

URBANA TRAFFIC COMMISSION
Tuesday, December 12, 2017

Approved February 13, 2018

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Harold "Dean" Hazen, City Council Member, Ward 6, Chair
Craig Shonkwiler, Assistant City Engineer
Sylvia Morgan, Chief of Police

MEMBERS ABSENT:

None

OTHERS PRESENT:

John Collins, Operations Manager, City of Urbana
Greg Rackauskas, 801 North Busey Avenue
Marshall Rackauskas, 801 North Busey Avenue
Ronald Durst, Durst Cycle and Fitness, 1112 West University Avenue
Tom Johnson, Facilities Services Director, Carle
Beth Beaty, Administrative Services Manager, City of Urbana
Dee Miles, 909 North Busey Avenue

The meeting began at 4:00 p.m.

Approval of Minutes:

Sylvia Morgan moved to approve the minutes of the October 10, 2017, meeting. Craig Shonkwiler seconded the motion. The Commission voted 3-0 to approve the minutes of the October meeting.

Additions to the agenda:

There were no additions to the agenda.

Public Input

Those wishing to provide input did so as items were discussed.

Unfinished Business

Item #1- Discussion of parking on streets bounded by Sunset Drive, Coler Avenue, Church Street and Lincoln Avenue.

Craig Shonkwiler summarized the discussion from the April 11, 2017, meeting regarding Carle employees parking on the street in the neighborhood bounded by Sunset Drive, Coler Avenue, Church Street and Lincoln Avenue. He discussed the outcome of a parking study conducted by the Engineering Division in October on a Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday during the periods before 7 a.m., during mid-morning, during mid-afternoon and after 7 p.m. He stated that he observed on-street parking and parking in the Champaign County Fairgrounds parking lot, the Vineyard Church

parking lot, and Crystal Lake Park streets and parking lots. Mr. Shonkwiler stated that general observations were difficult because Carle employees had varying work schedules, but there were some discernable parking patterns found in the area. He noted Carle employee parking on Coler Avenue and on Busey Avenue south of Fairview Avenue and on Hill Street west of Coler Avenue was heavy during the daytime. However, he stated that on-street parking on Coler Avenue and Linview Avenue north of Fairview Avenue was not heavy. He said that there did not appear to be employee parking within Crystal Lake Park. He mentioned that Urbana Park District had posted signs to restrict parking to park users only. He discussed parking in the nearby parking lots stating that there were approximately 40 cars parked in the Vineyard Church parking lot and 70% to 80% of the 204 stalls in the Champaign County Fairgrounds parking lot expansion east of Sunset Drive were occupied during his mid-day observations. Mr. Shonkwiler added that the data was not conclusive in pinpointing employees parking on the streets, but there were patterns that indicated that the vehicles may have belonged to Carle staff.

Tom Johnson said students and contractors working at Carle primarily used parking spaces in the Vineyard Church parking lot.

Dee Miles stated that she lived at 909 North Busey Avenue since 1979 and had extensive knowledge of the parking concerns. She had made additional observations on Thursday and Monday (December 7 and December 11) prior to the meeting. She indicated that the problem was worse, especially on Central Avenue. She noted that earlier she had observed 90 cars parked on the streets and that the number was now 108 cars parking in the neighborhood during the daytime. She observed on Monday there were nine vehicles with Carle parking stickers parked on the street and on Thursday, there were 11 vehicles. She said that her neighbor reported that Carle employees parked on Busey Avenue and completely filled the spaces in front of his home.

Marshall Rackauskas said that vehicles had cleared the street after 5 p.m. He asked if employees had to pay to park in the fairground and church parking lots.

Tom Johnson stated that employees did not have to pay to park in the Champaign County Fairgrounds or in the Vineyard Church parking lot. He said that some of those parking on the street might be Carle visitors. He said that the increase could be staff parking. He said that the smoking restrictions on the Carle campus might have resulted in some employees parking on the street so they could smoke in their vehicles.

Craig Shonkwiler said that parking on Coler Avenue could be visitors since he did not observe parked vehicles on the street all day. He saw more turnover on Coler Avenue than on any of the other streets. He added that he did not include Central Avenue in his study since there were many multi-family homes along that street. He said that if those numbers were included, it would be difficult to determine whether the vehicles belonged to residents or to Carle employees. Mr. Shonkwiler stated that Carle employees were not restricted from parking on City streets since it was legal for anyone to park on the street at this time.

Greg Rackauskas said that he lived at the corner of Hill Street and Busey Avenue and the proximity of his home to the Carle campus made the on-street parking desirable to employees. He stated that he drove around the neighborhood and was surprised by the number of empty spaces in the

fairgrounds and other Carle parking lots. He was concerned that the on-street parking would make crossing the street dangerous for pedestrians and that parked cars would promote drug activity. He contended that removing on-street parking would make the neighborhood safer.

Craig Shonkwiler asked if employees were told not to park on city streets.

Mr. Johnson said that he was not certain if the employees were told not to park on city streets, but he knew that they were told the locations where parking was provided.

Chair Hazen asked if there was sufficient parking for employees.

Mr. Johnson said that parking provided at the fairgrounds with the recent expansion and at the church was adequate. He added that without any restrictions, Carle administration had no recourse to prohibit employees from parking on City streets. He continued by saying Carle's parking facilities were reserved for their patients and there was some preferred parking that staff could rent for \$16 per month. He said parking was free in the fairgrounds and at Vineyard Church where security patrolled the lots and shuttle service was provided.

Marshall Rackauskas said that it was difficult to gentrify the area with parking being a concern. He asked if there could be parking available at other sites, such as the Family Video at Lincoln Avenue and Fairview Avenue.

Tom Johnson said that Carle was open to suggestions. He stated that crossing Lincoln Avenue was not an option as Carle administration was not comfortable directing employees across Lincoln Avenue because of the traffic volume on that street.

Dee Miles said that a two-hour parking restriction was suggested at the last meeting. She felt the parking situation was worse and asked what options were available.

Dean Hazen asked if a resident-only permit system could work.

Beth Beaty discussed the West Urbana parking system, which provided permits costing \$150 per year for residents to park on the street anytime. She said that residents could receive free daytime parking permits that will allow parking from 7 a.m. to 3 a.m. and that passes were available for evening and daytime guests. She added that the cost covered the implementation and enforcement of the program. Ms. Beaty discussed the North Urbana parking restrictions where parking was restricted to two hours during the day. She said the restrictions were enforced on a complaint basis when staff was available. She said there were some areas with two-hour parking restrictions that were regularly enforced to provide turnover in the parking spaces.

Greg Rackauskas asked if there could be restrictions prohibiting all parking on the street.

Mr. Shonkwiler said that there were some residents who parked on the street so restricting on-street parking might create problems for residents.

Ms. Beaty said that permit fees would pay for the program.

Sylvia Morgan mentioned that the fees might create a hardship for some residents.

Beth Beaty said that originally, North Urbana residents asked for the two-hour restrictions and then they asked that the enforcement be based on complaints. She cautioned that the restrictions might move the parking problem to south of University Avenue.

Craig Shonkwiler explained that if the permit system were instituted, it would be for the entire neighborhood, not for select streets. He added that City policy required 60% of the property owners sign a petition to approve of the restrictions before the item would be discussed by the Traffic Commission. Mr. Shonkwiler explained that parking restrictions requested by citizens that do not present safety issues would require a petition.

Marshall Rackauskas said that the parking problem was usually gone after 5 p.m. He felt that if the parking problem were contained, the neighborhood would improve. He asked if parking permits and two-hour parking restrictions could be implemented together.

Chief Morgan stated that the 3 p.m. to 3 a.m. parking restrictions would require a permit for residents to park on the street. She reaffirmed that residents could obtain free permits for daytime parking.

Ms. Beaty clarified that parking was not a problem in the evening. She said that if the permit system was approved residents could obtain a free pass to parking on the street from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Craig Shonkwiler said he observed vehicles parking in the area past 5 p.m. He said it was not clear whether those vehicles belonged to employees or residents.

Beth Beaty said that first-time permit holders would have to go to the City building to purchase their permits, but after the initial purchase, permits could be purchased on-line. She said that some residents in the West Urbana did not like the fact that they had to purchase permits to park overnight on the street.

Dean Hazen asked if the permit costs might be less since the area was smaller than the West Urbana parking zone.

Craig Shonkwiler stated that the permit costs offset the cost of enforcement. He added that the property owners who request the restrictions would be responsible for circulating the petition. He added that the City would prepare the petition and indicate the properties that were within the area.

Beth Beaty said that she could look at the pricing. She added that permit costs could be pro-rated based upon the amount of time the holder needed the permit.

Craig Shonkwiler said that restricting parking south of Fairview Avenue on Linview Avenue, Busey Avenue and Coler Avenue might push parking to other areas.

Sylvia Morgan said that restricting parking on streets might have some unintended consequences.

Mr. Shonkwiler suggested that those in attendance discuss possible solutions with their neighbors prior to circulating the petition as once the petition had been given to the requestor, the requestor had sixty days to obtain the signatures.

Dee Miles asked if the City could develop language that provided an explanation of the options before they begin talking to their neighbors.

Craig Shonkwiler said that he would work with Beth Beaty and the recording secretary to develop the language and allow those in attendance to review the summary.

Tom Johnson said that the restrictions might push employee parking to the fairgrounds since the majority of the staff work near that location.

John Collins said that the restrictions would reduce the number of vehicles parked on those streets, which would help with snow and leaf removal and street sweeping.

New Business

Item #2- Approval of 2018 Meeting Calendar.

Craig Shonkwiler moved to approve the 2018 meeting calendar.

Sylvia Morgan seconded the motion.

The Commission approved the motion 3-0.

Item #3- Discussion of pedestrian/bicycle signage on the northeast corner of University Avenue and Goodwin Avenue.

Chair Hazen moved Item #4 to Item #3 on the agenda since there was a member of the public in attendance to discuss pedestrian/bicycle signage on the northeast corner of University Avenue and Goodwin Avenue.

Dean Hazen mentioned there were three businesses that had doors opening onto the sidewalk along the east side of Goodwin Avenue. He asked if signage would be helpful in avoiding any future problems.

Ron Durst said that one tenant space was unoccupied at that time. He explained that a student riding a bicycle on the sidewalk along the east side of Goodwin Avenue north of University Avenue ran into an open door of one of the businesses located at 1112 West University Avenue. He said although the bicyclist was not injured, she shattered the glass in the door. He mentioned there were three doors along the west side of the building that opened into the sidewalk. He noted that a

bicycle lane (path) was located on the west side of Goodwin Avenue. He said many of the students living north of 1112 West University Avenue rode bicycles on the sidewalk to go to the parking structure on Goodwin Avenue. Mr. Durst suggested that the City paint the roadway to bring attention to the location of the bike path since the sidewalk along the east side of Goodwin Avenue was not wide enough to accommodate bicyclists or to install a bicycle lane on the east side of the street.

Craig Shonkwiler explained that University Avenue was under the State of Illinois' jurisdiction so the City would not be able to paint lines to direct cyclists to the multi-use path on the west side of Goodwin Avenue north of University Avenue. He added that there was not enough physical space on Goodwin Avenue north of University Avenue to install a bicycle lane on the street. He suggested the option of installing dismount zone warning signs on the sidewalk. Mr. Shonkwiler recommended adding warning signs and monitoring the area. He said that the sidewalk was not wide enough on the east side of Goodwin Avenue to accommodate bicyclists. If additional crashes occurred, he would then recommend an ordinance prohibiting bicycle riding on the sidewalk along the east side of Goodwin Avenue north of University Avenue. He showed signage used in Fort Collins, Colorado, as an example of how the dismount zone might appear on the sidewalk.

Dean Hazen said the signage on the sidewalk would probably be easier for bicyclists to see.

John Collins said that the templates could be purchase for \$300 to \$400, but once purchased, they could be used again.

Craig Shonkwiler said warning signs and painting the sidewalk could be implemented initially instead of passing an ordinance.

John Collins said that signage could be installed on the southeast corner of University Avenue and Goodwin Avenue to direct bicyclists to the bicycle path on the west side of Goodwin Avenue north of University Avenue.

Chief Morgan agreed that signage on Goodwin Avenue south of University Avenue would help bicyclists navigate through the intersection.

Craig Shonkwiler moved to paint dismount zone on the sidewalk along the east side of Goodwin Avenue from north of University Avenue to the parking structure for both northbound and southbound sidewalk traffic and to install appropriate signage indicating the location of the dismount zone.

Dean Hazen seconded the motion.

The motion was approved 3-0.

Craig Shonkwiler said that he would inform the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission of the Traffic Commission's decision so they would be aware of the bicycle dismount zone and continuation of education.

Item #4- Discussion of traffic control Kenyon Road and Cunningham Avenue.

Craig Shonkwiler reviewed the crash reports at the intersection. He said that there were no accidents, but motorists had reported narrow escapes. He said that there was a yield sign on private property for eastbound traffic, but no other yield signs at the intersection.

With the absence of crashes, Mr. Shonkwiler moved that no action be taken and staff continue to monitor the intersection.

Chief Morgan said the configuration of the roadway was confusing.

Mr. Shonkwiler said that it was not possible to install a stop sign for westbound traffic because it would create an overflow onto Cunningham Avenue (US Route 45), which was a major through street.

Sylvia Morgan seconded the motion.

The Commission approved the motion with a 3-0 vote.

With no other business at hand, the meeting was adjourned at 5:11 p.m.

The next regularly scheduled Traffic Commission meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 9, 2017, at 4:00 p.m. at the Urbana Public Works Department, 706 Glover Avenue, second floor conference room.

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara Stiehl
Recording Secretary