

URBANA TRAFFIC COMMISSION
Tuesday, March 5, 2013

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Dennis Roberts, City Council Member, Ward 5, Chair
Rich Surles, Police Lieutenant (for Police Chief Connolly)
Joe Smith, Senior Civil Engineer

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Pat Connolly, Police Chief

OTHERS PRESENT:

Tresor Ngoma, 610 E. Kerr Avenue
Brad Bennett, Senior Civil Engineer
Tracey Pettigrew, 1101 E. University Avenue

The meeting began at 4:00 p.m.

Additions to the agenda:

Item #2 was moved from New Business to Unfinished Business since discussion had occurred previously in November 2012.

Approval of Minutes:

Joe Smith moved to approve the minutes as read. Rich Surles seconded the motion. The Commission voted 3-0 to approve the minutes of the December 4, 2012 and the February 5, 2013 meetings.

Public Input

Those in attendance asked to speak to items as they were discussed.

Unfinished Business

Item #1- Discussion of parking restrictions on Kinch Street.

Dennis Roberts discussed the concerns of Ms. Karen Dixon, 1005 South Kinch Street. Ms. Dixon was concerned that the removal of parking on Kinch Street would make it difficult for her family to visit since parking would be limited. She said that many people have moved from the area because of the proposed parking restrictions. She also expressed concern about crime in the area.

Dennis Roberts suggested that she contact the Neighborhood Safety Task Force members with some of her concerns since the concerns were beyond the scope of the agenda item.

Mr. Roberts discussed an e-mail received from A. Gritton in which she expressed concern about leaving one child in a vehicle while taking another one across the street. She felt this scenario would occur if parking was restricted on Kinch Street. She also expressed concern about installing bike lanes for occasional bicyclists who rarely used Kinch Street. She stated that the installation of bicycle lanes would increase noise and litter on the street.

Joe Smith stated that not all parking was being eliminated in the 1000 block of Kinch Street.

Brad Bennett said that he realized that there was a loss of parking to install the bicycle lanes, but the City had made a commitment to be a bicycle-friendly community and had received a grant to implement the commitment.

Dennis Roberts asked if there could be a shared path on Kinch Street to accommodate some parking.

Brad Bennett stated that the limited pavement width made it difficult to do that.

Dennis Roberts stated that no one living on Kinch Street had contacted the Commission approving the plan.

Brad Bennett said that the bicycle lanes would not solely benefit those living on Kinch Street, but instead, benefit the entire community.

Dennis Roberts asked what the cost would be if this part of the plan was not implemented.

Brad Bennett said that the City would lose the funding for that part of the plan. He added that the 2008 Master Bicycle Plan designated Kinch Street as a bike lane since it was a connector between Washington Street and Florida Avenue and connected the neighborhood to Prairie Elementary School and Thomas Paine Elementary School.

Dennis Roberts asked if the plan could be changed to have bicycle routes instead of bicycle lanes.

Brad Bennett did mention that the reduction of lane widths to install bicycle lanes would most likely reduce vehicle speeds on Kinch Street, which was one of the concerns mentioned by residents at a previous meeting.

Joe Smith moved to remove parking on the west side of Kinch Street between Florida Avenue and Washington Street to install bicycle lanes per the Master Bicycle Plan.

Dennis Roberts seconded the motion.

Dennis Roberts mentioned that the configuration of Kinch Street made it difficult to make any additional adjustments to the plan.

Joe Smith mentioned that there were approximately seven homes that would be impacted by the parking restrictions.

Dennis Roberts stated that he was not happy to eliminate the on-street parking, but this route does connect to elementary schools.

The Commission approved the motion 2-0; one member abstained.

This item will go to Council for consideration.

The Commission directed the Recording Secretary to notify the residents of the decision and to let them know that the item would be discussed at the March 25th Committee of the Whole meeting and voted upon at the April 1st City Council meeting.

Joe Smith said that a speed study would be conducted in March.

Item #2- Discussion of traffic concerns on Kerr Avenue, east of Cunningham Avenue.

Tresor Gnoma summarized concerns discussed at the November meeting of the Urbana Traffic Commission. He mentioned that motorists were not aware that low functioning individuals were crossing Kerr Avenue, east of Cunningham Avenue as they approached the intersection. He said that the pedestrians did not comprehend the speeds of the vehicles. He added that one student had been hit. He suggested the installation of a speed limit sign to let motorists know of the legal speed limit.

Joe Smith recommended the installation of pedestrian ahead and speed limit signage for westbound traffic on Kerr Avenue as the motorists come over the hill. He added that there were not enough pedestrians crossing at that point to warrant a crosswalk, but that the signage should warn motorists of those crossing near the bus stop.

Tracey Pettigrew agreed that the signage would be helpful.

Joe Smith moved to install the pedestrian warning and speed limit signage.

Rich Surles seconded the motion.

Tresor Gnoma felt that the signage would draw attention to the pedestrians crossing.

Rich Surles said that he would ask to have a speed trailer installed on a recurring basis, especially in August when students move into the Town and Country apartments and during warm weather.

The motion passed 3-0.

This item does not require Council action.

New Business

Item #3- Discussion of speeding vehicles in the 500 block of East California Avenue.

A resident had contacted the Urbana Public Works Department with a concern about motorist speeding in the 500 block of East California Avenue, particularly during the time of the Market at the Square.

Joe Smith said that he would conduct a speed study in June during the time of the Farmer's Market.

Rich Surles said that he would ask Lieutenant Fitzgerald to have someone look at the problem.

Joe Smith said that he would discuss the results of the speed study at the July or August meeting of the Urbana Traffic Commission.

Discussion followed about upcoming Traffic Commission issues.

The meeting adjourned at 4:45 p.m.

The next meeting will be held on April 2, 2013 at 4:00 p.m. at the Urbana City Building, 400 South Vine Street, second floor conference room.

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara Stiehl
Recording Secretary