



TRAFFIC COMMISSION
City Hall—Council Chambers, 590 40th Ave NE
Tuesday, July 20, 2021
6:00 PM

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Schluender at 6:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Members present: Ciesynski, Davis, Finkelson, Nekora, Schluender

Staff present: Kathy Young, Assistant City Engineer
Captain Markham, Police

Council Liaison: Amáda Márquez Simula

APPROVE MINUTES

1. Motioned by Davis, seconded by Ciesynski, to approve the minutes of June 7, 2021, with amendment. Motion passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

Present: Christopher Elsenbast, Prodeo Academy (via Zoom)

2. REQUEST FOR NO PARKING DURING STUDENT ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL TIMES ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF 42ND AVENUE AND THE WEST SIDE OF 4TH STREET FOR PRODEO ACADEMY

Prodeo Academy is a new building on University Avenue. Christopher Elsenbast has requested No Parking adjacent to Prodeo Academy on the south side of 42nd Avenue and the west side of 4th Street from 6:00 am to 8:00 am and from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm. to facilitate student drop off and pick up. Due to parked cars in the area it's been challenging for parents to drop off and pick up students quickly.

At the last meeting commissioners felt that 42nd Avenue was narrow enough to consider no parking along the south side. However, according to the dismissal diagram for student pickup, they questioned if 4th Street should be designated as no parking or as a loading zone. Item was tabled until the next meeting in July pending more information from the Prodeo representative.

Davis stated that according to the arrival diagram Prodeo is only utilizing the area on 4th Street for dismissal at a different time. He questioned why there's a difference between the arrival and dismissal zones because it seems like this should be consistent. Mr. Elsenbast advised this will be consistent during the upcoming year. Both areas will be used for arrival and dismissal because they won't have distance learning, so a lot more kids will be dropped off and picked up. They plan to build in 4th Street for cars lining up so both streets will be used for the same amount of time at arrival and dismissal. Schluender advised that we have a proposed motion for either no parking or a loading zone. Asked if they are currently using the designated no parking on 4th

Street as a loading zone with cars moving through. Mr. Elsenbast advised this will be used as a loading zone and its high traffic in the afternoon.

There are also approximately 10-15 vans and taxis that pick up the students. Buses are up front in the parking lot and the taxis and vans come through the back. Students do not walk to 42nd Avenue to load; vehicles pull up on 4th Street. The most traffic is in the morning and the beginning of the dismissal time. This is when cars need a holding area until they come through the traffic line.

Young advised we can call a Public Hearing to designate No Parking, but can step down to a loading zone. Mr. Elsenbast stated times for the loading zone would be 6:30 am to 8 am and 1 pm to 3 pm or 6:30 am to 3:30 pm. Davis suggested 6 am to 3 pm. Young advised it will depend on how the residents feel regarding the 6 am to 3 pm; they may want midday parking available to them. Parking will still be allowed on the east side of 4th Street. Commissioners agreed with no parking on 42nd Avenue.

Motion by Davis to call a Public Hearing to designate “No Parking” on the south side of 42nd Avenue from University Avenue to 4th Street, next to Prodeo Academy. Seconded by Schluender. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion by Davis to call a Public Hearing to designate “Loading Zone 6 AM to 3 PM School Days” on the west side of 4th Street from 42nd Avenue to the south property line of Prodeo Academy. Seconded by Schluender. Motion passed unanimously.

3. REQUEST FOR TRAFFIC CALMING MEASURES ON RESERVOIR BOULEVARD FROM 37TH AVENUE TO 40TH AVENUE

Carrie Gille had requested traffic calming measures on Reservoir Boulevard from 37th Avenue to 41st Avenue, the concern being traffic speed.

Speed counts collected by the Police Department were reviewed at the June meeting. One traffic calming measure is to add striping to make the travel lane seem narrower. The City Council supported the idea of adding white parking lane and bicycle lane striping at a council meeting. On Reservoir Boulevard this will make the travel lane 10', bicycle lane 5.5', and parking lane 7'. Speed counts would be retaken in approximately one year to see if the striping has helped. Staff would also obtain a neighborhood perspective to see if residents feel this has slowed traffic or not.

There will also be upcoming meetings regarding the 37th Avenue project and this could be tied into these meetings to see what people think about the bike lanes. In the meantime, staff will advise residents on Reservoir Boulevard about the striping and allow them to comment. The striping is currently scheduled for August as part of a citywide project. Schluender asked about bicycle counts. These would need to be done manually. Some of the consulting engineers we work with have video equipment, but the tape would then need to be reviewed.

Davis does not feel three blocks of bike lanes are very useful, feels it would make more sense to have them the full length of Reservoir. He understands part of this is Anoka County. He would

like to see some discussion from the City Council as to whether they would want a continuation of the striping and what it would take to work with Anoka County for options and guidance. He knows residents from 40th to 44th have complained about speed on Reservoir Blvd as well.

Finkelson asked if this would be a good opportunity to discuss a crosswalk at 39th Ave and Reservoir Blvd. There's a fair amount of traffic at this intersection making it a good spot for a crosswalk. Young advised we can look at the parameters. There are sidewalks on both sides of Reservoir Blvd but none on 39th Ave; however, this is an offset intersection so we would be running into a landing issue for the crosswalk. Young advised a pedestrian ramp would need to be installed on the opposite side of the street that would point back onto Reservoir Blvd. Finkelson thinks one crosswalk across Reservoir between the two 39th Avenues would be the best, then there would only be one crosswalk and it would be 90 degrees perpendicular to the street. Davis would not feel comfortable with this because this is a common jog for cars-- going from one 39th to the other. He would recommend the north end of the east intersection. He also feels the lighting is insufficient on those corners. There's only one overhead light for the two intersections. Finkelson agrees. Having only one light makes it difficult to see pedestrians.

Motion by Nekora to direct staff to contact property owners on Reservoir Boulevard from 37th Avenue to 40th Avenue regarding plans to stripe bicycle lanes on Reservoir Boulevard. Seconded by Finkelson. Motion passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

Present: Mike Morris, 4713 Heights Drive

4. REQUEST FOR NO PARKING AT THE INTERSECTION OF HEIGHTS DRIVE AND UPLAND CREST

Mr. Mike Morris has requested NO PARKING along the east side of Heights Drive and Upland Crest, near the intersection. The issue is limited visibility for southbound vehicles on Upland Crest, continuing south on Heights Drive.

Upland Crest intersects with Heights Drive at an angle. Southbound traffic on Upland Crest has a YIELD sign before entering the intersection with Heights Drive. The topography of the intersection combined with the curve on Heights Drive limits visibility for southbound traffic. Drivers must proceed cautiously to continue southbound.

Heights Drive and Upland Crest are both 31' back of curb to back of curb. This width is typical for residential streets in Columbia Heights.

Mr. Morris has lived at 4713 Heights Drive for over 20 years. There hasn't been a lot of parking on this corner until recently, which has caused a visibility issue. He hasn't seen any accidents but drivers need to approach very, very slowly and it's difficult to see traffic coming from Upland Crest. It would help visibility if there was no parking designated between the two driveways on Heights Drive. Schluender questioned the amount of parking in the general area. Overall, the amount of parking in the area is relatively full along Heights Drive between 45th and 49th. There's also quite a bit of parking in the wintertime. When traveling north on Heights Drive drivers need to cross over Upland Crest. Due to parked cars on the right hand side of the curve, you can't see approaching southbound cars from Upland Crest until you're in the intersection, making crossing

over to continue on Heights Drive difficult. There is a yield sign coming from Upland Crest but no other traffic control, so it can be a surprise for both parties. When cars are parked on both sides of Heights Drive it becomes even narrower. However, the only real problem spot is when cars are parked between the two driveways on Heights Drive. Cars parked before or after these driveways don't really affect the visibility.

Motion by Finkelson to call a Public Hearing to designate "No Parking" on the east side of Heights Drive between the driveway entrances for 4617 Heights Drive and 4623 Heights Drive. Seconded by Davis. Motion passed unanimously.

REPORTS

City Engineer

5. SIGNAGE IMPROVEMENTS NEXT TO 4003 STINSON BOULEVARD

Public Works added an arrow sign as close to the corner as possible and a flashing light was installed on that arrow sign. A reflective strip was also added to each of the posts.

A disabled parking sign will be installed at 4912 4th Street at the request of the property owner.

Police Chief

None

Commissioners

None

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Schluender, seconded by Ciesynski to adjourn the meeting at 6:40 p.m. Motion passed unanimously.