

TRAFFIC SAFETY COMMISSION MINUTES
7:00 p.m., Monday, June 9, 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

Staff

Absent: Vice Chair Dick Meyer (unexcused)

Staff

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

Others

Present: Mary Clemens, David Clemens, Steven R. Salmon

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

A) Review and approve minutes of May 12, 2008

MOTION: Sult/Jones to approve the Minutes of May 12, 2008. (8 Yes/0 No/1 Absent [Meyer]) Motion carried.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE FLOOR

None.

NEW BUSINESS

A) Blaine Street grant application endorsement (see David Beam's TSC memo)

TIME – 7:05 PM

Mr. Paul Chiu, Senior Engineer, presented the staff report (see official record for full report).

MOTION: Brandt/Cookson to support the City of Newberg to submit a pedestrian and bicycle grant application for the Blaine Street improvement project.

VOTE: To support the submission of a grant application for Blaine Street. (8 Yes/0 No/1 Absent [Meyer]) Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS

C) Washington-Sherman – Traffic Data (TSC-08-008)

TIME – 7:14 PM

Mr. Chiu presented the staff report (see official record for full report).

The Commissioners reviewed the data with staff and discussed the recommendation to leave the intersection as it is since the speeding situation was determined as mild, with 85% of drivers traveling within the posted speed limit.

Commissioner Andrew Cookson asked if there were any standards for monitoring during bad weather and what influence the weather conditions could have on a traffic study. Staff replied they would look into what the weather data was for that day, to ensure weather conditions did not cause drivers to travel at slower speeds; he recalls mild weather during the study though.

Mrs. Mary Clemens stated as a resident on Sherman Street spoke of her own observations of speeding on this street. She mentioned her many travels as a pedestrian in Newberg and the differences in safety from one street to the next in regards to speeding vehicles. She mentioned the few cars on the study recorded at 92 mph and 62 mph and expressed concerns, not only for her own child, but also for all the other small children in the neighborhood out riding bikes and playing soccer. She said there are only two stop signs encountered on Hancock Street before drivers get to Illinois Street, the first at Sheridan Street and the second at the train tracks, which allows drivers to gain speed without stopping. She mentioned being witness to drivers that even speed through the stop signs at the tracks as well. She added many commuters seem to use this road as a bypass to traffic on Hwy 240. She would love a 4-way stop sign at this intersection, or any other solution to slow drivers down.

Mr. David Clemens supported his wife's testimony and added people tend to drive slower when they see a traffic analysis is going on. He felt installing stop signs were a minimal expenditure to provide safety for their child and other children in the neighborhood from speeding motorists in this area.

Chair Simpson sympathized with their concerns and pointed out there are several neighborhoods who do not have stop signs experiencing the same problems; unfortunately, it is not feasible to place stop signs at every intersection, especially when the traffic study do not warrant it. He added studies have shown that too many stop signs can actually cause drivers to speed up in order to make up for lost time caused by stopping as well.

Commissioner Cookson asked about the criteria for speed bumps and who is financially responsible. Staff replied that citizens incur the cost of installing speed bumps and the City does not currently have a policy for speed bumps installation or criteria.

Commissioner Jennifer Dawson agreed with the couple's concerns with traffic studies and spoke of her own experiences trying to get stop signs installed in her own neighborhood. She wondered if the neighborhood raised the money to cover the costs of the signs if the City would approve the installation.

Chair Simpson stated that only one household complaining and the results of the traffic study would not warrant approval for stop signs at this time. He did suggest, however, if the neighborhood could be organized to support the need for stop signs there might be a chance they will get more attention from the Traffic Safety Commission as well as the City Council. Overriding the staff recommendation cannot be justified at this time.

Commissioner Bryce Jones spoke of his own witness to commuters using other roads as a way to get around several cars traveling on Hwy 240.

Mrs. Clemens stated they would be back because this issue is important to them. They will attempt to get neighbors to sign a petition. She requested additional patrolling in the area in the meantime. Staff offered their support if they needed any further assistance and even offered to revisit this situation again in the future.

B) Sandoz-Wynooski – Yamhill County response (TSC-08-007)

TIME – 7:41 PM

Mr. Chiu presented the staff report, stating the City has permission from the County to establish their own parking limitations in this area (see official record for full report).

Discussion followed to decide if a two-hour or four-hour limitation would be best, making this a limited decision and acquiring City Attorney approval as to City's authority as well.

Mr. Steven R. Salmon, Salmon Concrete, approached the Commission to discuss details of the area and the businesses affected by this. He agreed with a 4-hour parking limit in order to allow space and time for truck drivers to stop and change loads or have lunch or check their Global Positioning Systems (GPS), but he did not feel it was safe or fair for them to be parking overnight for days at a time.

Alternatives for signage language and posting was discussed with concerns for which side of the street required signs and how that may affect drivers parking in other areas as a result. Staff suggested including a beginning and ending point within the motion.

MOTION: **Sult/Jones** to approve a 4-hour parking limitation within all established parking areas on the north side of Wynooski Road from Hwy 219 to Dog Ridge Road as a limited decision with the legal authority of the Traffic Safety Commission verified by the City Attorney.

VOTE: To approve 4-hour parking limitations on Wynooski Road as a limited decision. (8 Yes/0 No/1 Absent [Meyer]) Motion carried.

Mr. Salmon thanked the TSC for their time and consideration in this matter.

A) College-Sheridan – ODOT's Response (TSC-08-002a)

TIME – 8:09 PM

Mr. Chiu presented the staff report, stating ODOT did not believe there was a problem with the signal timing at College Street and Hancock Street (please see official record for full report).

Discussions followed about the suggestion to move some of the downtown streets into a one-way grid and the impact concerns on the state highway system.

Commissioner Lesley Woodruff expressed favor towards moving in this direction.

Commissioner Cookson suggested conducting a poll of the public's opinion. He also spoke of a possibility of increasing the flow of traffic on some streets as drivers attempt to get around on one-way streets, but also supported the idea as long as it is supported by the public.

Mr. Chiu stated this would be a City wide limited decision and a consultant would need to be hired to determine expense, impact, and ideal locations for the boundaries of the one-way grid.

Chair Simpson also supported the idea because he felt it would take care of several traffic issues, including parking, pedestrian safety, and maneuverability around town on narrow roads.

Mr. Tim Weaver, Police Sergeant, stated one possible problem could be commuter traffic using residential streets to get around back-ups on 99W.

Chair Simpson felt appropriate signage would be necessary as streets such as Sheridan Street are not collector streets and therefore not meant to have heavy traffic on them. He did feel this kind of thinking was proactive and "outside of the box" and asked what the first step would be to officially make this happen.

Mr. Chiu stated a consultant would be necessary to look into traffic studies and come up with modeling. Later public hearings would have to occur for the entire City of Newberg as well as those who must travel through Newberg to McMinnville area. He noted budget constraints and the need to take care and time with this matter.

Commissioner Leland Parks expressed hesitation over what the public would want because people do not often like such dramatic changes and he felt it would depend on their perspective of the problems at that intersection.

Sergeant Weaver replied he was neutral on the idea and would be interested to see what the public thought.

Commissioner Ronald Sult offered a perspective as a school bus driver and spoke of the current difficulty to maneuver on the older streets with parking on both sides. He felt this is a challenge though and spoke of the history of the streets and preserving that.

Commissioner Jones thought people would like it once it was established.

Commissioner Woodruff approved of the creative, proactive thinking. She thought it was exciting to think about new ways of doing things in Newberg, rather than just reacting to issues brought forward by the citizens.

Chair Simpson thought he might compose a letter to the editor to see what people are thinking about it. He said no action could occur at this point, but he would like to see this idea studied farther in the future.

D) Blaine Street 4-way stop request – Photos (TSC-08-009)

TIME – 8:32 PM

Mr. Chiu presented staff report (see official record for full report).

MOTION: Jones/Brandt to make the intersection on Blaine Street a 4-way stop.

VOTE: To make a 4-way stop at the intersection on Blaine Street. (8 Yes/0 No/1 Absent [Meyer]) Motion carried.

Chair Simpson called for a short recess at 8:38 PM and reconvened at 8:45 PM.

STAFF REPORTS - GENERAL INFORMATION

B) Engineering

Mr. Chiu mentioned the walking signs on 1st street and Hancock Street were fixed. He handed out an example of the raised crosswalk that is to be installed at Fulton Street in August. He offered details on the pavement rehab project on Meridian from Hwy 99W to the railroad. He also distributed a copy of the “School Area Safety” guide as a resource for the commissioners. He updated progress on Villa Street and a discussion followed concerning landscape islands and the challenges they pose.

Commissioner Sult stated there are parking problems occurring past Mountainview School and the new add on down to roundabout with people parking on both sides. Staff replied they have looked into this and they are considering no parking in that area.

A) Police

Sergeant Weaver reported on upcoming personnel changes and new positions. He stated the numbers of citations were down this month because of a recent accident with a motorcycle officer; there were 539 citations in April and only 436 in May. They are still looking to total the motorcycle. There were 18 DUII arrests with a total of 62 for the year, placing us ahead of last year’s pace. Traffic warnings have also increased from 81 to 135 this month. He also noted some changes in personnel with the City’s patrol dog. He noted the success of the recent shooting investigation that occurred in Dundee and commended the officers involved with that. He spoke of pedestrian stings planned and some confusion with drivers stopping at green lights for pedestrians. He spoke of interagency efforts used in other counties and some efforts being made by Newberg to participate on some level with other agencies within the County.

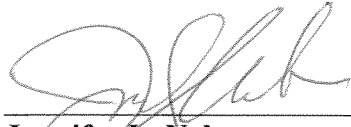
Commissioner Jones brought up an issue from Tualatin concerning a car passing a bicyclist in a no passing zone for discussion.

Commissioner Sult mentioned seeing kids at schools riding bikes without helmets a lot more.

Commissioner Woodruff informed the others of the idea of walking school busses as one community's response to rising gas prices.

ADJOURN TO NEXT MEETING

MOTION: Brandt/Cookson to adjourn at 9:25 PM until the next meeting on July 14, 2008. (8 Yes/0 No/1 Absent [Meyer]) Motion carried.

 7/14/08

Jennifer L. Nelson
Recording Secretary



Michael Simpson
Traffic Safety Commission Chair