

**UNAPPROVED
CITY OF BLAINE
TRAFFIC COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
September 5, 2017**

The Blaine Traffic Commission met in the City Hall Chambers on Tuesday, September 5, 2017. Chair Haas called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL – 2017 TRAFFIC COMMISSION

Members Present: Commission Members: Chmielewski, Hill, Mahmudi, Maschke, Skarich, Wold, and Chair Haas

Members Absent: None.

Staff Present: Jean Keely, City Engineer
Sergeant Joseph Sadler

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Item 3.1 – August 9, 2017, Traffic Commission Minutes

Motion by Commissioner Chmielewski to approve the minutes of August 9, 2017, as presented. Motion seconded by Commissioner Hill. The motion passed 7-0.

OPEN FORUM FOR CITIZEN INPUT

Nancy Ferosa, 11300 London Court, and Naomi Alt, 11306 London Court, introduced themselves to the Commissioners. Ms. Ferosa stated she and her neighbors recently filed a police report and have been in contact with Commissioners Hill and Mahmudi regarding traffic and safety concerns on Arnold Palmer Drive near their homes on London Court. She added drivers take the curve on Arnold Palmer Drive very fast, usually on the wrong side of the road, and do not observe the stop sign at 113th Avenue. She noted it is difficult for her and her neighbors to cross Arnold Palmer Drive to get to the sidewalk and the park.

Ms. Ferosa requested that a cut-out be considered at the stop sign at 113th Avenue, or the addition of striping or signage.

Chair Haas recommended that Ms. Ferosa and Ms. Alt direct their comments and concerns to City Engineer Keely for review and recommendation by City Staff.

Ms. Ferosa asked what Sergeant Warner's traffic observations were. Sergeant Sadler stated Sergeant Warner has submitted his observations, which are included in his traffic report.

Ms. Alt stated she has asked City Staff many times over the years for a yellow line down the middle of the road on Arnold Palmer Drive, but she has gotten no response.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Motion by Commissioner Wold to adopt the September 5, 2017, Traffic Commission Meeting Agenda. Motion seconded by Commissioner Maschke. The motion passed 7-0.

PUBLIC HEARING/COMMENTS

Item 6.1 – Traffic Concerns on 121st Avenue West of Sunset Avenue (Continued from August 9, 2017).

City Engineer Keely stated the City Staff have received complaints of speeding on 121st Avenue west of Sunset Avenue. She added this issue was reviewed by the Traffic Commission at its August 9, 2017 meeting, but several Woodland Village residents were not included in the public hearing notification mailing. She noted the Traffic Commission tabled the issue and directed City Staff to send notice of a public hearing related to tonight's meeting. Notice was sent August 18, 2017.

City Engineer Keely stated many resident concerns were brought up at the August 9, 2017, Traffic Commission meeting. These concerns include construction dumpsters in the road, requests for solar signage, poor visibility, the need for a lower speed limit, excessive speeds on 121st Avenue, vehicles not yielding for pedestrians, and safety at the Opal Drive school bus stop.

City Engineer Keely stated the first quarter mile of Sunset Avenue is 55 mph by State Statute. She added this length of Sunset Avenue qualifies for 35 mph designation, so that is a possible recommendation for the City Council.

City Engineer Keely stated the north side of 121st Avenue at the Woodland Parkway intersection could be considered for a marked crosswalk, which could be another recommendation. She added pedestrians are always urged to cross roadways with caution, even where crosswalks are present.

City Engineer Keely stated speed humps or bumps would not be allowed on 121st Avenue as it is designated as a MSA road. The City is currently reviewing State Aid designated roads in connection with the Comprehensive Plan update. She added none of the intersections meet the criteria for all-way stops, but there are a few cases where the City Council has approved their installation.

City Engineer Keely stated she consulted with the Planning Department regarding the planting of trees in the right of way, and trees were required to be planted on each residential lot but not in the boulevard.

City Engineer Keely stated white edge striping on both sides of the road, as well as a center yellow line, can reduce speeds by narrowing the roadway. She added many positive comments

have been received from residents in the Rice Creek Parkway neighborhood, where striping was done.

Commissioner Maschke asked whether a four-way stop is a possibility at Woodland Parkway and 121st Avenue, and whether traffic counts have been done there, or could be completed. City Engineer Keely stated she concentrated on Lever Street and Opal Street, because those streets were brought up at the last meeting.

Commissioner Wold stated traffic patterns to the north of Woodland Parkway should be reviewed at a later date, when all the homes are in. Chair Haas agreed.

Chair Haas thanked residents of the neighborhood for being vocal and making their comments known. He added police reports have shown that the speeding problems are coming from residents within the neighborhood.

Chair Haas opened the public hearing at 7:21 p.m.

Colin Harrington, 4417 121st Avenue, thanked the Traffic Commission for having this hearing and talking with the residents to figure out this issue. He asked City Engineer Keely whether the traffic counts on 121st Avenue were done in one location, near the speed limit sign. City Engineer Keely confirmed this.

Mr. Harrington stated residents are concerned about the roadway from Lever Street to Woodland Parkway. He suggested traffic counts should be done. He added the Woodland Village Homeowner's Association is discussing putting trees in the medians, and potentially working with the City to address that issue.

Mr. Harrington stated he supports a crosswalk at Woodland Parkway and 121st Avenue as there is a lot of foot traffic there that should also be measured. He asked whether there is a speed limit on 121st Avenue through the Athletic Complex, and if speed limit signs can be posted. Chair Haas stated that is a park driveway and not a public street. City Engineer Keely confirmed this, adding there is signage identifying the area as a park.

Commissioner Wold stated a portion of Woodland parkway west of the Athletic Complex has homes on it.

Mr. Harrington asked for examples of areas where the City has deviated from the standard speed limit and stop signs, and why the City would do so. City Engineer Keely stated speed limits are statutory, but the Rural Residential District gives the City the ability to change the speed limit if certain criteria are met, such as the number of driveways within a specific length of roadway. She noted there are a few newly-installed stop signs on 119th Avenue and Rice Creek Parkway that were approved by the City Council.

Mr. Harrington asked what would be the threshold for a stop sign at Lever Street, as well as marked crosswalks. City Engineer Keely stated, as referenced in the traffic report, stop sign criteria includes 5 or more crashes in a 12-month period, 300 vehicles per hour on a major street

during any 8 hour-period of an average day, and 200 units of vehicle, pedestrian or bicycle on the minor street in that same time frame.

Brandon Beckstrom, 4432 121st Avenue, thanked City Engineer Keely, adding residents are glad to have some action being taken. He stated he would like more signage, and perhaps a solar-powered flashing speed limit sign to increase awareness. He added the increased police presence is very helpful and he hopes that will continue.

Motion by Commissioner Skarich to close the public hearing at 7:06 p.m. Motion seconded by Commissioner Mahmudi. The motion passed 7-0.

Commissioner Maschke stated he would like to adopt the proposals presented by City Staff, and get traffic counts at 121st Avenue and Woodland Parkway. He added that would be useful information to have as the neighborhood grows and more homes are added.

Commissioner Hill agreed. He added the Woodland Village Homeowner's Association might be willing to come up with funding for a solar powered speed limit sign.

Commissioner Chmielewski stated he agrees with Staff's recommendations, but he does not support a crosswalk at 121st Avenue and Woodland Parkway as it would be a mid-block crosswalk, which are not as safe as crosswalks near intersections.

Commissioner Wold stated he supports continued traffic enforcement for the next few months. He added there will be many more homes to the north of this area. He asked if there is a speed limit sign posted on eastbound Woodland Parkway, at the park entrance. City Engineer Keely stated there is not, but that could be added as a recommendation. Commissioner Wold stated that should be considered.

Commissioner Mahmudi stated all of Staff's recommendations make sense, but it may take a combination of them to enforce the speed limit. He added the planting of trees by the Homeowner's Association would be very helpful with traffic calming, as well as posting a 35-mph speed limit sign.

Commissioner Skarich stated he supports the recommendations, but he would like to see traffic counts for 121st Avenue and Woodland Parkway. He added he is also concerned about uncontrolled mid-block crosswalks. He noted he would like to see cautionary signage within the park, warning about excessive speeds within park boundaries.

Commissioner Wold stated there are a few residential lots between Woodland Parkway and Lexington Avenue. He added, by Statute, that stretch of roadway should be 30 mph because it has residential properties. City Engineer Keely agreed.

Commissioner Wold stated he would support a speed limit sign on 121st Avenue, east of Woodland Parkway, for eastbound traffic leaving the park.

Motion by Commissioner Skarich to recommend City Council approval of establishment of a Rural Residential District for the first ¼ mile of 121st Avenue west of Sunset Avenue, with a speed limit of 35 mph from Sunset Avenue to Opal Street; instruct City Staff to post a 30-mph speed limit sign for eastbound traffic on 121st Avenue east of Woodland Parkway. Motion seconded by Commissioner Wold. The motion passed 7-0.

Motion by Commissioner Wold to recommend City Council approval of a marked and signed crosswalk on the north side of 121st Avenue at Woodland Parkway. Motion seconded by Commissioner Maschke.

Commissioner Skarich asked whether the crosswalk could have a flashing yellow light. City Engineer Keely stated that type of crosswalk is not typically used in Blaine, except in the school zone on 125th Avenue, where there are three schools. The school crosswalks were installed by Anoka County at the City's request. She added two more lighted crosswalk signs were installed on 119th Avenue last year at the City Council's direction. Chair Haas stated those types of crosswalks are very expensive.

The motion passed 4-3 (Chmielewski, Hill, Haas).

Motion by Commissioner Skarich to recommend City Council approval of white edge striping on both sides of 121st Avenue, as well as a double yellow center line to narrow drive lanes to 11 feet in width, from Sunset Avenue to Woodland Parkway. Motion seconded by Commissioner Hill. The motion passed 7-0.

Motion by Commissioner Wold to recommend that City Council direct City Staff to review traffic counts at the intersection of Lever Court and 121st Avenue to determine whether an all-way stop is warranted. Motion seconded by Commissioner Maschke. The motion passed 7-0.

Chair Haas asked when the traffic counts would be completed. City Engineer Keely stated Municipal State Aid road counts are a priority as they are due at the end of September 2017. She added there should be some results by the end of November, and agendas are posted on the City's website a week before meeting dates.

Chair Haas stated these recommendations will be presented to the City Council for their review and consideration.

PREVIOUS BUSINESS

City Engineer Keely stated the Traffic Commission, at their August 9, 2017, meeting, voted to table a review of Lakes Parkway traffic control. She added the necessary traffic counts will not be available until October 2017, so this item will be reviewed at the Traffic Commission's November 8, 2017, Meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

8.1 – Review of Marmon Street and 107th Avenue Between Ball Road and Sunset Avenue

City Engineer Keely stated City Staff have received complaints of speeding and truck traffic on 107th Avenue between Ball Road and Sunset Avenue. She added traffic counts, traffic speeds, and accident data were reviewed and summarized. She noted there was 1 accident on 107th Avenue in 2016, and 2 accidents in 2017 on Marmon Street.

City Engineer Keely stated the City does not have truck counts on our street system. She added this area has many commercial and industrial properties to the west that generate truck traffic. She noted City Staff have contacted these businesses and asked them to ensure that their truck traffic uses the County Roads system to access I-35W.

City Engineer Keely stated City Staff forwarded this issue to the Traffic Commission for their review and consideration due to resident complaints of speeding, and police reports that have been generated.

Commissioner Chmielewski stated he lives on Marmon Street, and the 2016 traffic counts are probably not accurate due to road construction at that time. He added there is a large amount of commercial truck traffic that uses Apollo Drive or 109th Avenue to go through Blaine, delivering products to businesses.

Commissioner Wold stated there is an increase in commercial trucks in residential neighborhoods due to the growth of online shopping and delivery, and truck drivers are generally on a schedule.

Commissioner Skarich asked whether the Commission has the authority to prohibit trucks on residential streets. City Engineer Keely stated that would require City Council action.

Chair Haas asked when City Staff contacted businesses to request that their trucks use County roads. City Engineer Keely stated she worked with the previous Police Chief on this within the last year or two.

Chair Haas suggested a follow-up letter could be sent to businesses, re-iterating the importance of having truck traffic use Lexington Avenue or Lever Street.

Commissioner Wold asked whether trucks are defined and restricted by their weight. Sergeant Sadler stated speed tubes will be used to monitor weight which will determine the type and size of truck traffic.

City Engineer Keely stated City Staff can send another letter to businesses.

Commissioner Wold requested that the Traffic Commission receive a copy of the letter that will be sent to businesses. City Engineer Keely agreed. Commissioner Chmielewski requested that truck traffic weight and counts be done on Marmon Street as well. City Engineer Keely agreed.

Item 8.2 – Review of Legacy Creek Parkway

City Engineer Keely stated City Staff have received resident complaints regarding traffic speeds on Legacy Creek Parkway. The average traffic count is in the 300-400 range, and the 85th percentile (the speed at or below which 85 percent of people drive) is 25 mph. The Police Department set up the speed trailer in June 2016, and the 85th percentile was 27 mph. The speed trailer recorded an 85th percentile of 25 mph in August 2017, and tube counters recorded 25 mph last week. There has been an average of one accident per year.

City Engineer Keely showed a map of the area depicting accident locations and dates.

Commissioner Mahmudi asked whether traffic volume is a concern, as vehicle counts are not high. City Engineer Keely stated she was surprised that traffic counts were not higher, based on the number of homes in the area.

Chair Haas asked whether this is a State Aid road. City Engineer Keely stated it is not a State Aid road.

Commissioner Wold asked if the map is current. City Engineer Keely stated the aerial map is from 2016, but Blaine's rapid development makes it difficult to maintain accurate aerial maps.

Commissioner Wold stated 131st Avenue terminates on the 2015 map. He requested clarification, as 131st Avenue is not a dead end. City Engineer Keely stated 131st Avenue is a through road that was graded in 2015, and is a gravel road in both directions with no sewer or water.

Chair Haas asked Sergeant Sadler whether there has been traffic enforcement in this area. Sergeant Sadler stated the traffic unit worked a total of three hours on Legacy Creek Parkway, during which no vehicles exceeded the 30-mph speed limit. He added the speed trailer was set up, and the fastest speed recorded was 33 mph, with an average of 19.3 mph.

Sergeant Sadler stated residents indicated that they felt that the traffic unit was situated too far south, but the traffic unit covered the entire roadway and there was no indication that traffic speeds are a problem. He added speed tubes will be out there shortly to verify the data collected by the traffic unit.

Chair Haas stated there does not appear to be a traffic speed issue. He added a public hearing could be scheduled, but that is optional. He asked how City Staff received the complaint.

City Engineer Keely stated a City Councilmember received a resident complaint which was referred to the City Manager, and forwarded to the Engineering Department for the Traffic Commission's review and consideration.

Commissioner Hill stated the "Yield" signs at the roundabout are difficult to see because they are obscured by "pedestrian crossing" signs, as well as vegetation. City Engineer Keely agreed to look into this.

OTHER BUSINESS

9.1 – Update on Traffic Enforcement

Sergeant Sadler stated traffic enforcement in school zones is in full swing, and the traffic unit has been focusing on Main Street near Blaine High School, Roosevelt Middle School and the elementary school. Traffic speeds have been high, including a 63mph in a 30mph zone. The traffic unit will continue to monitor that zone for the next few weeks.

Sergeant Sadler stated City Staff and the Police Department are working with local businesses to promote local traffic safety on their signs and billboards.

Commissioner Wold stated he lives near Centennial High School, which is located on North Road. He added he often sees Centennial Police monitoring the area, and he asked whether Blaine Police also monitor the area. Sergeant Sadler stated each of the two traffic unit Officers is assigned to a high school – Blaine High School and Centennial High School – and they work with school staff and Resource Officers to monitor traffic issues.

Commissioner Hill asked whether speed limits are enforced at the school speed zones only when lights are flashing, during “flash time”. Sergeant Sadler confirmed that the speed limit on the signs is enforced when the lights are flashing, during periods of time when students are going to and from school.

Commissioner Maschke stated the Legacy Creek request might be more of a community education issue. He asked whether concerned residents can do a “drive along” with the traffic unit to observe engagement and enforcement. Sergeant Sadler stated that request can be made.

Chair Haas thanked Sergeant Sadler for his report.

9.2 – Next Meeting – Tuesday, October 3, 2017, at 6:30 p.m.

Chair Haas stated the Traffic Commission’s next meeting on October 3, 2017, will include the Lakes Parkway review; as well as the possibility of getting additional counts on London Road and reviewing any previous counts. City Engineer Keely stated she is unsure whether that can be prepared in time for the October meeting.

City Engineer Keely stated residents on Aspen Lake Drive have requested speed humps or bumps, but no petitions have been received by City Staff. She added this issue could possibly come up in the future.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Commissioner Hill to adjourn the Traffic Commission meeting. Motion seconded by Commissioner Chmielewski. The motion passed 7-0. Adjournment time was 7:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Mullen

TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.