

APPROVED Meeting Minutes

Transportation Commission

Monday, May 22, 2017

Council Chambers – Village Hall

Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Chalabian called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

PRESENT: Jack Chalabian, Kyle Eichenberger, James Thompson, Roya Basirirad, Michael Stewart

NOT ATTENDING: Craig Chesney, Joel Schoenmeyer

STAFF: Jill Juliano, Jill Velan, Mike Koperniak, Kevin Cassidy

Also present -- Trustee Bob Tucker and Jamie Justice, Oak Park resident

- The floor was opened to non-agenda public testimony.
 - o No public testimony was offered at this time
- The Chair closed non-agenda, public testimony.
- Commissioner Thompson moved to approve the meeting's agenda. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Eichenberger. The motion passed unanimously
- Chair presented Minutes of April 24 for approval. Commissioner Thompson raised a question regarding text in paragraph two on page six of the April 24, 2017 minutes.
- The line reading "Jill Velan responded that the Transportation Commission is only say yes or no to staff recommendations" Parking Director Velan stated that she had not said it and the line was struck from the minutes.
- Commission Thompson motioned to approve the minutes as amended. Seconded by Commissioner Eichenberger, the motion carried by unanimous consent.

PETITION TO UPGRADE ALL-WAY STOP SIGNS AT LINDEN AND SUPERIOR

Jill Juliano presented a researched report concerning the upgrade of stop signs at the intersection of Superior and Linden. The intersection presently has a 2-way stop for the north and south traffic on Linden. Neighborhood residents believe the additional stop signs are needed as expressed in the valid petition that was submitted. Village Engineers Juliano and Koperniak support the installation, which will create a four way stop intersection. The engineers' support is based on studies observing traffic volume, directional flow, and average speed of travel.

Chairperson Chalabian perceived a lack of public support for the proposal, noting the absence of community members in the chambers. Engineer Juliano explained that there had been previous

communication with the interested neighborhood group. Prior to the Transportation committee's meeting, the neighborhood residents understood that the Village staff supported the proposal.

The floor was opened to public testimony

Jaimie Justice of 324 Linden was present at the meeting as a representative for the concerned neighbors. Mr. Justice described the area as being home to numerous children. He said he had personally observed some "near misses" involving children and cars that passed through too quickly. The intersection is close to Holmes Elementary and Alcuin Montessori. It is also travelled by OPRF students. He also described the need for children, walking to school, to run across the intersection due to swift moving cars. He also noted periods of unusually heavy automobile traffic and increased pedestrian traffic due to the intersection's proximity to Oak Park River Forest High School.

The floor was closed to public testimony

The committee members discussed the pros and cons of adding the stop signs.

Commissioner Stewart noted that the desire for safety was understood but there were also unintended adverse effects due to overly regulated intersections. Most Oak Park intersections have either all-way or two-way stops. The differing signage at various intersections leads to confusion among people driving in Oak Park. Erroneous assumptions are made concerning whether cross traffic will stop or not. Further, Mr. Stewart proposed that Oak Park inadvertently trains drivers to expect cross traffic to stop. Few communities have the proportional number of controlled intersections. Drivers are confused by variety of intersections: uncontrolled, 2-way and 4-way stops

Commissioner Basirirad stated that the installation of stop signs was useful and appropriate.

Commissioner Eichenberger proposed that the 4-way stop may be the prevailing expectation and proposed "cross traffic" signage and crosswalk markings to increase safety. Eichenberger speculated that intersection control might inadvertently move a traffic problem elsewhere as drivers avoided the stop.

Commissioner Thompson noted that the 4-way stop proliferation is a concern. Thompson indicated that he favored the proposal for the Superior/Linden intersection.

Chair Chalabian indicated that there is not a proliferation of stop signs in the Village. The commission discussed the apparent proliferation of all-way stop signs and contemplated what might be done to deal with them.

Commissioner Thompson motioned that the stop signs at Superior and Linden will be upgraded to all-way stop signs. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Basirirad.

AYES: Jack Chalabian, Kyle Eichenberger, James Thompson, and Roya Basirirad

NAY: Mike Stewart

The motion carried 4 to 1.

CONTINUED DEVELOPMENT OF TRAFFIC CALMING TOOLBOX

Staff Liaison Koperniak gave a presentation on the current state of the Traffic Calming Toolbox.

Chair Chalabian raised a question about how other communities deal with traffic calming bumps

. A Fire Department memo was referenced and a response was given. The Fire Department is concerned about traffic calming systems (i.e., speed bumps, corner bump-outs). Traffic calming efforts are concentrated in northwest Oak Park where emergency response times are seen as being 1% slower than in other areas. Chair Chalabian recommends keeping traffic calming devices off of emergency routes. The small increase in response time seems acceptable in exchange for an improved quality of life for residents in the targeted areas. As an example, there might be one emergency in a two-year period where a response time was minimally effected vs. the same two years where residents lived with less worry and less traffic.

Commissioner Eichenberger described the ratio as a cost/benefit analysis. He respected the Fire Department's information and the opinion that was formed but community benefit outweighs the cost in response time.

Commissioner Stewart compared the Fire Department's opinion against the numerous concerns about speed limit violations that have been brought to the Transportation Commission. Speed bumps should be included in the Toolbox and weighed along with other traffic calming measures.

Commissioner Eichenberger said that calming measures should be in the tool box along with a procedure to alert the community to any planned installations. The community must be made aware of possible increases in emergency response time.

Chair Chalabian made reference to scoring criteria involving speed bumps that were adopted last year by the Transportation Commission.

Commission members agreed to a break in the agenda in order to hold a conversation with Trustee Bob Tucker, liaison with the Village Board of Trustees.

The conversation with Trustee Tucker included the following points.

- The Village Board was just meeting with a group of residents of Mills Tower who have complaints and observations about parking for care givers near the building. He expects the matter to be referred back to the Transportation Commission.
- Trustee Tucker spoke about the Transportation Commission's involvement in an on-going parking study. He also spoke about the Village's use of outside consultants and why they were hired.
- Parking Services Director Jill Velan spoke about the role of the consultant hired in November. The consultant was used to address an "in-house" technology issue. The consultant has

expertise regarding parking regulations. The consultant's role in the parking study will be expanded. The consultant will complete a review of all parking ordinances and recommend best practices based on the review. The costs of engaging the consultant were approved in the last Village budget.

- Trustee Tucker spoke about plans to extend the consultant's contract. The Board will review the consultant's performance to date. The Board will determine the consultant's role in an extended contract.
- The consultant was identified as Dickson Resources Unlimited and was described as presently working on the Village technology update.
- Trustee Tucker spoke about the parking study as a nine month process and referred to ramifications for the Transportation Commission. Trustee Tucker stated that the Board wants the Transportation Commission to be involved to as great a degree as the Commission wants to be involved.

Chair Chalabian asked the Commission members their thoughts on the Comprehensive Parking Plan process.

Commissioner Eichenberger favored speeding up the process but warned that the process was "putting the cart before the horse". He asked what the Board's goals were.

Trustee Tucker offered that the goal was a holistic and comprehensive approach to parking in the Village.

Commissioner Stewart stated that the Commission established parking solutions by dealing with specific areas and neighborhoods through time consuming, hands-on efforts, through meeting and conversations with residents. The Village has a "piece meal quilt" of parking regulations. Commissioner Stewart does not want to see Commission's previous hard work undone.

Trustee Tucker said overly diverse regulations need to be refined while addressing targeted needs.

Parking Director Jill Velan said that the consultant would be assigned to focus on the issues that were defined by the Commission and the staff. The consultant was not intended to displace the Commission's input. Rather the consultant would take up tasks that would otherwise be assigned to staff. Velan stated that paying the consultant is cheaper than hiring staff.

Trustee Tucker stated that the Board wants input from the Commission.

Chair Chalabian stated that the Village community is the most important piece of the puzzle and The Comprehensive Parking Study, with its emphasis on an outside consultant, does not properly engage community input. The Chair proposed that the Board see the "power in numbers". An effort should be made to engage a multitude of residents before designs are begun so the design can reflect the community input. The seven Commissioners are Oak Park residents and know the town and the nature of its chronic parking problems.

Commissioner Eichenberger - The Transportation Commission is the appropriate representative of the community's plan. The consultant should refer to the commissions list of concerns. The Board and the consultant need to be aware that there is not a "one-size-fits-all" solution. Contact with the community must be proactive. The commission is not about writing regulations. The commission allows the public to have "skin in the game". There is a concern that the Comprehensive Parking Study will "rearrange the deck chairs" but no real change will occur. There is a concern that the study will set up unmet expectations and lead to disappointment.

Trustee Tucker explained that collecting and reporting input from Villagers would create a lot of additional work and time for the Transportation Commission.

Chair Chalabian seeks to insure that expectations are properly managed. He reiterates the need to involve the public.

Trustee Tucker does not see any large scale change. There are conflicting interests. Commuters want long term parking in the Hemingway District while business owners want parking limited to three hours. It is hard to generate interest from the community until it is too late. While there is no hierarchy, there are conflicting interests, differing needs in different areas.

Chair Chalabian proposes that the study will produce some "losers" but there will be gains. The Transportation Commission needs to spell out threats vs. opportunities. Blanket statements are to be avoided. Each resident asserts a right to some "domain". They expect to be able to "unload their groceries". The Chair is concerned that a consultant will finally only tell the Village what it already knows. Based on the commission's experience it must be acknowledged that parking issues are contentious and taken personally. Chair Chalabian calls for the board to clearly define the Transportation Commission's role in the Comprehensive Parking Study vis a vis the hired consultant.

Chair Chalabian suggests other Transportation Commission business such as the Traffic Calming proposals must be put on hold in order to address the Parking Study within the required timeframe.

Engineer Juliano replied that a work plan would be reviewed in order to identify tasks for the commission and tasks for the consultant.

The commission members indicated a willingness to meet more frequently to host meetings on the parking study and request a faster turnaround on meeting minutes and other packet information. The information is needed one week prior to each meeting.

Trustee Trucker thanked the commission for its work and concluded his interaction at the meeting at 8:45 pm.

Chair Chalabian resumed the discussion of traffic taming strategies at the conclusion of Trustee Tucker's visit to the Commission meeting.

The commission returned to the topic of the Fire Department's memo. The conversation reiterated an emphasis on an improved quality of life among residents and agreed that the installation of speed

bumps would remain in the Toolbox but there would be a high threshold to meet before installation would be recommended.

Chair Chalabian urged that no alternative to speed bumps be closed until absolutely necessary. The option to install speed bumps should also remain open until it was necessary to reject them.

Discussion among the commissioners led to agreement that the delay in emergency response times was nominal and not sufficient to rule out the possible installation of speed bumps.

There was discussion concerning the inclusion of the use of scoring criteria and the way it comes into play with other items in the Toolbox.

There being no further business, Commissioner Stewart motioned to adjourn the meeting.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Thompson.

The motion passed unanimously

The meeting adjourned at 9:58 pm

Kevin Cassidy
Administrative Secretary