

**MINUTES
BLOOMINGTON TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY, MAY 15, 2018 4:00 P.M.
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL
109 EAST OLIVE STREET
BLOOMINGTON, ILLINOIS**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Ms. Jill Blair, Ms. Maureen (Reenie) Bradley, Ms. Katherine Browne, Mr. Michael Gorman, Ms. Elizabeth Kooba

MEMBERS ABSENT: Ms. Angela Ballantini, Ms. Kelly Rumley

OTHERS PRESENT: Mr. Steve Rasmussen, Interim City Manager; Mr. George Boyle, City Attorney; Mr. Jim Karch, Director of Public Works; Mr. Kevin Kothe, City Engineer; Mr. Philip Allyn, City Traffic Engineer.

1. CALL TO ORDER: Mr. Gorman called the meeting to order at 4:01 pm.

2. ROLL CALL: Mr. Allyn called the roll. With five members in attendance, a quorum was established.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT:

No Public Comments were heard.

4. MINUTES: Reviewed and approved the minutes of the April 17, 2018 regular meeting of the Bloomington Transportation Commission. Ms. Bradley motioned to approve the minutes. Ms. Blair seconded the motion. The motion was approved by the Transportation Commission unanimously via voice vote.

5. REGULAR AGENDA: No Items

A. TC2018-03: City Pavement Marking and Crosswalk Policy Review

Mr. Allyn informed the Commission that Staff is starting the process of reviewing and updating various policies. The first policy to be reviewed is the Pavement Marking Policy, which includes a section on crosswalks. The intent of the discussion today is to gain initial comments and feedback on the current policy, including items or details on which additional information is requested. We are going through at a Staff level as well making various tweaks and revisions due to changes in practice or updating references to outdated publications such as the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). In the packet is a list of items that we are currently planning on revising. A revised policy will be brought back in June or July with the Commission and Staff changes for approval or additional comment.

Ms. Bradley mentioned that there did not appear to be a reference to pavement markings on speed bumps. Mr. Allyn agreed this would be a good section to add. Ms. Bradley indicated that the bumps on both Northpoint and on Colton by the high school need to be repainted.

Mr. Gorman inquired about the City's ability to stay on top of maintaining the pavement markings. Mr. Allyn indicated that it is difficult to keep up with the amount of staff and markings that we have. Mr. Gorman mentioned that he had been talking with the Town of Normal Engineering Department and they are also struggling, but are not at the point where it would be beneficial to purchase additional equipment. Would this be a good opportunity for cooperation with the Town in potentially sharing equipment? Mr. Karch indicated that it's not an equipment issue, it's a personnel issue; we don't have the people we need to do more. We have both a long-line machine and a walk-behind machine. The work is generally done at night. We do struggle as most communities do. Mr. Gorman asked if there was an opportunity to share

staff with one municipality hiring additional people and then contracting them out to the other municipality part of the time. Mr. Karch indicated that we do partner with the Town and with McLean County whenever possible. However, with the current political climate there is not the ability to be adding additional staff at this time. In addition, if adding staff becomes a possibility, there are other areas with a greater need for additional staff such as maintenance of our sewers. From a safety perspective, feces in a basement is not a positive thing and minimizing backups into residents' basements as a matter of public health is likely a higher need.

Mr. Gorman mentioned that in conversations with Alderman Buragas, one of the reasons she asked for the Commission to be created is because she has had several instances of her constituents saying they have requested crosswalks and been denied because our policy is too restrictive. Mr. Gorman would like to see the policy be loosened as part of this update. He didn't have any specific requests, but thought that a number of the guides mentioned in the packet such as the NACTO Urban Streets Design Guide and AASHTO have more progressive ideas and he would suggest moving more in that direction. Mr. Allyn reminded that obviously the more markings that are added, the more there is to maintain, which we just discussed was already difficult. There is certainly a balancing act between what is needed and what is maybe perceived to be needed. There is also the issue where if people see the same thing repeatedly, it starts to get ignored. For example, if there is a marked crosswalk on both sides of every intersection, but there are no pedestrians using the crosswalk, then the lines begin to blend into the background and drivers no longer see them. For this reason, we do try to be a little selective on where we use the two lines versus the high-visibility crosswalks. We need to keep them from become overused and ignored so that in places where they are needed, they are still effective. Obviously, there is a fine line here and we will see what we can do to loosen the policy a bit. Mr. Gorman mentioned that Alderman Buragas had done some independent research and had found studies where the overuse effect is not as much of an issue as it is made out to be. Mr. Allyn indicated he would be happy to review whatever information she has on the subject. We also welcome new studies and additional information to help make the best decisions that we can.

Ms. Blair indicated that one thing in the crosswalk section that jumped out to her was that mid-block crosswalks should not be allowed. She cannot think of a particular place where one would be needed, but it seemed odd to say they should not be allowed. Mr. Allyn mentioned this was an example of some of the odd wordings that are intended to be cleaned up a bit as part of this process. In engineering terminology, that particular language of "should" and "shall" have very exact definitions, which is why they are used. Generally speaking, mid-block crosswalks are not the safest crosswalk locations. It is safer to have them at intersections where they are expected by drivers rather than in the middle of a block, which is why the policy says they should not be allowed. There are places however, such as on Olive outside City Hall, where a major pedestrian route crosses a street in which they are advantageous and needed. The following section expands that if mid-block crosswalks are used, they shall be high-visibility. Mr. Gorman also mentioned that they are also used in locations such as where Constitution Trail crosses streets. The Town of Normal has recently started installing mid-street signs at these locations reminding drivers to stop for pedestrians in the crosswalk.

Ms. Bradley asked about citizen volunteers helping paint faded lines on speed bumps. Mr. Allyn responded that there were a number of reasons why the City would prefer this work to be done by City employees rather than volunteers, not the least of which is the safety of people working in the roadway. In addition, there are union considerations and significant liability concerns if this work is not done correctly.

Ms. Blair asked about the statement at the beginning regarding requests for changes to the pavement markings must be made in writing. What is the reason for this and what is considered "in writing"? Mr. Allyn indicated this is mostly an administrative item. It is often difficult to receive a comment verbally with no way to record it and then remember the details when back in the office several hours later. The

Non-emergency Complaint/Request Form, which can be found on the website and obtained in person at the Public Works office, is the preferred method since it helps track and document requests internally. Emails also work. The website has a good comment/request submittal form that is also available. In addition, the My Bloomington app has a comment submittal form where you can also upload photos. Comments submitted through the website and the app get emailed to the responsible party for response, so these work fine. Comments on Facebook pages are usually not constantly monitored, and phone calls or face-to-face conversations are difficult to record, so these are not suggested methods of submitting a request.

B. Information: April Citizen Comments/Complaints Summary

Mr. Allyn indicated a summary of the complaints/comments received since April 1 was provided in the agenda packet and requested any comments or questions. There were no comments.

Ms. Bradley asked if the parking restriction on Oak Street was north or south Oak Street and what was the reason for the request. Mr. Allyn indicated that it is part of a neighborhood dispute regarding parking of potential commercial vehicles on the street.

C. Information: IDOT Route 9 Phase I Study Update

Mr. Allyn indicated that Engineering Staff recently met with IDOT who informed us that they are in the early stages of a Phase I study for the entire Route 9 corridor through the City. They do not yet know the details of the work, but the basic scope of the project is a mill and overlay with some curb and gutter removal and replacement and some areas of pavement cross slope correction. The curb lines will generally stay the same (streets will not be widened or narrowed). Curb ramps will be updated to meet current ADA requirements. It does not sound like there will be significant changes to traffic signal equipment other than minor ADA improvements. There was some discussion of adding bike lanes through a portion of the City. It is still very early in the process and there is not yet an estimated construction date. There will be a public open house at some point, likely this late summer or fall. The bike lane additions are primarily focused on the section that is one-way and may involve some loss of on-street parking. Staff will be providing input where possible, but this is a project that IDOT will be driving.

Mr. Gorman asked about potential changes in the alignment of Route 9 around Bent Elementary School. Mr. Karch indicated that we are still working on this with IDOT and some elected officials. We still see it as a critical need to get Route 9 off of Lee and relocated onto Center and hopefully there will be more updates in the future.

6. OLD BUSINESS:

A. Legal Department Brief Presentation on Role and Duties of the Commission

Mr. Boyle gave a presentation on the role and duties of the Commission. A copy of the City Code relating to the Commission was distributed. Mr. Boyle stated the ordinance establishing the Commission is brief but does have some good information. Now that we are about eight months in, the Commission seems to be doing a good job fulfilling the major functions outlined in the ordinance. The purpose of the Commission is to assist, advise, and inform administrative and elected officials of the City on matters pertaining to the transportation of people and materials in the City. Highlights of the last eight months have been when the Commission was able to weigh in on proposed ordinances such as the one that affected downtown traffic flow and specific projects to give Staff input that we would not normally receive. The areas of focus consist of advising on policy matters involving streets and highways, pedestrian ways, bikeways, multi-purpose trails and truck routes. With respect to how items get put on the agenda, they can come from the City Traffic Engineer, the Director of Public Works or Director of Community Development, the City Manager, or the Mayor or City Council. In addition, if a citizen requests in writing for an item to be heard by the Commission, the Traffic Engineer can place it on the agenda or the Transportation Commission can place an item on the agenda by majority vote.

With respect to powers and duties, the Commission reviews various proposals outlined in Section 302. There are also additional powers and duties outlined in Section 303. Mr. Allyn prepared a document (provided in the binders) titled "Area of Responsibilities" that summarizes the powers and duties in Section 303 with illustrative examples. The Commission has the ability to provide recommendations to improve transportation conditions on policy-level matters such as complete streets, parking management, traffic circulation, and the like. It has the ability to review and make recommendation on matters of transportation in the various plans the City has such as the Bicycle Master Plan or the Street Improvement Master Plan. Thirdly, there is the ability to receive concerns from the City Traffic Engineer. This could be the Citizen Complaints/Concerns referred to previously or it could be something coming from Staff. Fourth, the Commission can conduct public hearings on matters that Council or Staff feels are pertinent. Finally is the ability to make suggestions on programs and outreach as they relate to bicycle facilities.

In summary, it feels like the Commission has thus far been functioning well. The hope in reviewing this information, even though it is a fairly simple and straightforward ordinance, is to be a springboard for questions or dialogue on what the role of the Commission is moving forward.

7. NEW BUSINESS: None

8. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Mr. Gorman mentioned that this week is the Good To Go Commuter Challenge put on by the McLean County Planning Commission. This is an opportunity to try to become a more sustainable commuter for the week. There is a website, goodtogomclean.org where people can log their commutes (anything that does not include driving alone) and become eligible for prizes from the Regional Planning Commission.

8. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting adjourned at 4:31 pm unanimously by voice vote; motioned by Ms. Blair and seconded by Ms. Bradley.

Respectfully,

Philip Allyn
City Traffic Engineer