

TRAFFIC SAFETY COMMISSION MINUTES
7:00 p.m., Monday, February 13, 2012
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.”

CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chair Neal Klein called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM.

ROLL CALL

Members

Present:	Neal Klein, Chair	Lesley Woodruff, V. Chair	Doris Brandt	Karl Birky
	Dianna Cotter	Ron Johns	Kari Lawson	James Oravetz

Members

Absent: Shannon Eoff (excused) Hannah Kinney, Student Commissioner (excused)

Staff

Present:	Brian Casey, Police Chief	Paul Chiu, Senior Engineer
	Mary Newell, Support Services Manager	Jennifer Nelson, Deputy City Recorder

Others

Present: Ryan Howard, Claudia Schendel, Albert Keuftedjian, and Leah Griffith

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was performed.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A) Review and approve the Traffic Safety Commission minutes for January 9, 2012.

MOTION #1: Brandt/Oravetz to approve the Traffic Safety Commission minutes for January 9, 2012, as amended. Motion carried (8 Yes/0 No/1 Absent [Eoff]).

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE FLOOR

Mr. Ryan Howard, Newberg City Councilor, spoke about the Council's adoption of the bicycle plan which is to be installed in April. He felt two uncontrolled intersections along Meridian Street at 3rd and 5th Streets may have some issues once the planned bicycle route is installed. He said although it works fine now, with shared roadway markings and way finding elements there will be a conflict with motorists not seeing the bicyclists. He asked the commission to consider adding stop signs in at least one of the two directions, ideally on the cross streets since there are already stop signs on 2nd, 4th and 6th Streets and the bicyclists would not have to stop while allowing a margin of safety.

Commissioner Dianna Cotter asked why it would be best to put stop signs on 3rd and 5th Streets instead of Meridian Street. Councilor Howard replied he is not an expert, but he thinks it would facilitate the bicyclist better.

Commissioner Lesley Woodruff added that alternating also allows for drivers going down Meridian Street to no stop at every intersection.

Councilor Howard said it is a counterbalance of facilitating the bicyclists by not encouraging drivers to use the road as a cut-through. Normally he would not recommend this, but since there are already two stops then it will not be as much of a problem as it could be in other places. From a bicyclists perspective he is always concerned about cars not realizing they need to stop and yield to those on the right when there are no signs present.

Commissioner Cotter asked if they have taken a look at how much traffic will be on this bike path.

Councilor Howard said it is hard to tell how many bicyclists may move to using this road from others if they do not use it already, which is the hope. He also mentioned the ACTS Oregon grant was received by the City for the Safe Routes to School program plan with Joan Austin Elementary School and they are required to participate in the Walk/Bike Challenge in May. They are planning to develop this further by extending participation to all schools in the district and the entire City encouraging downtown businesses and employees to walk or bike to work as much as possible during the event, which kicks off tentatively on June 9th.

Chair Klein stated they would move discussions for the stop signs on Meridian Street under New Business on the agenda this evening.

NEW BUSINESS

A) TSC-12-002 Crater Lane
TIME – 7:12 PM

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

Commissioner Karl Birky asked if staff had the sense that traffic would slow down through the narrower, undeveloped section of Crater Lane. Mr. Chiu replied the data was collected in the wider area where there is a four-way stop and he would think that traffic would go slower in the narrow area.

Commissioner Woodruff agreed with staff that a stop sign would not be the right application and suggested occasional enforcement or placing a speed trailer there may be more useful since it is a local street and the same people are driving there every day. She also suggested getting the school involved by sending reminders home in the newsletter to parents or get some kids to volunteer to walk in the area with a sign before school starts; she felt getting the kids and parents involved could provide a good visual reminder.

Mr. Chiu said there is about two thousand feet of roadway here with no stop signs and this could be an opportunity to consider another stop at the halfway point to break up this long stretch, he added it would need to be looked into though to see if warranted.

Commissioner Cotter said she also lives on a long straight street with no stop signs and she agrees with the concerns here with the lack of signage and the length of the road and the number of people in the 85th percentile. She said enforcement may help but she would support increasing control and also putting in a speed sign as a reminder.

Ms. Claudia Schendel said her primary concern was for the foot traffic every day, not just at the school, but also late at night with pedestrians, bicyclists, joggers, and dog walkers who are walking on the road because the sidewalk ends before this area. She said there have been many close calls and it is scary with drivers speeding at night. She also suggested the speed study may be different if recorded on a day that is not as sunny as when

this occurred. She added there are a lot of older people in the area and there are no signs until you get to the school.

Chair Klein suggested placing a stop sign at Hazelnut Drive and Crater Lane for the north and southbound traffic would possibly slow drivers down in the undeveloped area.

Chair Klein also thought since there is not any narrowing of the road and it is an undeveloped area they should maybe talk with the Planning Commission (PC) about putting in a traffic calming device in the middle of the road to help through that long stretch.

Commissioner Karl Birky felt it was a dangerous practice to try to solve problems when they have qualified city staff, a Transportation System Plan (TSP) plan, and engineers that know about warrants for stop signs. He said they have not looked at warrants or street designations here. He said streets are intended to move traffic through town and they should consult staff for their opinions before trying to solve the problem on the fly.

Mr. Chiu agreed he usually cautions the use of stop signs and the intersection would need to be examined for warrants and interactions with the TSP so an undue burden is not created somewhere else with the installation of stop signs or traffic calming measures. He can only guess at this point until traffic data is studied further. He said they could look at things like encouraging parking on both sides to narrow the road but adding stop signs may have the opposite effect with drivers trying to compensate for stopping by increasing their speed.

Commissioner James Oravetz said he understands calming measures, but felt sometimes traffic control is better using the fantastic results on Vittoria Way as an example.

Commissioner Cotter asked staff if installing speed signs would not have a positive effect and perhaps lower the speed for those who need a reminder. Mr. Chiu said a speed sign may only help those who forget this is a residential area and they should be traveling at 25 mph anyway; he felt drivers are often tuning out while driving and the signs do not register. He did not have high expectations this would help.

Commissioner Ronald Johns suggested a pedestrian sign may be more useful than a speed sign and he really liked the idea of working with the school to remind the parents as they will be the majority of the speeders.

Commissioner Woodruff asked about painting a 25 mph marker on the road as the drivers would be more likely to see this as they are driving over it. Mr. Chiu suspected they would pay less attention to something on the pavement unless they were in a shopping area because people often go through even pavement painted stop signs. He agreed he would like to see a good solution for this area because the majority of the speeds being at 32-33 mph are too much for this area; he mentioned the vehicles parking on both sides again as a way to narrow the street and caution drivers to slow down to avoid hitting cars.

Commissioner Woodruff asked if there is grant money available to build a median or a couple bulbs outs; it would even be great to make them into rain gardens or some multifunction purpose as other cities have done. Mr. Chiu spoke of new experiments in Australia where artificial islands are painted on the pavement in the middle of the road to encourage compliance from drivers.

Commissioner Birky agreed drivers go faster on a straight road rather than a curved one, but it would be a lot of work to put in bulb outs and other things to make the road seem narrow. The best way is to have residents park their cars on both sides of the street rather than taking away the parking to build a median. He spoke of what other cities like Corvallis and Salem have done based on the outcome they wanted and read something from a traffic engineering book about frustrated drivers actually causing more crashes.

Commissioner Kari Lawson had concerns with parking if medians are installed and something is developed later. She asked staff if all street parking would be gone or just one side would be available. Mr. Chiu said it depends on how aggressive the medians are and where they are proposed; it would require input from homeowners and neighbors in the area to see if they are willing to help fund it.

Chair Klein said it appears that none of residents empty out of their homes onto Crater Lane because of all the side streets, so he did not think they would be taking any parking from in front of the homes.

Commissioner Woodruff felt they should start by contacting the school and involving the surrounding community before doing something physical. These are people driving their kids to and from school on these streets and there are kids on the streets.

Commissioner Lawson also suggested increasing patrols and placing the speed trailer at that location. Police Chief Brian Casey said he already sent an email requesting the traffic team to put patrols in area.

Commissioner Cotter agreed with the Commissioners Lawson and Woodruff and added they should also distribute a letter to residents asking for their input to see if they feel it is a problem or if they have suggestions.

Chair Klein asked staff if there were any plans for that undeveloped area. Staff replied there were not at the moment. Chair Klein asked staff to place this item on the agenda calendar for following up discussion in six months, which can be adjusted if anything comes up.

Commissioner Woodruff added planning staff should also be contacted to see if anything is going on there.

B) TSC-12-003 Everest Road (Texaco)

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

Mr. Albert Keuftedjian, Owner of the Texaco Gas Station, distributed some of his own pictures to the commissioners and discussed problems with traffic heading east stacking up at this intersection to turn without understanding they are blocking off his customers. This is affecting his business and he cannot afford to lose customers who decide to drive past and move onto another business when they cannot get in to his station. He said he owns the property there and more than this being a safety concern, it is also a business concern and he wants to place a sign on his property to not block the driveway to see if drivers will respect this because he does not know what else to do.

Commissioner Birky expressed concerns for business owners putting up traffic signs around town. Mr. Keuftedjian argued that it is his property and he should be able to put a sign on it, which would be more professional looking than all the sandwich signs around town. Chair Klein argued those signs are usually for advertising, not to regulate traffic on a City roadway, so there is a difference.

Commissioner Cotter added he may also get into some trouble with the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT). She asked if the problem is primarily with drivers attempting to turn left or right. Mr. Keuftedjian replied it was both. Commissioner Cotter stated in an ideal situation with unlimited funding the problem could be solved by eliminating the ability to turn here but there is not another alternative in that area. She said she respects Mr. Keuftedjian's point of view and would like to help him in any way they can that is applicable to other businesses and within the City Code.

Commissioner Oravetz asked Mr. Keuftedjian if he considered opening the pumps to both directions. Mr. Keuftedjian said he tried that but 90% of his business is from west to east, especially his loyal customers, and

those going east to west block the three pumps and it is difficult to get to cars when they have gas tanks on opposite sides.

Commissioner Birky asked about the distance from the crossbar to the driveway. Mr. Chiu said the stop bar is fairly close to 99W but behind the crosswalk; it is possible to draw a white box and still have one vehicle outside of the box waiting to clear out of the intersection; he did not know the exact distance. Commissioner Birky spoke of ODOT having standards for placement and wondered if there would be enough space there to leave a gap there and he also wondered if semi-trucks or longer vehicles would block the box. Mr. Chiu did think that could pose a problem as an exception; however, they could at least provide a minimum solution without over-restricting traffic there.

Mr. Keuftedjian stated at least half of the access would help so a vehicle can get in; he has 30 feet there.

Commissioner Oravetz recommended staff look into the dimensions and legalities before bringing the information back to the Commission. Mr. Chiu referred to some of the figures and acceptable markings from the staff report in the agenda packet and noted the staff preference as option C with the crosshatching over the single "X" in the box. Discussions followed about the cost effectiveness and durability of thermal markings vs. painting the lines.

Commissioner Birky cautioned staff to make sure there is adequate space; he said it is not good enough to just look at it and make a decision. He encouraged staff to talk to ODOT and make sure all the distances are appropriate and the numbers correct as spelled out in the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). Mr. Chiu said he will talk with ODOT and get concurrence from them and work with them as they may have an interest here.

MOTION #2: Cotter/Oravetz to approve TSC-12-003 requesting access review on Everest Road intersection with 99W at the Texaco gas station with the staff recommendation to install the Option C of figure 3B-18, a white box with hatch lines painted on the pavement, from the intersection to the driveway at Texaco; allowing at least one vehicle to be behind the crosswalk or stop sign whichever is more restrictive for vehicles turning right onto 99W; and only after ODOT is contacted for approval. Motion carried (8 Yes/0 No/1 Absent [Eoff]).

Chair Klein recessed at 8:32 PM and reconvened at 8:43 PM.

C) TSC-12-004 Howard Street (Library)
TIME – 8:43 PM

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

Ms. Leah Griffith, Library Director, explained this was not a formal request, just an observation by library staff and a problem that has been around for a long time. She discussed the specifics about the entrance to the one-way street with the presence of the sidewalk at the intersection after ODOT improvements and the fact that most drivers think it is a parking lot, rather than a street and therefore, do not abide by the posted traffic signs. She said most drivers do not even realize they are going the wrong way.

Commissioner Cotter asked about the reasoning behind making this a one-way street in the first place. Ms. Griffith explained there was not enough room for two-way traffic with the parking and mentioned discussions for changes with the Cultural District would allow this to be addressed when those changes take place.

Commissioner Doris Brandt asked if there was such a thing as a sign for "This Way Out" with an arrow to be placed in front of the parked cars. Mr. Chiu said this could create an inconvenience or obstacle on the sidewalk

and could be unsightly; it is possible to do this, but he is not sure about the results. Commissioner Brandt said they could at least place one sign on the tree there.

Commissioner Johns asked if a lot of people are willfully going the wrong way or have they just never paid attention. Staff replied they are treating it like a parking lot and adding another sign may not help at all.

Commissioner Oravetz said other than installing a one-way spike strip he did not see what else could be done.

Commissioner Birky suggested since people think it is a parking lot, maybe it should be and have the entrance from the highway closed off, especially with the additional traffic that will be coming when the Chehalem Cultural Center expands.

Commissioner Lawson also suggested making the parking spots angled in the future so people backing out of the spaces can only go the right way. Ms. Griffith spoke of the importance of retaining close parking spots to the library entrance for elderly, handicap and mothers with small children; she said the entrance from the highway is also important for access by their delivery truck. The Library Board has discussed these things and considered moving the parking to more of a parallel parking set up.

Commissioner Cotter asked about the timeline for the proposed Cultural District changes. Ms. Griffith said there are master plans but no money to do it at this point; there have also been discussions in connection with the Sheridan Street public parking lately. Commissioner Cotter felt this might be something left to the PC and the Library Board at this time because there is not anything the TSC can really do.

Chair Klein suggested readdressing this area after decisions are made regarding the Cultural District and after proposals are made by the consultant being hired to examine the N. College and Sheridan Streets area.

MOTION #3: Birky/Brandt to take no action on TSC-12-004 regarding the Howard Street one-way traffic situation at the Newberg Public Library, leaving the area as it is with current signage. Motion carried (8 Yes/0 No/1 Absent [Eoff]).

- D) Discuss Meridian Street stop sign request by Councilor Ryan Howard to coordinate with bicycle plan

TIME – 9:20 PM

This item was added to the agenda by the Chair after it was brought up during Public Comments for discussion. Mr. Chiu stated a study needs to be conducted to see if this is a warranted request before a decision can be made.

Chair Klein directed staff to conduct a study. Mr. Chiu replied he would probably set up two studies on Meridian Street and 3rd Street as well as Meridian Street and 5th Street to make a determination from all four legs of traffic.

Commissioner Lawson asked if they can get accurate results since the bicycle plan has only been approved and not implemented yet. Mr. Chiu said this can be done prior to installation to determine the motorized vehicle flow, especially while school is still in session. The vehicle traffic is not expected to change after the bicycle plan is implemented, but they are anticipating getting more bicyclists to use the road. Chair Klein tabled the discussion until staff returns with a report.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

STAFF REPORTS - GENERAL INFORMATION

A) Police update

Police Chief Brian Casey reported efforts are focused on the preliminary budget process and shortages in the general fund impacting the public safety staff and budget.

B) Engineering update

Mr. Chiu gave updates on the TSC-11-020 marked crosswalk request at N. College Street and Sheridan Street. ODOT is looking into warrants and staff will be contacted when the investigation is complete. Staff is working on a Request for Proposal (RFP) for a traffic consultant to examine the area and provide proposals. The speed zone request and recommendations from the ODOT order were accepted. He suggested discussing a webinar on "Complete Streets" during the work session next month in addition having ODOT attend. He shared a letter from Mr. Chuck Zickefoose complimenting them on a great job done with the marked crosswalk on Villa Road.

Ms. Jennifer Nelson, Minutes Recorder, offered a reminder for the Mayor's upcoming Volunteer Appreciation Dessert to be held on April 30, 2012, from 7:00 to 8:30 PM in the Public Safety Building (PSB) and asked the commissioners to save the date on their calendars to attend.

C) Log of Decisions

Ms. Mary Newell, Support Services Manager, gave updates on the Log of Decisions.

D) Items from Commissioners

Chair Klein asked staff to look into other traffic safety groups in Yamhill County and report back. He discussed the idea to move office elections to allow more time for more new member training before attending a meeting; he is working with the city attorney as there will be Code changes needed to do this.

Commissioner Woodruff discussed haiku signs for pedestrian safety.

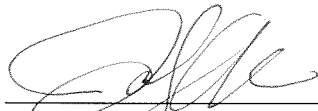
Commissioner Cotter asked staff to see if a representative from the Information Technology department could be available at the work session as well to assist with email problems being experienced by the commissioners.

A reminder was given that a work session will be held immediately prior to next meeting beginning at 6:00 PM.

ADJOURN TO NEXT MEETING

The meeting adjourned at 9:43 PM until March 12, 2012.

Approved by the Newberg Traffic Safety Commission this 12th day of March, 2012.



Jennifer L. Nelson
Deputy City Recorder



Neal S. Klein
Traffic Safety Commission Chair