing a bicycle friendly campus.

Ms. O'Farrell made a recommendation to the city council that paragraph three of the bicycle ordinance be deleted because she feels it will be obsolete in future. She further added that in light of balancing the biker and vehicular traffic, what about inserting language into the ordinance that states bicycles will be operated in bicycle lanes where provided by the city. Mr. Hirsch then asked if there was a bicycle lane, is a cyclist legally obligated to ride in that bicycle lane. Deputy Chief Leroux does not believe it is illegal, but he will do more research to make sure.

Mr. Hirsch asked Deputy Chief Leroux if he thought this ordinance will be as hard to enforce as the no texting while driving law. Deputy Chief Leroux believes it will be enforceable, but, at times, could be difficult if there is not enough evidence to support a ticket.

Mr. VanBogaert stated he will take all of the commission's suggestions and comments to the city attorney and follow-up with the commission at a later date.

Mr. Hirsch made a motion to support Ordinance No. 12-13, An Ordinance Establishing A Safe Passing Distance Between Motor Vehicles and Bicycles. Ms. Mills seconded the motion and all were in favor of the intent of the ordinance.

Dodge Street Loading Dock at 720 Northwestern: Tim Balensiefer with T-Bird Design Services came to the meeting today to discuss a possible change in the loading dock design off of Dodge Street. The original plans show the loading dock is designed to be a WB50 loading dock, which is an L-shape loading dock, but he is asking for that to be modified to a WB67 design, which is an end dock loading area. The reason is because some of the delivery companies do not have a truck small enough to fit in to the loading dock as it is designed on the plans. The developer is also requesting a larger door to accommodate these deliveries. They are also asking to restrict traffic on Dodge Street from 6:00 am to 12:00 pm to facilitate their deliveries. Mr. Balensiefer showed an exhibit of the proposed truck path. Mr. Preo then asked why the inability of these vendors to provide a smaller truck should warrant changing the loading dock and potentially taking away parking spaces on Dodge Street. Mr. Buck stated this was something that we should have been aware of before approval of the original design. Chairman Sinha asked Mr. Buck to review and recommend a solution.

Chairman Sinha made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Buck seconded the motion and the meeting was adjourned.

NEXT MEETING: 5:00 pm, Tuesday, July 16, 2013, Council Chambers.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "D.M. Buck". The letters are stylized and connected.

David M. Buck, P.E.
Public Works Director

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