

APPROVED Meeting Minutes
Transportation Commission
Monday, August 28, 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, Craig Chesney, James Thompson, Joel Schoenmeyer

Excused: Roya Basirirad, Michael Stewart

Staff: John Youkhana, Mike Koperniak, Mary Avinger, Allison Von Ebers

Parking Consultant: Jennifer Rentz of Dixon Resources Unlimited

The floor was opened to non-agenda public testimony.

David Kelm of 1025 Pleasant Place unit 12D spoke about an article in the Wednesday Journal newspaper regarding the development at Harlem and North Boulevard. Mr. Kelm stated he thinks North Blvd should be one-way all the way eastbound and South Boulevard should be one-way all the way westbound. He feels many Oak Park streets are too narrow for two-way traffic especially with parking on both sides of the street.

Non-agenda public testimony was closed out.

Approval of Tonight's Meeting Agenda

Commissioner Eichenberger motioned to approve the agenda as presented and was seconded by Commissioner Schoenmeyer. The motion was approved by a unanimous voice vote.

Approval of Revised May 10, 2017 Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Chesney motioned to approve the revised May 10, 2017, Transportation Commission meeting minutes as modified and was seconded by Commissioner Thompson. The motion was approved by a unanimous voice vote

Approval of the Draft July 31, 2017 Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Schoenmeyer motioned to approve the draft July 31, 2017, Transportation Commission meeting minutes as presented and was seconded by Commissioner Eichenberger. The motion was approved by a unanimous voice vote.

DISCUSSION ON THE VILLAGE WIDE PARKING STUDY, PARKING NEAR TRANSIT (CTA & METRA LINES)

Chair Chalabian explained how public testimony works to the audience and that no official decisions would be made at the meeting.

Parking Services Manager, John Youkhana gave a presentation on the parking study and spoke about the missed opportunity to go over the transit area at the July 24th Transportation Commission meeting. John spoke about how the Village Board of Trustees wants staff to restructure the study based on information from over the years. John also spoke about the four forums the Parking Division held between August 22nd and August 23rd. He spoke about the outreach done by staff and while only approximately 40 people came to the forums, the Commission might have expected more people. John mentioned he was told in a previous conversation with the parking consultant, people showing up usually starts slow and builds up.

Commissioner Eichenberger spoke about the different perspectives at the forums.

Commissioner Chesney, who also attended some of the forums, stated they were held on the first day of school and thinks that might have affected attendance. Commissioner Chesney spoke about people being concerned about parking being taken away. He also mentioned he doesn't think communication to residents seem to be effective.

Commissioner Thompson spoke about residents at the forums complaining about not being able to park in front of their houses.

Chair Chalabian spoke about the forums and how he thinks the times were compressed. He spoke about how the consultant said staff would go to the stakeholders and not wait for them to come to us and how there's lots of opportunities for communication between Resident Beat Officers (RBO's), businesses and special events. Chair Chalabian stated he knows people are passionate about parking yet only three of 40 people from the forums are here. He also spoke about response during forums and community outreach. Chair Chalabian suggested the Commission have a pop up tent at the Farmer's Market in September.

John Youkhana continued the presentation with a map of the affected areas around the transit stations. Chair Chalabian asked if walking distance from the trains were taken into consideration and John Youkhana responded.

Jennifer Rentz of Dixon Resources Unlimited gave a brief overview of feedback from the forums and stated she will get the Commission a more comprehensive report. Ms. Rentz stated residents that attended the forums were encouraged to come to the Transportation Commission meetings and to share information on future meetings with other residents and businesses.

Commissioner Thompson asked about timeline to get feedback from residents and Jennifer Rentz responded.

Commissioner Eichenberger stated in his experience having a website to give people more information with previous and future information would be good. John Youkhana replied there is information on the Village's website that will be updated after tonight's meeting. Commissioner Eichenberger also asked if there was data on how much each parking issue came up during the forums and Jennifer Rentz responded yes.

Commissioner Chesney spoke about the history of the Commission working with staff for years on changes and communications with residents. John Youkhana spoke about working on making parking accessible and values Commissioner Chesney's comment on history of Commission and staff.

A discussion was had about the CTA/Metra stations in Oak Park, standard walking distance to the stations, the consideration of effect of accessibility, emergency response, affected permit areas and the needs of the stakeholders in the area was had.

Chair Chalabian stated he thinks the use of the word "transit" is misleading and should be renamed and questioned if the consultant is suggesting focusing on the Y2, Y3, and Y4 area due to competing interests. John Youkhana responded staff used the word "transit" because it is an easily identifiable landmark and the explained why the pilot project is in Y2, Y3, and Y4. A brief discussion about what to call the parking study instead of "near transit" area took place.

Chair Chalabian asked what the area and limits of time are that staff suggested pursuing and John Youkhana responded Harlem Ave to Oak Park Ave between South Blvd and I-290 and will get recommendations from the consultant on the pilot program. Chair Chalabian suggested updating the timeline for the revised study.

John Youkhana gave an update on lot 119 and spoke about concerns from the YMCA and the Pleasant District Association. YMCA agreed to host four of the permit holders and the remaining three permit holders will either stay on Pleasant Place or use metered spaces.

Commissioner Chesney spoke about concerns from the 1200 North blocks along North Ave and if there would be moratoriums in other areas.

John Youkhana recommended bringing information about the parking study to the Transportation Commission first before going to the Village Board of Trustees. John also spoke about previous parking studies for the North Ave and Roosevelt Rd boarder streets. John also spoke about the pilot program and changes and how the overall goal is to make changes Village wide.

The floor was opened to public testimony.

Julie Denise of 1217 Woodbine spoke about her interest for public notice and about hearing the North Ave Business District wanted to change parking restrictions and her concerns that none of the residents on the 1200 blocks were notified. Ms. Denise also spoke about her concerns with the current two hour parking restrictions and doesn't want them increased to three hours because residents are already impacted by closures and lots of parking on the block. Ms. Denise suggested notifying people through the Park District and spoke about cars parking during the 8am-10am parking restrictions and stated it isn't logical to have the restrictions if they aren't being enforced.

Christine Baumbach of 1202 Woodbine spoke about residents talking about parking in Oak Park in a closed group on Facebook with over a 1000 members and how no one knew about tonight's meeting. Ms. Baumbach stated there needs to be more information on the Village website and the Village Facebook page. Ms. Baumbach also spoke about parking pressure on her block from businesses and Lindberg Park and how she supports the two hour restrictions but just wants them enforced.

David Kelm of 1028 Pleasant unit D stated there would have been more people involved if residents were notified. Mr. Kelm spoke about signs for meetings about parking changes being on Randolph and not on Pleasant. Mr. Kelm also spoke about the Village buying lots to make off-street parking and how the Village should require developers to provide overnight parking.

Dr. Nandini Datta of 1211 Belleforte stated she has lived here over nine years and spoke about North Ave businesses and how the no parking restrictions on Belleforte have been in place for over 30 years. Dr. Datta also spoke about the pilot program and focusing on the 1200 block of Belleforte and that some, not all businesses are in the association and gave the Commission pictures of open parking. She also stated businesses could use shared parking, shuttle service, or valet parking. Dr. Datta spoke about community engagement and that residents should be notified what proposals are in order to get better participation.

Corey Gimbel of 1210 N Marion stated he moved to Marion before the cul-de-sac went in and residents paid thousands of dollars for it to go in. Mr. Gimbel spoke about cars that would speed down the street and kids that got hit, and how the idea of taking out cul-de-sacs is bad and he wants to keep them in place.

Public testimony was closed out.

Chair Chalabian stated this was the first he heard anything about removing cul-de-sacs. John Youkhana responded that is not something that staff recommends and doesn't believe the North Avenue Business District is trying to hurt residents. John went on to explain that staff posted signs on affected blocks, passed out flyers, posted information on the Village website and on the Village's Facebook page and encouraged people to notify neighbors and groups to attend and speak about their concerns.

Chair Chalabian spoke about a clear lack of outreach and how there should be a town hall meeting to discuss what's going on and residents can share their concerns. Chair Chalabian stated he would be willing to attend the meeting to engage residents and that this is very important. He spoke about his desire to hear the Business District's side and the concerns from churches and the Park District.

Audience members asked about recommendations from staff and the Commission and Chair Chalabian spoke about the Commission's role and how recommendations for work comes from staff and the consultant, then goes to the Village Board of Trustees. He stated nothing will go to the Village Board of Trustees without being heard by the Transportation Commission.

Jennifer Rentz also explained the role of Dixon Consulting and their process based on feedback from residents.

Chair Chalabian asked what the next steps are and John Youkhana responded they will take feedback from this meeting and convert forum results and bring it to the next couple Transportation Commission meetings as well as get more outreach for the next meeting, and will look at having a town hall meeting for the 1200 N blocks.

Chair Chalabian stated he doesn't like how community outreach was done and asked the Commission if they should consider having stakeholders contribute to building how parking should be. He asked about having town hall meetings to discuss concerns and if the Commissioners would be willing to spend an extra amount of time listening to citizens discussing concerns in various areas of the Village.

Commissioner Chesney stated he agrees to increasing engagement but doesn't think town hall meetings work and gave his reasons why. He stated they need public education and then specific target areas.

Commissioner Eichenberger stated this kind of outreach could possibly apply to other topics like bike safety and pedestrian safety. He stated whatever is done now should be used in the future.

Commissioner Thompson stated people responded to proposal and doesn't think it will work to design from a blank slate. Commissioner Thompson stated he's not sure people would show up to town hall meetings.

Commissioner Schoenmeyer agreed with Commissioner Thompson and that the Commission needs to have a narrower scope and have representatives instead of open forum.

John Youkhana spoke about an example of residents and Commission involvement in changes and making recommendations and having residents agree. He spoke about the point of establishing the Traffic Calming Toolbox idea and how there's only so much enforcement can do.

A discussion took place about where to focus the Transportation Commission's efforts on Y2, Y3, and Y4 zones, more public participation for proposed changes, and outreach to 1200 North blocks and follow-up review.

Chair Chalabian asked the Commission if they should go over the study area by each line item or apply all to each future study session – either A or B.

Commissioner Chesney chose A, Commissioner Eichenberger B, Commissioner Thompson B, and Commissioner Schoenmeyer A.

John Youkhana stated at the next Transportation Commission meeting they will look at Y2, Y3, and Y4 and look at entire list of options for the proposed area.

A discussion about the next Commission meetings, Village Board of Trustees meetings, study sessions, recommendations, direction Village Board of Trustees is going, and how to get info out to residents occurred.

FOLLOW UP ON TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION 2018 WORK PLAN

John Youkhana spoke about items on the work plan.

Chair Chalabian asked about testing signs and John responded about issues with signs and people saying they can't understand them. Julie Rentz from Dixon Resources Unlimited also said they could provide sign examples and it should correlate with the parking study.

Commissioner Eichenberger spoke about his talks with Nikki Sylianteng, the sign originator and asked if the sign designer was contacted and John Youkhana responded no but they will reach out.

Commissioner Thompson asked about signs versus policy and John Youkhana responded.

John Youkhana and the Commission discussed their items C, D, E, F, and G on the 2018 Work Plan.

Commissioner Thompson stated he would like to work on traffic light synchronization, including traffic lights at Home and Madison and look at pedestrian buttons that don't work.

Chair Chalabian would like staff to report an update on traffic signal synchronization and optimization feasibility of push button utilization and review removal of push buttons where they are not IDOT involved and their utilization. John Youkhana asked how to measure that and Chair Chalabian suggested through pedestrian counts and asked to add this to the 2018 Work Plan.

A brief discussion about reaching out to the Technology Commission and the meetings in September took place.

Commissioner Chesney mentioned this was his last Commission meeting.

Commissioner Schoenmeyer motioned to adjourn the meeting and the motion was seconded by Commissioner Thompson.

The voice vote was unanimous to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:37 PM.

Respectively submitted

Mary Avinger

Mary Avinger,
Administrative Secretary