



TRANSPORTATION SAFETY & ADVISORY COMMISSION

CITY OF HARRISONBURG, VIRGINIA

TO: Transportation Safety & Advisory Commission Members, Council members, City Manager Kurt Hodgen, Assistant City Manager Anne Lewis

FROM: Ian Pike, Transportation Systems Specialist

DATE: Wednesday, August 17, 2016

RE: Transportation Safety & Advisory Commission Agenda for Wednesday, August 10, 2016

The Transportation Safety & Advisory Commission met on **Wednesday, August 10, 2016 at 8:30AM in Room 011 of City Hall, 409 S Main St.**

Members present included: Bill Blessing, Lee Eshelman, Joshua Humphries, Russell Presnell, Reggie Smith, and Doug Stader

Advisory Members & Guests Present: Jim Baker, Paul Helmuth, Ian Pike, Cpl. Wayne Westfall, James Wininger, and Erin Yancey

Commission meetings are open to the public and citizens are provided the opportunity to voice their views/concerns about any item before the Commission. It is the policy of the Commission to move relevant agenda items to the beginning of the meeting when citizens are in attendance to avoid detaining them for the entire meeting.

Welcome

1. Introductions & Welcome Erin Yancey

Mr. Baker welcomed Erin Yancey from the Public Works Department as the newest advisory member of the Transportation Safety & Advisory Commission.

Business

1. Evelyn Byrd Ave at University Blvd

Mr. Baker explained that he has received comments that the new signs have made navigating the intersection easier, but some people just don't like it. There have been no new safety complaints.

2. Bicycle/Pedestrian Plan Update

Mrs. Yancey explained the current schedule for the update to the Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan for the city. Project prioritization has finished and the Berkley Group is completing the narrative. A draft is expected by Labor Day and will be presented to the Bicycle/Pedestrian Subcommittee at their September meeting. A joint meeting with this committee will occur at the October meeting. A public comment period is planned for November. The final draft is planned to be presented to the Planning Commission in January and to the City Council in February or March.

3. Update on Parking Problems on Devon Lane

Mr. Pike and Tom Hartman of the Public Works Department met with some of the property managers responsible for the units adjacent to the section of Devon Ln with the parking problem after the July meeting. Mr. Pike and Mr. Hartman expressed the concerns brought up during the July meeting. The property managers expressed their concerns that removing the on-street parking would just push the problem to nearby apartment complexes or cause other hazardous parking situations in the off-street parking lot.

After this discussion, Mr. Hartman and Mr. Pike met with other traffic supervisors in the Public Works Department and settled on three options that could help remedy the problem without having to remove the parking: 1) adjust the centerline similar to what was done closer to Port Republic Rd, 2) add an edgeline parallel to the curb that designates the appropriate parking area for drivers, or 3) converting the on-street parking to permit parking only. The traffic supervisors suggested moving the centerline and adding in the edgeline at the same time. Mr. Pike presented these to the commission as an alternative to completely removing parking.

Mr. Blessing asked if this would solve the parking problem. Mr. Baker responded that he would still prefer to remove the parking completely, but that he stands behind his staff and their recommendation to balance the needs of all parties involved.

Cpl. Westfall suggested that this might lead to another problem involving pedestrians. There are a large number of pedestrians that travel on Devon Ln that don't use the existing sidewalk, opting to walk on the curb, in the gutter, and on the road. By moving the centerline to narrow the travel lane on that side, it could be more dangerous for pedestrians that walk there.

Mr. Humphries motioned to support moving the centerline and adding the edgeline for parked vehicles. The committee approved.

4. Crash Concern at Exxon/7-Eleven on Pleasant Valley Rd at S Main St

The Public Works Department has received several complaints over the last few months about crashes at the Exxon/7-Eleven on S Main St, specifically from cars turning left into the entrance on Pleasant Valley Rd. There have been four crashes at that entrance so far this year, three of which involve stopped vehicles in the left/thru lane for the signal waving left-turning vehicles through, then the turning vehicles are struck by moving vehicles in the right turn lane. The Department brought this before the Commission for suggestions to mitigate this problem.

Mr. Pike mentioned that adding any kind of median barrier on Pleasant Valley Rd might hinder large trucks turning right from S Main St onto Pleasant Valley Rd. Cpl. Westfall said that trucks would probably be fine making the turn, the issue would be with blocking the entrance and how the owner would perceive that.

Mr. Smith suggested directing vehicles to use the S Main St entrance by providing wayfinding signs. Mr. Humphries stated that people coming from I-81 might not be familiar with area and would still use the Pleasant Valley Rd entrance.

Mr. Eshelman suggested adding “Do Not Block Entrance” signs as well as additional stop bars on Pleasant Valley Rd to allow for turning vehicles. Cpl. Westfall noted that these stop bars would need to be set back further from the entrance. Mrs. Yancey then asked if that would cause tractor-trailers to have to wait through multiple signals to clear the intersection. Others in the Commission explained that large truck drivers are often experienced enough to know when to start moving in order to clear intersections. Mr. Blessing said that adding a stop bar and “Do Not Block Intersection” signs work well at the intersection of Country Club Rd and Blue Ridge Dr to stop vehicles from blocking Clay St. Other Commission members agreed.

The Commission recommended add “Do Not Block Entrance” signs in accordance with the MUTCD. Cpl. Westfall also suggested reaching out to the business owner about recommending people to use the S Main St entrance.

5. Citizen Concern with Crosswalks at MLK Jr Way/Reservoir St

The Public Works Department received a citizen complaint about the crosswalks at Reservoir St and MLK Jr Way. The citizen had been in several altercations and near-miss collisions with vehicles when using the crosswalk. According to the Code of Virginia (§ 46.2-924), vehicles “shall yield the right-of-way to any pedestrian” when said pedestrian is legally allowed to be in a crosswalk.

Cpl. Westfall suggested that motorists might not understand when a pedestrian should be in the crosswalk. Mr. Eshelman then suggested adding leading pedestrian timing to allow pedestrians to start crossing without any vehicle movement. Commission members also discussed changing when the flashing hand comes up on the pedestrian signal display. Mr. Pike said he would look into the MUTCD to see what adjusts could be made.

Mr. Blessing brought up the need to educate both pedestrians and motorists about safely and legally navigating intersections.

6. Resolution in Support of Harrisonburg Police Department

Mr. Humphries, being struck by the events happening across the country, proposed a resolution to thank Harrisonburg Police Department for all their hard work to keep the community safe and for working so closely with this commission. Mr. Presnell suggested adding the other departments that work closely with this commission, such as the Fire Department, Department of Motor Vehicles, and Public Transportation. Mr. Blessing agreed that other departments should be recognized for their work and commitment to safety, but that each one should be addressed individually.

Other Business/ Announcements

1. DUI Enforcement During Labor Day Weekend

Mr. Stader explained that there will be increased DUI enforcement during Labor Day weekend, a joint program between the Harrisonburg Police Department and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

2. S Main St at Grace St Intersection Improvements

Mr. Humphries revealed that the new signals are installed at Grace St and S Main St and the parking deck on MLK Jr. Way is open.

3. Sight Distance Issue at Franklin St and S Mason St

Mr. Blessing mentioned that there is a sight distance issue when traveling eastbound on Franklin St at S Mason St. Mr. Pike said he will bring this up with the maintenance crew at the Public Works Department.

4. Madison Hotel and Conference Center Update

Cpl. Westfall stated that blasting has started for the Madison Hotel and Conference Center and that it will be causing traffic issues. The Police Department is working with the Public Works department to control traffic.

Adjourn

Next Meeting September 14, 2016, 8:30am