

APPROVED 8/7/12

URBANA TRAFFIC COMMISSION
Tuesday, June 19, 2012

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Dennis Roberts, City Council Member
Pat Connolly, Chief of Police
Joe Smith, Senior Civil Engineer

MEMBERS ABSENT:

None

OTHERS PRESENT:

Brad Gould, 506 East Main Street
Bill Benton, 1303 East Main Street
Jennifer Carlson, 106 Hartle Avenue
Janice Mitchell, 1401 East Main Street
Georgia Morgan, 804 West Nevada Street
Carl Larson, 411 East Mumford Drive
Brad Bennett, Senior Civil Engineer
John Collins, Operations Supervisor
Charlie Smyth, 806 South Coler Avenue
Katie Linnemann, Urbana Park District
Craig Shonkwiler, Senior Civil Engineer

The meeting began at 4:04 p.m.

Additions to the agenda:

There were no additions to the agenda.

Approval of Minutes:

Joe Smith moved to approve the minutes as read. Dennis Roberts seconded the motion. The Commission voted 3-0 to approve the minutes of the May 1, 2012 meeting.

Unfinished Business

Item #1- Discussion of parking restrictions on Hartle Avenue.

Joe Smith reported that an ordinance would be before Council that would restrict parking on both sides of Hartle Avenue from the centerline of Main Street to 70 feet south of the centerline of Main Street.

Dennis Roberts agreed that the restrictions would improve visibility at the intersection of Hartle Avenue and Main Street.

Janice Mitchell, director of the Urbana Neighborhood Connections Center (UNCC), stated that she had spoken with several neighbors and parents to try to improve parking around the center.

Brad Gould, president of the VFW Post 6289, said that the VFW post didn't mind UNCC staff parking along the white wall when there are no activities at the VFW. He was concerned about motorists speeding when dropping students at the UNCC. He said that many of the VFW patrons are elderly and cannot move quickly.

Janice Mitchell said that she would continue to communicate with parents and staff to reduce congestion on Hartle Avenue.

Joe Smith asked about the availability of the parking lot to the east of the UNCC building for parking.

Janice Mitchell said that the area was used as a basketball court. She added that the staff had used the grass lot to the south when other parking was not available.

Pat Connolly cautioned that once the signs were installed, there would be a police presence in the area to enforce the parking. He asked when peak hours were for the facility.

Ms. Mitchell said that traffic was heaviest between 4:30 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. and added that drop-off times were not a problem.

Jennifer Carlson from the Developmental Services Center (DSC) said that their staff meets once a month at 106 South Hartle Avenue to discuss their programs. She asked if their staff could use the VFW parking lot.

Mr. Gould said that they could use the lot as long as there were no events scheduled at the VFW during that time.

Bill Benton asked that the lot not be used when snow had not yet been removed. He said that the VFW pays to have snow removal in their lot, but it would be difficult for their contractor to remove the snow if vehicles were parked there.

John Collins said that the Operations Division would flag the no parking signs after they were installed to make motorists aware of the new signs.

Dennis Roberts recommended that no further action was needed. He said that if there were any additional problems, those could be discussed at a later date.

New Business

Item #2- Discussion of traffic on Lincoln Avenue at Nevada Street.

Joe Smith discussed the results of a traffic study performed on Lincoln Avenue between the eastbound leg of Nevada Street and the westbound leg of Nevada Street. Mr. Smith reported that

- Left turn volumes from southbound Lincoln Avenue onto eastbound Nevada Avenue were in the 3 to 15 vehicles per hour range during the day or approximately 3% of the total volume for southbound traffic.
- The peak period of left turns was from 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. and totaled 28 vehicles or approximately one vehicle every 2 minutes.
- Right turns into eastbound Nevada Avenue from northbound Lincoln Avenue were even less at 2.5% of the total northbound volumes.
- The peak hour for afternoon and evening traffic at the intersection was from 4:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. During that hour, only 23 vehicles turned left.
- The traffic from westbound Nevada Avenue was predominantly right turning traffic at 75% right turns and 25% left turns. ADT (average daily traffic) values of Nevada Avenue were approximately 1000 vpd (vehicles per day) and Lincoln Avenue was 17800 vpd.
- Traffic volumes rose steadily since the road diet was implemented (2006) with gains of over 1300 ADT on Lincoln Avenue.
- There have been 5 crashes in the last 5 years (2 in 2009 and 3 in 2011). Four of the accidents were rear end crashes that involved someone waiting to turn left onto Nevada Avenue from southbound Lincoln Avenue and the other was a sideswipe accident from a merging maneuver, again for a southbound vehicle. None of the crashes happened during the peak period.

He concluded that a possible solution to move traffic along smoothly would be to recommend a no left turn prohibition from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. He added that it probably would have a high violation rate unless it was strictly enforced.

Georgia Morgan expressed concern about restrictions during certain times of day. She felt that the changes would be inconvenient and cause confusion for drivers at times when traffic would be heavy.

Charlie Smyth asked if a designated left turn lane could be installed.

Joe Smith said that it would be expensive to create. He mentioned that there might not be enough room to add another lane. He suggested additional warning signage and pavement markings to encourage motorists to move into the correct lanes. He added that there were no accidents during the peak hours to support the lane restrictions.

John Collins said that Operations could install the same signs in the lane island as was currently on the right Lincoln Avenue for southbound traffic.

Joe Smith moved to add signage and pavement markings for southbound traffic on Lincoln Avenue beginning at the Alumni Center (601 South Lincoln Avenue).

Pat Connolly seconded the motion.

The motion was approved 3-0.

This item does not require Council action.

Dennis Roberts asked about the timing of the pedestrian signal at the southern leg of Nevada Avenue and Lincoln Avenue since an e-mail response to this item questioned the length of time required to wait for the "Walk" light to operate.

Joe Smith stated that the cycle for the traffic signal was interrupted by pedestrians activating the pedestrian button. He wondered if the pedestrians were not using the button since a countdown would begin once the button was activated.

Item #3- Discussion of parking restrictions in front of 204 North McCullough Street.

John Collins mentioned that he received an e-mail from Parking Enforcement asking if changes could be made to reduce the blockage of the driveway across from 204 North McCullough Street. He mentioned that the restricted area could be moved north to provide space for two vehicles without blocking the driveway.

Joe Smith moved to change the parking restrictions on the west side of the 200 block of North McCullough Street by moving it 5 feet to the north.

John Collins said that 25 tickets had been issued for cars blocking the driveway across from 204 North McCullough Street.

Pat Connolly seconded the motion.

The motion was approved 3-0.

This item will go to Council for consideration.

Item #4- Discussion of the installation of a stop sign on Vermont Avenue at Broadway Avenue.

Joe Smith reported that the T-intersection at Vermont Avenue and Broadway Avenue was not regulated by a stop sign. He added that there was a visibility concern created by a hedge on private property at the northwest corner of the intersection. Although there were no reported accidents at the intersection Mr. Smith recommended the installation of a stop sign since there

was a visibility issue at that corner. He said that there was a similar situation at the Delaware Avenue and Broadway Avenue intersection, except that intersection did not have a hedge blocking visibility.

Joe Smith made a motion to install a stop sign for eastbound traffic on Vermont Avenue at Broadway Avenue.

Dennis Roberts seconded the motion.

The motion was approved 3-0.

This item will go to Council for consideration.

Item #5- Discussion of the installation of informational signage for Urbana parks.

Carl Larson, member of the Urbana Park District Advisory Committee, asked if the City of Urbana could place informational signage in City right-of-way to direct people to the parks. He presented a list of proposed sites.

Joe Smith mentioned that the City placed informational signage in the right-of-way for parks that were not on major routes, such as Lohmann Park, Chief Shemauger Park and the Aquatic Center.

Dennis Roberts suggested looking at the possibility of including the parks as part of the Signage and Wayfinding program to create a uniform sign program.

Joe Smith asked where the funding for the signs would come.

John Collins mentioned that the informational signs would have to comply with the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) if they are placed in the right-of-way.

Joe Smith suggested that the City meet with the Urbana Park District to discuss the signage.

Carl Larson said that he would be willing to meet to discuss the recommendations.

Joe Smith asked that this item be placed on the August agenda. He added that the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) has strict rules about the placement of signage in the right-of-way so some locations might not be possible.

Item #6- Discussion of parking restrictions of Fairview Avenue to accommodate bicycle lanes.

Brad Bennett discussed the request for the removal of parking on Fairview Avenue to install bicycle lanes. He mentioned that the City received a \$199,000 grant from Safe Routes to School to install bike lanes. He said that the lane in front of King School was one area for the bike lanes, adding that currently there was no parking on the south side of the street. He stated that

parking would need to be removed on the north side to provide adequate lane widths for the bicycle lanes.

John Collins asked if the busses staged pick-up and drop-off in that area.

Joe Smith said that busses had moved their staging area to the parking lot on the north side of the school.

Dennis Roberts asked if the removal of parking would create problems for child pick-up at King Elementary School.

Brad Bennett mentioned that the school district had been notified and approved the parking restrictions and addition of bicycle lanes. The school district supported the grant proposal.

Barb Stiehl reported that Pauline Walker, 1210 North Busey Avenue, contacted the Public Works Department by phone to indicate that she supported the parking restrictions to encourage students to ride bicycles to school.

Joe Smith stated that there were only two properties (906 and 908 West Fairview Avenue) impacted by the restrictions and that those property owners were notified about the meeting and the planned restrictions.

Joe Smith moved to restrict parking on both sides of Fairview Avenue from Lincoln Avenue to Goodwin Avenue.

Pat Connolly seconded the motion.

The motion was approved 3-0.

This item will go to Council for consideration.

Brad Bennett mentioned that Engineering would return to the Traffic Commission to discuss the parking restrictions on Florida Avenue and Kinch Drive to accommodate bicycle lanes.

Craig Shonkwiler said that parking restrictions for bicycle lanes on the east side of Broadway Avenue between Washington Street and Illinois Street would need to go to the Traffic Commission at a later date.

Brad Bennett said that work would begin during spring or summer of 2013.

Joe Smith moved to cancel the July meeting of the Urbana Traffic Commission due to the July 4th holiday.

Pat Connolly seconded the motion.

The motion was approved 3-0.

The meeting adjourned at 5:04 p.m.

The next meeting will be held August 7, 2012 at 4:00 p.m. at the Urbana City Building, 400 South Vine Street, second floor conference room.

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara Stiehl
Recording Secretary