

TRAFFIC SAFETY COMMISSION MINUTES
7:00 p.m., Monday, May 12, 2008
Public Safety Building, 401 E. Third Street, Newberg, OR

"Mission Statement: To give the citizens of Newberg a forum to voice traffic safety concerns, evaluate related issues, provide a liaison with the City and promote traffic safety within the community."

Members

Present: Chair Michael Simpson Doris Brandt Andrew Cookson
Jennifer Dawson Bryce Jones Leland Parks
Ronald Sult Lesley Woodruff

Members

Absent: Vice Chair Dick Meyer (excused)

Staff

Present: Paul Chiu, Senior Engineer
Tim Weaver, Police Sergeant
Jennifer Nelson, Recording Secretary

Others

Present: John Viola, Michael J. Braem, Ruth Harshfield, Steven R. Salmon, Ron Reed

CHAIR MICHAEL SIMPSON CALLED THE MEETING TO ORDER AT 7:01 PM.

A) Review and approve minutes of April 14, 2008

MOTION: Brandt/Jones to approve the Minutes of April 14, 2008 as amended. (8 Yes/0 No/1 Absent [Meyer]) Motion carried.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE FLOOR

Mr. John Viola shared his concern for the heavy traffic on 9th Street and the intersection at Blaine Street because of no stop sign on the south portion of Blaine Street. He stated that people travel quickly down that road and through the intersection well over the posted 15 mph and rarely stop at the posted signs. Since the road turns to gravel in that area, there is a lot of skidding and there had even been an incident where a vehicle had to be pulled out by a tow truck. He cited several narrow escape incidents between vehicles and pedestrians, especially children and a woman with a stroller and a child on a tricycle. He added teenage drivers are not the only problem; adults of every age are as well. He requested something be done to prevent possible injury or fatality such as speed bumps and police monitoring or at least another stop sign. He mentioned his previous attempts to contact police officers and his discouragement that nothing has been done yet.

Mr. Michael J. Braem also lives in the area and he supported the points made by **Mr. Viola**. He mentioned the problems with the traffic starting when the public park first opened down the road. His primary concerns are for the children in the neighborhood and he recommended speed bumps.

Mr. Paul Chiu, Senior Engineer, asked if the problems with the traffic occurred only during peak hours. He was told the park hours of operation had nothing to do with it. He recommended bringing Chehalem Park and Recreation District (CPRD) into the dialog concerning the traffic patterns and go from there to find a solution. He was requested to study the issue and prepare a report for the next meeting.

Commissioner Bryce Jones suggested placing a speed trailer in the area as a temporary solution.

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Ruth Harshfield, Executive Director of Alliance for Community Safety (ACTS) Oregon, shared some information about mini grants available through ACTS Oregon and gave examples of what other areas around the state have used the money to fund. She spoke of problems around the state including older drivers and increases in DUI crashes involving prescription medications. She explained the grants could be for \$5,000 but could not be used to supplant personnel hours or overtime. She also spoke of bicycle safety grants, which are also \$5,000 for activities like "bike rodeos" and helmet distribution. The application process is completed by the end of May and the grants awarded by September the next year. She announced ACTS Oregon would be hosting a breakfast meeting at their office on June 4th to discuss travel options and commuting. She also spoke of the transportation safety conference coming up October 22nd-24th.

A) Request for 2-hour parking along Wynooski Road at the Sandoz neighborhood (TSC-08-007)

Mr. Paul Chiu, Senior Engineer, presented the staff report (see official record for full report). He stated he did not have any decisions or recommendations at this time and suggested there may need to be an interagency meeting with Yamhill County and City staff since part of Wynooski Road is a County road.

Mr. Steven R. Salmon, Owner of Salmon Concrete, testified he has owned his concrete contracting company for twenty-eight years and lived at his current residence at Sandoz Road and Wynooski Road for twenty-four years. He said the neighborhood is changing very quickly and he has observed the area turning into a sort of truck stop for over-load trucks. He mentioned quite a few trucks with trailers actually park in the area for overnight or for days at a time when they do not actually go to any of the area businesses. He mentioned some conflicts he had with some of the truck drivers and his concerns for the safety issues with blocked driveways and the inability to see oncoming traffic on Wynooski Road being quite dangerous. The letter he submitted has been supported almost 100% by the other business and landowners in the area and they seem to feel the same way he does. He mentioned the problem has been increasing over the last three to four years. He added he was sympathetic to the truck drivers not being able to park their trucks when they want to get home; but he also felt it was unfair to the other business owners, like him, who spent a lot of money to provide their own truck parking and on-street parking, curbs, and sidewalk improvements that cannot even be used by their customers. He said he would like to see some limitation for parking there to prevent truck parking overnight and for days at a time.

Commissioner Leland Parks wondered if there was any concern for limiting the parking for the businesses there.

Mr. Salmon replied he did not see it as a problem since the spaces are already not available all day and night. He thought it would be great to have some on-street parking short term for people coming to the businesses.

Commissioner Jones asked if there were any lots owned by the City where trucks could park.

Mr. Tim Weaver, Police Sergeant, replied he did not know of any and recognized this as an ongoing problem for all communities. He spoke of the permit system within the City where truck drivers may apply for a permit to park their unloaded tractors at their residence. He agreed there was not question of this being a safety hazard in this area.

Commissioner Jones mentioned seeing the A-DEC, Inc. parking lot being used for breaking up doubles and triples; he wondered if that was an option for others to use. Staff replied it is private property and it is used for that company's own transportation and freight needs only. There is also a huge liability concern for commercial freight haulers parking on private property.

Mr. Salmon added he had problems in the past with freight trucks going to the paper mill using Sandoz Road, which is not intended for trucks to go through, and he was able to resolve those issues directly with the business owners. He expressed his sympathy for the truck drivers but he also felt some of them have been disrespectful to the neighborhood and business owners by parking their loaded trailers in driveways that do not belong to them; especially when they do not even live in the area.

Sergeant Weaver asked if the truck parking went down farther than the mattress factory. He replied that it often did and some of the photos provided show trucks in that area.

Mr. Chiu asked if the trucks were parking on both sides of Wyooski Road. He stated they were only parking on the developed side.

Commissioner Andrews Cookson asked staff if there was any ordinance addressing this issue that they can fall back on for support. Staff mentioned the problem was that the road is part City and part County.

Staff was directed to conduct further studies, meet with the appropriate County officials, and report on this topic in July. Discussion followed concerning the changes that may or may not occur with the traffic signal and other changes being made by ODOT in the near future.

Mr. Salmon added he did not want to see no truck parking allowed there because he felt it was a great place for trucks to pull over safely to check GPS systems and such; he just felt the time they can stay parked there should be limited.

OLD BUSINESS

A) Request School Zone Flashing Lights (TSC-08-005)

PRESENTATION: Capital Enterprise Representative Ron Reed will speak to the Traffic Safety Commission and provide traffic safety equipment demonstrations and answer questions.

Mr. Ron Reed, Capital Enterprise, completed a demonstration for use of a digital traffic speed sign in a school zone area and answered questions.

Chair Simpson expressed concerns for the solar powered units being used in the northwest since nine months of the year is primarily cloud covered. He was told a site inspection could be completed, the panel upsized, and a battery could run for fourteen days still collecting energy. He did recommend hardwiring the unit for the uses intended for the school zones.

Discussion followed on where other units like this were being used around Oregon and how the signs would require a foundation to place the pole into which holds the light. There were concerns expressed about how the unit could be moved around to various places during the trial period, which could be for 30 days, 60 days, or maybe even 90 days depending on the vendor.

The prices ranged from \$9,000 and up for the solar system, \$6,500 for the 120-volt system, \$7,200 for solar L-tech systems, and \$6,300 for 120-volt, L-tech systems. Numbers are based on different versions and different amenities on them. The ODOT grant program for bicycle and pedestrians safety was also mentioned as a possible option to assist with funding later.

Chair Simpson suggested Hwy 219 at N. Everest Road where several residents cross from a low-income residential area for services on the other side of Hwy 219. He thought a push-button option would make sense in this area and cost less than a 4-way stop light, especially if grants are available. Staff discussed the signalization need in the area due to development with the Orchards Lair homes, tying it in with the problem of pedestrian crossing, and needing to wait until the development and the ODOT Hwy 219 project is completed.

Discussion followed to develop a list of areas that could benefit from the sign demonstration, getting an approval permit from ODOT, talking with staff at the City, responsible entities for providing signs like this, and how to follow up on this matter.

Mr. Chiu recommended finding community support for this type of sign and possibly fundraising options for funding if the citizens feel this could be a beneficial purchase. He suggested running an article in the local paper could be a way to inform the public of the reasons and benefits of this type of sign. Staff was directed to meet with Public Works staff to come back in a month with recommendations and an estimate of City costs.

This item was tabled until additional information is provided.

STAFF REPORTS - GENERAL INFORMATION

A) Police

Sergeant Weaver reported on four recent accidents resulting in five fatalities, which Newberg public safety officers have responded to, and the impacts they have had on the community. He also reported one of the motorcycle officers was involved in an accident as well. This month has been the second highest month of the year for activities with 3,950 calls for services and eighteen DUII arrests (averaging 2-3 per night with 4 in one single 24 hour period); one included use of prescription drugs. He spoke of a retirement and the intended replacements for after July 1st since the City is currently in the middle of the budget process. He noted some changes that would be occurring with the administrative process for Traffic Safety Commission as well.

B) Engineering – Project updates

Mr. Chiu updated the TSC on situation with Sheridan Street and College Street (Hwy 219) intersection safety (TSC-08-002a). He has not heard back from ODOT yet on the timing of the signal at College Street and Hancock Street.

Chair Simpson asked about the previous suggestion to make alternating one-way streets on the north and south bound downtown streets.

Mr. Chiu replied they were on a holding pattern right now and strong evidence would have to be presented to ODOT to change 1st Street from one-way to two-way. He added this would be more than a limited decision and would involve more than the City.

Chair Simpson stated he would like to see the issue on the table because it would solve many problems such as parking issues, pedestrian crossing, and speeding.

Mr. Chiu continued with updates on the raised crosswalk for Fulton Street at Friendsview (TSC-08-004) because of the pedestrian fatality there last November. They are still fine-tuning and considering installing this type of raised crosswalk in other places, but installation at Fulton is planned for this summer. George Fox University and Friendsview are sharing the costs. He also stated the bid opened last week on the pavement rehabilitation project on 9th Street and Meridian Street. The contract will be awarded in June and the plan is to finish before July.

ADJOURN TO NEXT MEETING

MOTION: Brandt/Sult to adjourn at 8:26 PM until the next meeting on June 9, 2008. (8 Yes/0 No/1 Absent [Meyer]) Motion carried.


Jennifer L. Nelson
Recording Secretary


Michael Simpson
Traffic Safety Commission Chair