



**TRANSPORTATION SAFETY & ADVISORY COMMISSION**

**CITY OF HARRISONBURG, VIRGINIA**

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**TO:** Transportation Safety & Advisory Commission Members, Council members, City Manager Kurt Hodgen

**FROM:** Brad Reed, Transportation Planner

**DATE:** September 13, 2010

**RE:** Transportation Safety & Advisory Commission Summary from September 2, 2010 Meeting

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The Transportation Safety & Advisory Commission met on Thursday September 2, 2010 at 9:00AM in Room 205 at the City Municipal Building, 345 S. Main St.

Members and Advisory Members present included: Bill Blessing (Chair), , Thanh Dang (Public Works), Brad Reed (Public Works), Officer Greg Deeds (Police), Len Van Wyk (citizen), Reggie Smith (Transit), Doug Stader (DMV)

Guests Present included: Sandy Bopp (citizen)

*Citizens are always provided the opportunity to voice their views/concerns about any item before the commission. It is the policy of the Commission to move the agenda item to the beginning of the meeting when citizens attend Commission meetings to avoid detaining citizens for the entire meeting. However, any citizen is welcome to stay for the entire meeting.*

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*Welcome*

*Citizen Request*

**1. Sandy Bopp – Pedestrian safety issues**

Ms. Bopp expressed concerns about pedestrian safety. She would like to inform the public that pedestrians have the right-of-way in a painted crosswalk. She has had many close calls while walking and believes that children walking to school would be safer if drivers were better informed. She also expressed a desire for a jaywalking ordinance and for increased enforcement of these issues. She explained that the Central & South Ave crosswalk, while

approved, is very unsafe and that she has seen cars travelling around stopped cars and into the crosswalk.

Mr. Blessing informed Ms. Bopp that the TSAC subcommittee will focus on pedestrian issues and that her concerns are shared amongst the Commission. This is a matter that has been worked on for years and there is no overnight fix.

Ms. Bopp also mentioned that the area surrounding Keister Elementary lacks the necessary sidewalks and that sidewalks are generally deficient in the City. Mr. Blessing informed her that the subcommittee will look into this.

Ms. Dang shared that the MPO has been sponsoring public service announcements on the radio to encourage pedestrian & bicycle safety and has helped inform the public of such safety matters at the International Festival with a Walk Smart, Bike Smart tent. Ms. Dang explained that there is still a need to look into additional solutions to reach a broader audience.

Mr. Van Wyk expressed that the Commission is in agreement that improvements are needed, but does not believe that a jaywalking law would be a solution right now until more places to cross are installed throughout the City. He went on to explain that enforcement of these matters would take away from police time used somewhere else and that this is a cultural change for Harrisonburg and is a very hard thing to accomplish.

The Commission explained that we have been working on this for a long time and will continue to do so. Ms. Dang explained that the Keister and Waterman Safe Routes to School (SRTS) programs have been successful and that the sidewalks installed through the programs will make it easier to encourage parents to let kids walk to school.

### *Old Business*

#### **2. Bicycle & Pedestrian Subcommittee Update**

Ms. Dang announced that four applications were received for the Subcommittee from the following individuals: Charles Chanault, Lara Mack, Thomas Jenkins, and Paul Johnston. Mr. Blessing mentioned that he has asked Thomas Jenkins to take the Commissioner responsibility for now and asked Mr. Van Wyk to be the Commission's representative on the Subcommittee. Mr. Van Wyk accepted this responsibility and also went on to explain that all four applicants are ones that typically focus on cycling issues and that he would like to root out someone to focus on pedestrian issues. Mr. Blessing expressed that he wouldn't mind expanding to include a pedestrian advocate, if found. Ms. Dang mentioned that Lara Mack is associated with Our Community Place (OCP) and can push pedestrian issues.

Mr. Blessing moved to go ahead and start with this group and the Commission voted to accept all four applicants to the Subcommittee. Mr. Blessing mentioned that he would like the Chairman of the Subcommittee to attend the Commission meetings as often as possible.

**3. Sheetz entrance on Vine St**

Mr. Reed explained that Public Works is still waiting on acceptance by Sheetz of the proposed plan of action for their entrance on Vine St and has been assured by their lawyer that an answer will be coming very soon. The Commission recommended that a deadline for moving forward without acknowledgement be set if an answer is not received by September 10<sup>th</sup>.

**4. Request for additional street lighting on College Ave**

Ms. Dang reported that Mr. Williams is still waiting on an answer from HEC on this matter.

**5. Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program - Old Town update**

Ms. Dang announced that an Old Town neighborhood meeting was held Monday August 30<sup>th</sup> at 6 PM with representatives from Public Works and Police present. 43 citizens attended the meeting and the overall feeling was that the night was very successful, with citizens giving very positive feedback. The Public Works Department shared the results of their traffic study then broke those in attendance into groups to discuss traffic calming measures. Raised intersections, speed tables, painted crosswalks, 4-way stops, and many other topics were discussed, with many common themes between groups. Ms. Dang went on to explain that staff is working with the list of ideas to develop a comprehensive traffic calming plan to be presented to a citizen committee on 9/17 or 9/20. The plan is likely to be revised after that meeting and will be finalized for an October neighborhood meeting. Staff will need to discuss funding with the neighborhood and how to prepare for a presentation of the plan to City Council. Ms. Dang explained that the Commission will be kept up to speed on the contents of the traffic calming plan.

**6. Request for crosswalk on east side of E Market St and Mason St intersection**

Ms. Dang had no changes on this topic and reminded the Commission that it is being researched in tandem with the Old Town NTCP study. Mr. Blessing suggested the idea of channelizing the northbound right turn off of Mason St to help traffic flow, but noted the limitations of City right-of-way on the northeast corner of the intersection.

**7. Request for crosswalk at University Blvd and Driver Dr**

Ms. Dang explained that JMU has already gone ahead and painted two crosswalks at this location when permission was given by the City to paint only one crosswalk. Mr. Williams sent an email to Mr. Eshelman to ask why two were painted, but Mr. Eshelman did not have an answer. Ms. Dang said that this matter is being looking into by staff and that the University may

be asked to choose between one of the crosswalks. Ofc. Deeds mentioned that he would like to see the one on Driver Dr stay and the Commission agreed.

#### **8. No Parking in bicycle lane update**

Ms. Dang demonstrated a 'no parking in bicycle lane' sign and explained that such signs have been placed on Central Ave and Park Rd on a temporary basis to educate motorists. Ms. Dang also mentioned that EMU is taking measures to educate its staff and students through various conduits.

#### *New Business*

#### **9. Ben Wyse Resignation**

Mr. Blessing announced that Mr. Wyse has resigned from the Commission and that steps have been taken to search for a new member. Mr. Reed explained that the appropriate parties have been informed and that an announcement for the position has been posted on the City's website (<http://www.harrisonburgva.gov/index.php?id=197>). Once applications for the position are received, the selection of the new member will be made by City Council.

#### *Other Business/ Announcements*

#### **10. Speed limit changes and studies**

Mr. Reed explained to the Commission that Public Works will be lowering all 45 mph speed limits in the City by at least 5 mph because the City does not possess the safety equipment necessary for road work in 45 mph speed zones. The purchase of this equipment would be a very large expense for the City for only a very small portion of our roadways. Examples of this equipment include larger work zone signs and truck-mounted attenuators, or crash cushions. These requirements are set forth in section 6F.83 of the Virginia Work Area Protection Manual.

Mr. Reed went on to explain that Public Works will also be performing speed limit studies in various locations in the City, including most of the entryways, in order to determine the appropriateness of the currently posted speeds.

Mr. Blessing mentioned that the 25 mph section of Old Furnace Rd East of Vine St may be a good area to study. Mr. Van Wyk suggested looking for areas that don't match driver expectancy and Mr. Reed agreed, explaining that that is one of the goals of the studies.

#### **11. Reservoir St roadway lighting between Lucy Dr and Stonewall Dr**

Ofc. Deeds presented a list of ideas he will be giving to Brian O'Dell of HEC to help visibility for pedestrians on this corridor, especially those walking to and from Copper Beech and other large developments at night. Mr. O'Dell is already looking at improvements here with his lighting manager and plans to send Jim Baker, director of Public Works, a proposal for changes. Mr. Deeds explained that there are several existing utility poles near the Charleston Townes

property area that could be used as light poles. The Commission agrees with the recommended lighting improvements.

#### **12. Brook Ave no parking near Graham Packaging**

Mr. Reed explained that Public Works has been in discussion with Graham Packaging and nearby residents on Brook Ave concerning truck maneuvering problems next to Graham's loading dock. There is inadequate space for truck maneuvering on Brook Ave and there have been several cases of damaged property and disputes when trucks have been unable to back properly due to parked cars on the street. Mr. Reed informed the Commission that Public Works has sent letters to the three homes in front of which on-street parking is recommended for removal to resolve the situation. Addresses 55 and 65 will lose all on-street parking on their frontage, while only a small portion of address 75's street frontage will be signed for no parking. The Commission agreed with this course of action and approved the no parking plan.

#### **13. Speed limit signage on Myers Ave**

Mr. Reed informed the Commission that Sgt. Keller had previously notified Public Works that there is no speed limit sign on the northbound stretch of Myers Ave. Mr. Reed explained that the traffic department is looking at speed limit signage in the entire Old Town neighborhood and ensuring that it is sufficient. Typically, speed limit signage in residential areas is only needed at entrances to neighborhoods, especially if the speed limit of the adjacent major street is greater than 25 mph, which is the state standard speed in residential areas.

#### **14. Bicycle & pedestrian safety flyers**

Mr. Stader demonstrated to the Commission the new Virginia state flyers for bicycle & pedestrian safety that are being made available to the public.

*Adjourn*