



TRANSPORTATION SAFETY COMMISSION

CITY OF HARRISONBURG, VIRGINIA

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**TO:** Transportation Safety Commission Members, Council members, City Manager Kurt Hodgen, Assistant City Manager Evan Vass

**FROM:** Brad Reed, Transportation Planner

**DATE:** June 15, 2010

**RE:** Transportation Safety Commission Summary from Thursday June 10, 2010 Meeting

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The Transportation Safety Commission met on Thursday June 10, 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), Drew Williams (Public Works), Thanh Dang (Public Works), Brad Reed (Public Works), Jim Baker (Public Works), Faith Castellano (Public Works), Grant Holsinger (Transit), Lee Eshelman (JMU), Ben Wyse (citizen), Len Van Wyk (citizen), Calvin Ferrell (citizen)

Guests Present include: Thomas Jenkins (Shenandoah Valley Bicycle Coalition)

*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

*New Business*

### **1. Old Town Neighborhood Traffic Calming**

The Commission discussed the request for traffic calming in the Old Town neighborhood made by residents at the June 8<sup>th</sup> Council meeting. Mr. Williams described the details of the recent accident at the intersection of Franklin St and Ott St, explaining that there was not much the City could have done to prevent what happened. An individual with a suspended license ran the stop sign on Ott St and struck a vehicle traveling on Franklin St.

Mr. Williams informed the Commission that Public Works staff will meet with representatives from the neighborhood on June 11<sup>th</sup>, at which time the completed Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program petition is expected to be received. After verifying the petition, a neighborhood meeting will be held by Public Works to discuss existing problems and possible solutions. Recommendations for resolving this issue will be brought through the Commission.

## **2. Commission Organization & Bicycle & Pedestrian Involvement**

The Commission discussed the changes proposed by Council to include bicycle and pedestrian matters in the responsibilities of the Safety Commission and to change the name to the Harrisonburg Transportation Safety & Advisory Commission. Mr. Blessing and Ms. Dang suggested that a subcommittee be formed to focus on bicycle and pedestrian topics. Mr. Jenkins liked this idea and will be working with Ms. Dang on an outline of such a change with a list of possible subcommittee members to be presented at the next Commission meeting.

### *Old Business*

## **3. Sheetz & Chamber of Commerce Entrances on Vine St**

This issue was tabled until the next meeting on July 8<sup>th</sup> at the request of Sheetz. Mr. Reed explained that staff will be presenting accident data and a visual record of safety issues at the next meeting. Both Sheetz and the Chamber of Commerce are expecting to attend to discuss the problem. Mr. Williams mentioned that the final Commission recommendation will be taken before Council for consideration.

## **4. Request for Additional Street Lighting on College Ave**

Brian O'Dell, Harrisonburg Electric Commission (HEC) Manager of Engineering, is reviewing this request, but no determination has been made because data collection is still in progress.

## **5. Request for Crosswalk on East Side of E. Market St and Mason St Intersection**

Mr. Reed presented the findings from data collection performed by Public Works staff and recommended that a crosswalk be installed at this location. Mr. Reed explained that demand at the unmarked crossing was 12 people during the four hour study performed from 11 AM to 3 PM on Tuesday June 8<sup>th</sup>. The demand at the other crossing was slightly higher and varied from 18 to 23 people. Mr. Reed also went over the potential safety hazards of such a crossing, as vehicle counts show high volumes of conflicting vehicular traffic, specifically from permissive NB right turns and SB left turns off of Mason St and right turns on red WB off of Market St.

Mr. Blessing explained that he did not believe that the demand is sufficient to warrant a crossing at a location with so many potential vehicular conflicts. He also mentioned that a crosswalk at this location might invite more pedestrians to cross the most unsafe leg of the intersection and that it is legal to cross where there is no painted crosswalk.

Mr. Jenkins mentioned that he lives in the NE neighborhood and typically crosses mid-block on E Market St between Mason St and Reservoir St. He feels that it would be safer for those in his neighborhood to have a convenient place to cross at the signal.

Mr. Reed explained that this might be a location to try out a leading pedestrian interval should the crosswalk be installed, but the necessary upgrade to the traffic signal controller to allow such operation is likely 1-3 years down the road. This technique would allow the pedestrian 5-7 or so seconds to establish presence in the crosswalk while the signal is red for the conflicting approaches, at which point the crossing would operate as normal.

Mr. Van Wyk shared that he thinks the crosswalk should be installed because demand in the pedestrian count was almost as high at the unmarked crossing as it was at the marked crossings.

Mr. Baker suggested that traffic patterns at this intersection may relate, in part, to the issues in the Old Town neighborhood and that Public Works staff should review this connection and make appropriate recommendations at the next meeting. The Commission recommended that Public Works staff move forward with this suggestion.

## **6. School Lights**

Ms. Dang explained that Public Works has found no need for additional driver notification on Pleasant Valley Rd beyond the school flashing lights that are already in place; however, brush may need to be trimmed to improve visibility of the sign for the WB direction. The Commission recommended against the addition of flashing beacons to the existing school lights.

## **7. Speed Limit Increase on Linda Ln (Country Club Rd to Smithland Rd)**

The Commission recommended at its May 6<sup>th</sup> meeting that the speed limit be increased to 35 mph from Country Club Rd to Smithland Rd. A request was made to Colonel Harper with the Commission's recommendation and permission was granted to move forward with the change. Mr. Reed informed the Commission that the speed limit signs were changed by Public Works a week prior to this meeting and that the change appears to have gone smoothly.

### *Other Business/ Announcements*

## **8. Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan Update**

Ms. Dang informed the Commission that the 2010 Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan draft was presented to Planning Commission on Wednesday June 9<sup>th</sup> and received favorable a recommendation to City Council for adoption. The Plan will go to public hearing before City Council at the July 13 and 27 meetings. Staff requests that the Commission review the Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan and provide comments and a recommendation to City Council at the next Commission meeting. The draft plan is available for download at [www.harrisonburgva.gov/bikeped](http://www.harrisonburgva.gov/bikeped).

## **Adjourn**