

**UNAPPROVED
CITY OF BLAINE
TRAFFIC COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
September 7, 2021**

The Blaine Traffic Commission met in the City Hall Chambers on September 7, 2021. Chair Haas called the meeting to order at 6:30PM.

ROLL CALL – 2021 TRAFFIC COMMISSION

Members Present: Chair Haas; Vice Chair Wold; Commission Members: Ford, Hill, Voeller and Wifler

Members Absent: Commissioner Skarich

Staff Present: City Engineer Dan Schluender, Sergeant Nate Hatanpa and Assistant City Engineer Stefan Higgins

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Item 3.1 – May 4, 2021 Traffic Commission Minutes

Commissioner Wold requested a change to the minutes on Page 3, in the fourth paragraph, noting the correct spelling of Harley's last name was Flor.

Motion by Commissioner Wold to approve the minutes of May 4, 2021, as amended. Motion seconded by Commissioner Ford. The motion passed 6-0.

OPEN FORUM FOR CITIZEN INPUT

James Goltart, 3100 120th Avenue North, explained over the last couple of weeks he has spoken with Commissioner Wifler regarding the speed of traffic along Harpers Street. He stated he was encouraged to create a petition with his neighbors. He reported he created a change.org petition three weeks ago which has over 100 signatures, over 1,300 views and has been shared 25 times on social media. He read the language within the petition in full for the record. He requested the city of Blaine and traffic commission address the aggressive speed of traffic along Harpers

Street NE in order to improve the safety along this roadway for the neighbors living in this area.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Motion by Commissioner Ford to adopt the September 7, 2021, Traffic Commission Meeting Agenda, as presented. Motion seconded by Commissioner Hill. The motion passed 6-0.

PUBLIC HEARINGS/COMMENTS

None.

PREVIOUS BUSINESS

7.1 – Review Traffic Control Harpers Street

City Engineer Schluender stated engineering and police department staff continue to field a few traffic complaints on Harpers Street north of 125th Avenue. A majority of the complaints are concerned with the speed of the traffic in both directions of Harpers Street. Staff has conducted data gathering over several years indicating that the 85% speeds are 4-5 miles over the posted speed limit of 30 mph. The police department continues to conduct education and enforcement campaigns along the corridor. As previously reported to the commission, patrol has noted that over 85% of the traffic violators that were pulled over all lived within three blocks of Harpers Street indicating that this is a neighborhood issue.

Mr. Schluender explained the Harpers Street area continues to grow and is on one of the leading edges of development for the past decade. The street network continues to expand off Harper Street, but there are several key street connections that are not constructed, forcing a majority of the traffic to use Harpers Street, i.e. 131st Avenue to the east, 132nd Avenue to the west, 129 Avenue to the east. Please note as of 2022 there will be a new connection on 129th Avenue to the west connecting with Xylite Street. Also planned for 2022, Anoka County will be upgrading 125th Avenue from Harpers Street to Lexington Avenue and will include a traffic signal at Legacy Creek Parkway.

Mr. Schluender reported Harpers Street is approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile long with a signal at 125th Avenue and a stop sign at the intersection with 132nd Avenue/ 131st Avenue. All of the current side streets to Harpers Street have a stop

condition. Staff has purchased two additional temporary driver feedback signs. One set is currently placed on Cloverleaf Parkway between 99th Avenue and Polk Street.

Mr. Schluender stated staff recommends installation of the new temporary driver feedback signs on Harpers Street for one year. Staff to continue to collect data once signs have been installed and to monitor the new connection of 129th Avenue to determine if traffic control needs to be altered at this intersection with Harpers Street.

Commissioner Hill asked if the temporary signs would be trailer mounted or on a post. Mr. Schluender explained the signs would be on a post.

Commissioner Wifler inquired if the feedback sign would be installed on the southbound side of Harpers Street. Mr. Schluender explained a pair of signs would be installed. He recommended a sign be installed on both the northbound and southbound lanes.

Chair Haas reported state statute sets residential speed limits in urban areas to 30 miles per hour. He commented at this time the area does not meet warrants for stop signs. Mr. Schluender stated this was correct.

Chair Haas discussed the issues that arise once stop signs are installed, that at times traffic rolls through stop signs.

James Goltart, 3100 120th Avenue North, requested traffic data information from staff from the past traffic studies along Harpers Street. Mr. Schluender stated he would compile this information and send it to Mr. Goltart and the traffic commissioners.

Mr. Goltart questioned how 130th would develop in the future. Mr. Schluender commented this would be driven by development. He explained the goal would be to have 131st extend and to improve the gravel road to pavement with a signal at Lexington Avenue.

Motion by Commissioner Hill to recommend staff install the new temporary driver feedback sign on Harper Street for one year. Motion seconded by Commissioner Wifler. The motion passed 6-0.

NEW BUSINESS**8.1 – Review Traffic on Cloud Drive**

Mr. Schluender stated engineering and police department staff continue to field traffic complaints on Cloud Drive between Radisson Road and West Lake Boulevard. A majority of the complaints are concerned with the speed of the traffic on Cloud Drive. Staff has collected data over several years indicating that the 85% speeds are 0-2 miles over the posted speed limit of 30 miles per hour. Listed below are results of the data collected.

Aug 2016 - 85th % = 30 MPH
May 2018 - 85th % = 26 MPH
June 2018 - 85th % = 31 MPH
July 2021 - 85th % = 31 MPH
August 2021 - 85th % = 32 MPH

Mr. Schluender explained the police department continues to conduct education and enforcement campaigns along the corridor.

Commissioner Wifler asked if this matter was discussed seven or eight months ago. Mr. Schluender reported this was the case, noting the matter was discussed at a Zoom meeting with Mr. Putz.

Nick Putz, 2475 Cloud Drive NE, indicated this topic was discussed last October at a Zoom meeting. He stated at that time, he was advised somebody would be reaching out to him to discuss potential speed bumps. He commented he never heard from staff which led him to reach out to staff again this summer where he expressed concern with the speed of traffic. He discussed how some communities have lowered residential speed limits to 25 miles per hour. He reported a speed trailer was placed along Cloud Drive several weeks ago and he knew of several people still going close to 60 miles per hour down this residential roadway. He feared that a lot of the speeding traffic was not coming from the neighbors but was coming from the school or those leaving the Jim Peterson Sports Complex. He requested the City consider solutions to address this concern.

Chair Haas discussed the concerns that arise with speed humps and reported they would have to be removed in the winter months in order to plow the street.

Mr. Putz questioned how the city would recommend this matter be addressed.

Chair Haas reported education and enforcement were the best way to address the speed of traffic.

Mr. Putz expressed concern with the fact this matter has been brought up several times over the past few years and from what he can tell no action has been taken by the city.

Chair Haas explained the traffic commission has only been in existence for the past three years. He asked if the violators were from the neighborhood. Sergeant Hatanpa noted the violators could be traffic passing through the neighborhood or vehicles cutting through to The Lakes. He understood there was more cut through traffic when school was in session.

Chair Haas asked if Cloud Drive was an MSA roadway. Mr. Schluender explained Cloud Drive was no longer an MSA roadway.

Janan Putz, 2475 Cloud Drive NE, stated she has had neighbors suggest she get a speed catcher like the one on 117th. She requested the city have more of a police presence and that a driver feedback sign be installed along Harpers Street in order to assist with addressing the concerns of the speed of traffic.

Sergeant Hatanpa explained he and several other officers have been posted along Cloud Drive. He understood there was a large volume of traffic and there were legitimate speeders. He reported it was difficult to have a police officer posted on Cloud Drive for long periods of time waiting for a random cut through speeder.

Mr. Putz discussed the speed of traffic along Cloud Drive and commented on how frequently a car was speeding. He stated he looked forward seeing the data from the September traffic study. He indicated the speed trailer greatly assisted with slowing traffic.

Ms. Putz commented further on how afraid she was for her son to walk to the bus stop or to the neighbors due to the high speed of traffic. She explained her family was considering moving out of Blaine because of the safety concerns she had for her family. She was very upset that the city could not make this matter a priority.

Commissioner Hill suggested the Putz family post signs that encourage vehicles to "Drive like your children live here".

Mr. Putz explained two signs have been posted and he did not believe these signs were doing anything to address the concern.

Commissioner Ford questioned if Mr. Putz had any other suggestions to address the concern.

Mr. Putz stated he did not know any other solutions besides speed humps and lowering the speed limit to 25 miles per hour.

Commissioner Ford indicated the city has to follow the 30 miles per hour per state statute. He explained the commission was hearing these concerns but he also understood that people were going to speed at times.

Mr. Putz commented he would like to see what temporary speed humps would do to address the speed of traffic along Cloud Drive. He anticipated the neighbors would be willing to cover 75% of the cost for speed humps.

Chair Haas explained this option would lead to other neighborhoods requesting speed humps. He encouraged Mr. Putz to do some research online regarding the concerns that arise from speed humps.

Mr. Putz stated again for the record, he would like the city to lower the speed of traffic along Cloud Drive to 25 miles per hour.

Mr. Schluender offered a few suggestions for the commission to consider. He explained staff was not recommending any suggestions because the data collected to date does not indicate there is a speeding issue on this corridor. He suggested the commission consider putting the speed trailers along this corridor now that school has started and that the tubes be placed along the roadway to gather additional data for staff and the police department. He anticipated there were two times a day that traffic was speeding and he hoped the new traffic data would assist in focusing the police departments efforts towards enforcement.

Chair Haas thanked staff and Sergeant Hatanpa for their continued efforts to address this concern.

Motion by Commissioner Wold to recommend staff place the driver feedback trailers along Cloud Drive and that the speed tubes be placed along this

corridor for the next three weeks to assist with gathering additional feedback in order to assist the police department with a more focused AM/PM traffic enforcement campaign. Motion seconded by Commissioner Voeller. The motion passed 6-0.

8.2 – Crosswalk at Jefferson Street and Bengal Drive

Mr. Schluender explained the city had a request from several residents on the east side of Jefferson Street looking to improve the crosswalk across Jefferson Street onto Bengal Drive. He noted staff has reached out to the school district regarding this matter in order to coordinate moving pedestrian traffic from Jefferson Street onto the high school campus.

OTHER BUSINESS

9.1 Update on Traffic Enforcement

Sergeant Hatanpa stated the Blaine Police Department has been targeting 119th Avenue from Club West Parkway to Radisson Road. He discussed the complaints the department has received regarding traffic blowing through stop signs and noted heavy enforcement has occurred. He indicated a tree blocking site lines has been trimmed in order to assist with improving the stop sign concerns. He reported other areas of concern were along Lever Street north of 125th Avenue and 117th Avenue from Ulysses Street to Jefferson. He noted random enforcement has occurred along Cloud Drive between West Lake Drive and Radisson Road. He stated he looked forward to having the speed feedback signs installed along Harpers Street.

9.2 Introduce Stefan Higgins

Mr. Schluender introduced Assistant City Engineer Stefan Higgins to the traffic commission members.

9.3 Next Meeting

Chair Haas stated the next Traffic Commission was scheduled for Tuesday, October 5, 2021.

Chair Haas congratulated Commissioner Hill for being awarded the 2020 TZD Engineering Steward Award and for his dedication to Minnesota roadways.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Commissioner Ford to adjourn the Traffic Commission meeting. Motion seconded by Commissioner Hill. The motion passed 6-0. Adjournment time was 7:26PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Heidi Guenther
Minute Maker Secretarial