

WEST LAFAYETTE TRAFFIC COMMISSION
WEST LAFAYETTE CITY BUILDING
WEST LAFAYETTE, INDIANA

TIME: 5:00 pm, Tuesday, September 15th, 2015

PLACE: West Lafayette Public Library / Walnut Room

PRESENT: Dave Buck Vicki Burch Karen O'Farrell
Chris Leroux Jim Knapp Andrew Hirsch
Larry Wood Kumares Sinha Doug Payne
Boudewijn van Gelder

VISITORS: Erin Cooper Ed Garrison Michael Susong
Charles Tritschler Lauren Bruce Zachary Baiel

Chairman Sinha brought the meeting to order at 5:00pm and determined there was a quorum.

Professor van Gelder made a motion to amend the minutes from the July 20th, 2015 meeting to include the direct quote of a statement he made regarding parking in the Sunset Ridge Subdivision as well as amend the name change on two of the motions that were made to reflect who made what motion. With those changes made, Professor van Gelder made a motion to approve the amended minutes, Mr. Hirsch seconded the motion and the minutes were approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None.

NEW BUSINESS:

Meridian Street Study: Mr. Ed Garrison with the City Engineers Office came before the commission to present the Meridian Street Study Update. Mr. Garrison stated that it was requested at the last meeting that the Engineers Office conduct an additional speed count on the straight portion of Meridian Street between Vine Street and Salisbury Street. A third location has been included and at this location Mr. Garrison stated that the 85th percentile speed was 31 mph, and that the average speed was 26 mph, which is consistent with the existing recommended speed limit of 25 mph.

Mr. Garrison stated that the Engineering Department did an additional study looking at stopping sight distances and how they are affected by the curve in the road on Meridian Street. The study focused on the intersection at Vine Street and Meridian Street, and showed that there were several conflict points, such as parked cars, trees and shrubbery.

Mr. Garrison suggested removing the parking spaces shown on map (highlighted in red), adding curve ahead signage to warn drivers of the curve, and possibly do trimming to some of the trees so that drivers can see around the corner better.

Mr. Buck stated that the Engineering Department would also recommend adding additional yellow curb at each one of the red car spots on the map provided.

Chairman Sinha asked how many parking places would be lost if this recommendation passes, to which Mr. Payne stated that 18 parking places would be lost. Professor van Gelder stated that the parking spaces shown on the report are very dense and that cars do not typically park that close, therefore it would likely be less than 18 parking spaces.

Chairman Sinha asked how many cars typically park in this area to which Professor van Gelder responded that these are the first parking spots close to Purdue that are more than 2 hour parking, so they are very heavily used.

Mr. Buck stated that the city also looked at crash data and accident history at the intersection of Grant Street and Meridian Street, and noticed a significant number of accidents in the last five years.

Mr. Buck stated that he has requested funding from the West Lafayette Redevelopment Commission for pedestrian safety improvements along Meridian Street from Salisbury Street to Northwestern Avenue. Mr. Buck stated that if that budget is approved, then the City could potentially do a larger project including new sidewalks and lighting.

Ms. Lauren Bruce who lives at 315 Meridian Street, was present and stated that the original purpose for bringing this to the committee's attention was because of the accidents that were occurring in front of 308 Meridian Street. Ms. Bruce asked if there was anything else the city could do to keep cars out of that specific yard.

Professor Van Gelder stated that up to this point, most have been hit and run accidents that have not been reported.

Deputy Chief Leroux stated that from the research done by the Engineering & Police Departments, he believed that there were 8 total accidents in the last five years within the internal intersections in the neighborhood. Mr. Buck stated that if the accidents are not reported, then it is hard to keep track of the volume of accidents and why the accidents occurred in the first place.

Ms. Bruce questioned if the neighborhood would need to report every accident in the future, to get more accurate data to which Chairman Sinha agreed. Mr. Buck stated that currently, the City does not have enough real data to go off of to make a regulatory change to the intersection as significant and permanent as the proposed 4 way stop.

Chairman Sinha stated that he would recommend taking other precautionary measures such as the curve ahead signage and removing parking before the installation of a stop sign, because once you install a stop sign, you cannot take it out.

Mr. Charles Tritschler who lives at 304 Meridian Street was present, and asked if the commission could fill the public in on the research done by Professor Frickers class, to which Mr. Buck and Mr. Garrison replied that the city has not heard anything back from Professor Fricker.

Mr. Tritschler stated that the problem is not so much the speed and the average speed that covers a wide range, but the problem is found in the tails of the normal distribution. Mr. Tritschler stated that the tails involve very significant accidents. Mr. Tritschler also emphasized that the best thing about the stop sign proposal is that it is good for the school children. He also stated that he does not understand what the limitations for the school zones are. The school zone signs are only on Grant Street and Salisbury Street. Mr. Tritschler stated that the feeder streets are very important and that he commends the proposed solutions and believes that they will address the children walking to school concern, but it does not address the motorists late in the night driving wrecklessly.

Chairman Sinha stated that as a citizens committee, the committee feels that if these changes that were suggested by the Engineering Department do not help, then the committee would continue working on this issue with additional efforts.

Mr. Zachary Baiel who lives at 124 Connolly Street was present asked if the updates to Meridian Street are currently within the City Engineering Departments Budget or if these updates were part of a long term planning goal. Mr. Buck responded that the updates are part of a long term planning goal which is why the City made the request to the Redevelopment Commission for funding for a project on Meridian Street.

Mr. Baiel asked who the appropriate contact would be to encourage that this project be approved and move forward, to which Mr. Buck responded that the public can contact members of the Redevelopment Commission, City Council, as well as the Mayor to voice support of the projects and see improvements come to Meridian Street

Mr. Baiel questioned what recourse other homeowners would have if they find on-street parking a problem in front of their house since the City will be shifting 18 parking spots to the east to which Deputy Chief Leroux stated that the City Ordinance allows for neighborhoods to petition the city to be added to/or taken out of a Neighborhood Parking Permit zone.

Mr. Tritschler applauded Ms. Zina Brechinsky on her presentation at the July Traffic Commission as well as Ms. Lauren Bruce for putting up the cardboard sign that shows a child about to dart into the road along Meridian Street.

Chairman Sinha stated that collectively, the commission feels that the suggested recommendations will improve the safety on Meridian Street.

Chairman Sinha clarified that the city is proposing to add 25 mph speed limit signs, take out 18 parking spaces by adding additional yellow curb, as well as add curve ahead signage with an advisory speed of 15mph.

Professor van Gelder made a motion to approve the recommendations suggested by the Engineering Department, Ms. Burch seconded and the motion was approved.

Stop Sign off of Northwestern Avenue for driveway: Professor Sinha stated that while driving south on Northwestern Avenue in front of Mackey Arena, there is a stop sign posted for the driveway in front of Mackey Arena. Professor Sinha explained that this stop sign is visible from Northwestern Avenue, and that it is confusing for motorists.

Mr. Knapp stated that he would look into this matter with the Purdue Grounds Department.

OLD BUSINESS:

Parking at Mailboxes: Mr. Buck stated that work has begun on drafting an ordinance for the City Code to modify the parking regulations regarding Professor van Gelders concern about parking in front of mailboxes. Mr. Buck went on to explain that in the City Code Chapter 44 Section 44.03 talks about specifically prohibited locations. Mr. Buck suggested the addition of a 16th item be added saying that Motorists shall not be allowed to park so many feet on either side of a mailbox. Mr. Buck asked that the commission help determine the exact proposal.

Professor van Gelder stated that according to the study he did in 2014, he believes that the letter should state that motorists should not park 20 feet on either side of the mail box.

Mr. Payne stated that if there were 20 feet total taken away on either side of a mailbox, then that would take away much of the street parking in a lot of neighborhoods.

Professor van Gelder stated that according to the United States Postal Law the owner of the property is responsible for easy and safe access to their own mailbox, and that the delivery man does have the right to refuse delivery if there is no access to the mailbox.

Mr. Buck stated that some communities coordinate mailboxes to be on one side of the road, whereas other communities have central location to pick up mail. Mr. Buck suggested looking at how other neighborhoods and communities handle this type of conflict.

Mr. Payne stated that the location of the mailbox is critical, and suggested that homeowners move the mailbox by the driveway allowing more room for the delivery man. Deputy Chief Leroux stated that parking near or blocking a driveway is already prohibited which would help ensure mailboxes are always unblocked.

Professor Sinha suggested that the City Ordinance state that motorists should not obstruct mail boxes. Professor Sinha also suggested that the commission look for the proper wording for the letter as well as do some research to find what other communities do.

Lindberg Road Update: Mr. Hirsch asked for an update on the Lindberg Road reconstruction to which Mr. Buck responded that the City has hired an engineering firm to do a topographic survey and is also in the process of collecting information on existing utility information for Lindberg Road between Salisbury Street & Northwestern Avenue. Mr. Buck also stated that the Lindberg Road reconstruction was also submitted to the West Lafayette Redevelopment Commission as an item in the spending plan requests for 2016.

With no other business before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned.

2015/2016 MEETING INFORMATION:

- 5:00 pm, Tuesday, November 17 2015, West Lafayette Public Library, Walnut Room.
- 5:00 pm, Tuesday, January 19 2016, West Lafayette Public Library, Walnut Room.
- 5:00 pm, Tuesday, March 15 2016, West Lafayette Public Library, Elm Room.
- 5:00 pm, Tuesday, May 17 2016, West Lafayette Public Library, Elm Room.
- 5:00 pm, Tuesday, July 19 2016, West Lafayette Public Library, Walnut Room.
- 5:00 pm, Tuesday, September 20 2016, West Lafayette Public Library, Walnut Room.
- 5:00 pm, Tuesday, November 15 2016, West Lafayette Public Library, Walnut Room.

Respectfully Submitted,



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

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