



**TRANSPORTATION SAFETY & ADVISORY COMMISSION
CITY OF HARRISONBURG, VIRGINIA**

TO: Transportation Safety & Advisory Commission Members

FROM: Ian Pike, Transportation Systems Specialist

DATE: Wednesday, June 30, 2017

RE: Transportation Safety & Advisory Commission Summary for Wednesday, June 14, 2017

The Transportation Safety & Advisory Commission met on **June 14, 2017 at 8:30AM in Room 011 of City Hall, 409 S Main St.**

Commission members present: Bill Blessing, Chance Ebersold, Josh Humphries, Leonard Van Wyk, Cpl Wayne Westfall

Advisory Members and Guests present included: Jim Baker, Mike Brady, Paul Helmuth, Scott Kleist, Ian Pike, Doug Stader, Judith Trumbo, 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

Business

1. Recognition of Jim Baker

Mr. Baker was recognized recently at city council for his years in public works and was awarded the American Public Works Association lifetime member designation

2. Update on Previous Action Items

On the Peach Grove speed limit discussion – sight distance was checked from each intersection based on the recommended minimum needed for 35 mph and 40 mph cross traffic. While there is sufficient sight distance at two of the four intersections, the other two would require drivers look beyond the hill at the school entrance. It is recommended to not change the speed limit at this time.

On school zone signing around the city – a summer intern at Public Works has completed maps for each school noting all the signs and pavement markings for each. The next steps are to evaluate internally and develop more consistent guidelines.

3. Discussion with VMRC Representatives on Rt 42/Virginia Ave Safety Concerns

Representatives from VMRC, President and CEO Judith Trumbo and Vice President of Technology Scott Kleist, were invited to present their safety concerns about Rt 42/Virginia Ave to the commission. The main safety concerns were in anticipation of coming development, including a new elementary school on Parkwood Dr and new construction as part of the VMRC Master Plan.

The current concern directly related to VMRC is traffic turning left into and turning left out of the main entrance on Rt 42/Virginia Ave. Older drivers are not able to appropriately judge a gap in traffic, leading to often unsafe decisions. VMRC would like to see the traffic signal that is planned for the intersection with Acorn Dr be installed sooner rather than later in order to force a gap in traffic to allow vehicles in and out of VMRC. Another idea, in conjunction with the traffic signal installation, would be to move the speed limit signs so that traffic must slow down to 35 mph north of VMRC instead of just south.

A speed study was done back in February when this issue was initially raised and found the 85th percentile speed for northbound traffic was approximately 45 mph and for southbound traffic was approximately 44 mph. This suggests there is not a speeding problem in front of the VMRC entrance, as initially thought.

The group discussed the jurisdictional challenges with moving the speed limit signs further north. Rt 42/Virginia Ave is effectively split between the city and Rockingham County from Sharon Ln to approximately Twin Oaks Dr. The group also discussed the potential the signal could have to signify to drivers that they have entered the city and should change their driving behavior, similar to signals acting as gateways on the east, west, and south sides of the city. Due to the significant cost of a new signal, the group proposed that VMRC share in the cost of such an installation, to which VMRC noted that they were not opposed.

Another concern was the nearby Minnick School, which has only been in operation for a short time. Most in the group were not aware of it, but suggested that marking an appropriate school zone similar to other schools in the city could also bring a traffic calming effect to the area, at least during times when the school zone would be enforced.

City staff thanked the group and the VMRC representatives for their ideas and asked for time to digest all possible solutions before returning with a recommendation.

4. Parking on Betts Ct

The commission discussed a similar concern here back in 2004 and recommended the entire road be signed for no parking. Since then, some of the signs have come down. Employees of the nearby Nissan dealership seem to be parking on the street, allowing for more room on the property for inventory. Mr. Baker believes this is more of a zoning issue considering this is a commercial/industrial zone of the city, not residential. No other commercial/industrial zones

outside of downtown allow for on-street parking. Cpl Westfall noted that officers have enforced the “No Parking” signs when they were there.

The group agreed that this road should be used for ingress and egress to the developments only and that the “No Parking” signs should be put back up.

5. Parking and Bike Lanes on Park Rd

In a recent discussion with some officials from EMU, they mentioned wanting to extend the bike lanes on Park Rd beyond Dogwood Dr, possibly up to Upland Dr or Shank Dr. The group’s main concern was the amount of on-street parking that would be lost to the bike lanes. Many people that attend games and other activities at EMU’s ball fields use the on-street parking since there is no designated parking lot for them. The group asked if EMU had a plan for where those vehicles would go once the bike lanes went in. The group is not against bike lanes, but they do not want to cause problems back in the neighborhood which is where these vehicles would inevitably go if the on-street parking were removed.

City staff noted that they will check in with EMU about allowing these visitors to utilize the available parking lots during events.

Other Business/ Announcements

A commission member wanted to discuss the increase of people loitering in the medians around the city as a potential safety concern. Cpl Westfall explained that HPD is working on developing an ordinance to target specific intersections based on crash data where the safety concern would outweigh the person’s right to be there. This would not be used to criminalize panhandling.

The group asked if this would be a blanket ordinance across the city or if it would only target specific intersections. Cpl Westfall explained that it would only be at specific intersections where loitering would be distracting to drivers, increasing the safety risk.

Adjourn