

Traffic Commission

April 2, 2018

The meeting was called to order by Acting Chairman Schaber at 6:55PM.

Members present: Mr. Schaber, Mr. Daniels, Safety Director Robbins, City Engineer Bischoff, Chief Collins, Law Director Russell

Members absent: Mr. Huddle

(Per City Ordinance, Traffic Commission is made up of members of Streets and Sewers Committee, plus Safety Director, Engineer, Police Chief, and Law Director.)

Minutes were reviewed from the August 16, 2016 meeting. Motion made by Safety Director Robbins to accept, City Engineer Bischoff 2nd; Ayes – all in favor (6-0)

Minutes from 08/16/2016 Approved (6-0)

New Business:

Item 1. DAVIDS STREET PARKING ISSUE

Mr. Brian Long (1039 Davids Street) addressed the commission regarding parking concerns in front of his Davids Street home. He explained that the issue has been persistent for two years and that nothing has been done by the police department, despite his frequent phone reports. He states that he is not getting results.

Chief Collins stated that the police department has been addressing parking issues when they are aware of them and have issued some citations, including at least one to the neighbor lady. If the reports are at a peak time, they may not be addressed based on higher priority calls taking precedent. The chief has been out to talk with Mr. Long at his home and had several conversations with him. The safety director has erected “no parking” signs.

Mr. Long states that the post office seems to think that his yard is a place to park while they are delivering the mail and they are doing the same thing. The neighbor is also parking there. He requested suggestions from the commission.

Chief Collins suggested contacting the post office regarding the issue of the mail person parking there. Mr. Long stated that he had and that the post office was not helpful, threatened to move his mail box, and/or to petition to have another sign removed.

Mr. Long states that the police department does not show up, even when they are notified. Chief Collins explained staffing levels, and prioritizing a more critical crime (i.e. a domestic dispute would take priority). Mr. Long does not understand why he should continue to call if no one is going to come out.

Mr. Daniels asked Mr. Long why he thinks the area is appealing to someone to park there. Mr. Long stated, “because she’s lazy... and doesn’t have her own car.” The area is grass, except where it is torn out because cars are driving on it. He states that the sidewalk has been destroyed and is now a sinkhole.

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Mr. Daniels looked at a picture of the area and described a grass strip between Davids Street and the side walk. They are parking on “this side” of the sign. The sign is at the edge of Mr. Long’s property. Mr. Long states that they would rather park there than in front of her house, because “it is easier for them”. Mr. Daniels stated that it appeared to be graveled on Mr. Long’s side of the sign. Mr. Long stated that is because the grass has been ripped out. He further explained that they go in at an angle starting at the sewer drain. The post office is parking by the drain and doing the same thing. Mr. Daniels stated that perhaps they could do some planting in the green area. Mr. Long stated that there are limits by city on what and where he can plant because of underground pipes.

Mr. Schaber stated that at one point Mr. Long put boulders out there and he was told to move them. He wondered if other landscape items could be used, or would they be an obstruction.

City Engineer Bischoff clarified that they need to look at it on a case by case basis. Boulders were a hazard. Trees are on a case by case basis. There are planting guidelines. If there are underground utilities, there are restrictions about what can be planted.

Mr. Daniels stated that there is enough space to park a car there from an average driver’s viewpoint. They are not supposed to park on sidewalks, but they do. They look at it as concrete. They may prefer to park out front rather than park in the alley out back, especially in the dark. He speculated as to how they could keep them off Mr. Long’s lawn and then they can drive into their own parking spot more directly instead of across this green space between the road and the sidewalk. He felt that they would not drive a car through a 4” seedling or a tree. Perhaps, certain types of tree would have shallow roots that would not create sewer issue.

Mr. Long states he applied for a variance and never got a response.

City Engineer Bischoff stated that there is a road just south of there. The issue might be side obstruction as a driver is pulling out to that road and trying to look back to the north. They need to look at specific area to determine issue.

Safety Director Robbins stated that one of the options to deal with a problem with one resident is to remove parking on the west side of the street all the way to the park. It is very narrow. That road becomes somewhat of a speedway down through there. The problem that creates is the fact that there is limited parking for those people who reside in the four houses south of Mr. Long. There is alley access. It is a dead-end alley which makes it difficult to navigate at certain times of year. Some people are uncomfortable parking in a dark alley. Once you remove parking then the change would impact the residents that live further south. That would eliminate any parking. The parking area is very narrow, to park and get off the traveled portion of the road way. Standard size vehicles are going to be on the sidewalk.

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Mr. Schaber stated that Mr. Long's biggest issue is where the grass has been killed off and is become gravel into the sidewalk. He said if trees are not an option because of side issues looking south perhaps shrubbery would provide the same obstruction for people parking but drivers could still be able to see over.

Safety Director Robbins stated that the first time there is a crash with a vehicle pulling off of Broad Street. the first argument is going to be a side obstruction. That is in the city right away which creates a city liability.

Mr. Long suggested that the city take the responsibility to repair the side walk instead of him. Safety Director Robbins asked if anyone had instructed him to repair the side walk. Mr. Long confirmed that no one had asked yet, but he expects that they will sooner or later. Safety Director Robbins clarified no one has made that request. Mr. Long stated that he has been informed that it his responsibility to take care of damages. Therefore, he believes that he should have a right to say who parks on it and who does not.

Law Director Russell stated that there is an ordinance preventing parking on a side walk. He knows that the law enforcement agency enforces that section of code. He requested that Mr. Long continue to rely on law enforcement to enforce when they have time and ability and they see someone parked on the sidewalk in this stretch of the roadway. He is sure they will stop and write ticket. There may be times that they are not able to respond because of higher priority issues. There is a code section that applies and residents rely on law enforcement to enforce. That is the mechanism that exists to deal with this type of situation.

Mr. Long says that the police have seen people parking there and drive right on by. Mr. Long now says that it has been three years and only one ticket has been written. He disagrees that the enforcement mechanism is effective.

Law Director Russell restated his position.

Mr. Long states that he does not believe that city will do anything because they have not done anything. They have not done anything that would register. The effectiveness is minimal. The sign has no effect whatsoever. He believes that the Chief and his people are not getting the job done either. He believes that the city needs to come up with something different and more aggressive.

Mr. Daniels stated that the sign that is currently installed is close to the telephone pole. Mr. Long stated that there was one on telephone pole until someone ran into it. Mr. Daniels stated that we cannot have the entire police force chasing after this particular problem. If the sign were moved back towards Mr. Long's place, that changes the entry angle. If they are going to muddy up the front of his green space between the sidewalk and the road, they are going to end up with a sign. Now it widens the space in front of their house between the sign and the telephone pole. If they put it here, the end result

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is to park on the sign. If they are park on the other side, they are breaking up their own sidewalk. The city cannot just arrest them, but if we put the sign here there is no incentive to park in his area. They will have to go around the sign to park between the sign and the telephone pole.

Mr. Long stated that was tried before and it did not work. Last time, he said that they ripped the sign out and threw it in his yard. He asked about a guard rail that drivers could see over.

Mr. Daniels expressed concerns about liability. He explained a situation that he has with an alley personally. He knows that the people are going to end up in his yard when they make the turn. Yes, they are on his property, yes, they are leaving ruts. He just put down gravel so that he does not have to look at mud ruts and let it lay. That is the quickest solution.

Mr. Long stated that does not resolve his broken sidewalk problem.

Mr. Sulu Kelley (365 E. Farming) has seen signs for no parking in certain places, i.e. so far from pavement. Staff clarified that it is not a city ordinance. He questions why boulders are a safety issue because they don't obscure line of sight. If they hit it, they are already off street. Law Director Russell explained that there is a city code that prohibits placement of objects in right away of streets. Placing a boulder in the right away would violate an existing city code. The right away is in existence for people to travel the roadway and it is recognized that sometimes people do not control their vehicles and stay on the roadway. Rather than create a hazard, they created a code section to prohibit placement of things like boulders. Mr. Kelley asked if installing a curb might be an option. Safety Director Robbins stated that it is not feasible to excavate and bring to code to build a curb for 100 feet. Mr. Kelley stated he has signs from towing company that say no parking at some fo his properties. It is a tow away zone.

Mr. Long asked why he could not place a rock there, if he was able to plant a tree. Law Director Russell stated that trees are a hazard, a line of sight concern, and a utility issue. He is not in favor of a tree being planted in this vicinity.

Mr. Daniels asked, while not empathizing with neighbor, what is the driving force for the neighbor to park there? He suggested moving the sign back north. He felt that we could just accept the fact that the neighbor is going to park there and give her a spot to park in front of her house without using his yard to get there. The sign will be in her way. This would take away her incentive to drive in his yard. They do not need her green space to get to a spot in front of her house. He does not know why there is even a sidewalk there.

Mr. Long does not believe that a sign will work. He feels that his neighbors will just rip it out. He does not believe that this will change the end result. He feels that the neighbors do not care if there is a sign there or not. They park right in front of a sign that says no parking. He states city and county vehicles also park there.

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Safety Director Robbins stated that there was a sign and we relocated that sign. There was additional (nonspecific) discussion regarding the signs. Safety Director Robbins agreed to follow up about adding a sign or changing the placement of the sign(s) to discourage parking (by the location/placement of the sign post). Mr. Robbins thinks that adding a sign should be considered, but does not feel comfortable moving the sign as that opens up additional opportunity for a neighborhood dispute. He will leave the door open to moving the sign should this not work.

Mr. Long expressed dissatisfaction that he has waited three years for the city to do something. He does not believe that this will be a satisfactory solution to the problem with the neighbor parking in his yard.

Mr. Daniels asked him to give it 90 days and to return if he has additional issues.

Mr. Schaber made a motion to direct Safety Director Robbins to install additional sign(s) or relocate the existing sign at his discretion; Mr. Daniels 2nd; Roll Call: Ayes -- Mr. Schaber, Mr. Daniels, Safety Director Robbins, City Engineer Bischoff, Chief Collins, Law Director Russell (6-0)

Motion approved that Safety Director Robbins will arrange to install additional sign(s) or relocate existing sign, at his discretion.

There being no further business, Acting Chairman Schaber adjourned the meeting at 7:26PM.

Acting Chairman Schaber

Clerk of Council

May 6, 2019

Members present: Mr. Schaber, Mr. Huddle, Mr. Daniels, Engineer Bischoff, Safety Director Robbins

Members absent: Law Director Russell, Chief Collins

With a quorum present, Mr. Huddle called the order to at 7:28 PM.

Item 1. INTERSECTION OF WOODROW AND UNCAPHER

Mr. Schaber received a phone call requesting a 4 way stop at this intersection due to a line of sight issue. There have been 3 accidents at that intersection in 2019. There is a property that has several vehicles and it is believed that those vehicles may be creating the line of sight issues.

Mrs. Blevins recalled that there was a stop light at this intersection at one time.

Warren Culler (750 Uncapher) said that there are accidents at intersection every year. They asked for 4 way stop sign with the stop light was pulled. The last time they presented, they said that a traffic study had been done and that there was not enough traffic. He identified other locations where there are 4-way stops that are not state approved. If parking spots are eliminated, it will create other problems because there is not enough parking.

Carla Drake (762 Uncapher) spoke in favor of a stop light or 4-way stop sign. Homes have been built since the school is no longer there. There is a camper and a trailer that park there regularly are blocking the view.

Lonnie Daniels (608 Decatur) spoke in favor of a 4-way stop sign. He stated that there is a line of sight issue.

Engineer Bischoff stated that they turn to the Ohio Manual of Uniform Traffic Control. A study was done at this intersection and there was not enough traffic. Usually 4-way stop is used where two streets cross that have a comparable amount of traffic. Stop signs should not be used to control speed. The city has deviated from this manual in the past, but they have tried to correct.

Safety Director analyzed accident data from 2008 from the police department. There have been 23 accidents at the intersection (2 accidents per year). Previously, they moved parking to the east and worked with neighbors to remove some vegetation and moved some parking further west. There is a significant number of accidents at Woodrow and Davids. There is a lot of traffic in and out of Speedway and that is a difficult intersection. Woodrow and Henry had 12 accidents at that intersection. There is not a significant amount of traffic on Henry Street. This leads him to believe that there is a sight problem at both intersection because of the 6-7 vehicles that part between the two intersections. He does not believe that the 4-way stop signs will correct the issue. The easiest way to address this is to address the sight issue by removing parking between Woodrow and Henry (6 spaces). There is ally access to all those properties

Mr. (Josh) Daniels shared experience that he has seen cars accelerate to go through intersection because there is not enough room and they may be making room for the next car. If the stop sign does not work, then they should look at the parking issues. It may take both

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changes. He thinks they should do something different. There is a precedence to do it. If Law Director was there, he would ask him if there are legal ramifications for such a move if it is judged unwarranted.

Engineer Bischoff clarified that line of sight is something that should be considered in engineering study. It is not a lone factor, but also 5 or more crashes in a 12-month period is a factor. It is probably worth looking at an updated study, especially because some changes have been made at. That would be his recommendation. There is a process to adding the stop sign, including advance notification and publication. Working on the parking issue is a simpler solution. It is also easier to go back if it does not make the changes needed for the intersection.

Mr. (Josh) Daniels stated that those people are parking there because they do not have a better place to park. A car could easily be hit there. He does not believe that they would need to reverse off a 4 way stop.

Safety Director Robbins stated that 4-way stop will not solve the problem at Henry. The parking spaces are always full, not necessarily one person. There would be a total of 5 spaces impacted. Two of those vehicles belonged to a house on the north side of the street. Mr. Schaber said that the individual may be parking other vehicles on Uncapher as well.

Safety Director Robbins stated that cars must move in a 72-hour period, must be registered, and legally parked. Residents can park anything other than a commercial semi-tractor on the street from dawn to dusk. Motor homes are considered motor vehicles. Mr. Daniels stated that he thought that should be looked at. He cautions against changing a law based on what happens in a small block area.

Mr. Daniels made a motion to change the intersection of Uncapher and Woodrow to a 4-way stop; Mr. Huddle 2nd. Roll call: Ayes: Mr. Schaber, Mr. Huddle, Mr. Daniels; Nays: Safety Director Robbins, Engineer Bischoff

LEGISLATION GOES TO COUNCIL WITH 3-2 APPROVAL

ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

There being no further business, Mr. Schaber adjourned the meeting at 8:00 PM.

Chairman Schaber

Clerk of Council