

TRANSPORTATION AND PARKING COMMISSION
Minutes

May 10, 2017, 7:00 p.m.

Council Chambers - Village Hall
801 Burlington Avenue, Downers Grove

Chairwoman Dunne called to order the May 10, 2017 meeting of the Transportation and Parking Commission at 7:00 p.m. and led the meeting with the recital of the Pledge of Allegiance. Roll call followed and a quorum was established.

ROLL CALL

Present: Chairwoman Dunne; Commissioners Carter, Saricks, Schiller

Absent: Commissioner Wrobel, Wilkinson

Staff Present: Public Works Traffic Engineer Will Lorton

Others: John and Barbara Staehle, 3540 Pomeroy Ct., Downers Grove; Robert Svoboda, 3550 Pomeroy Ct., Downers Grove; Mark Cronin, 1117 Jefferson, Downers Grove; John Schofield, 1125 Jefferson, Downers Grove

Chairwoman Dunne explained the protocol for the meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT (on non-Agenda items) – None.

Traffic Engineer Will Lorton explained that the following items fall within what has been approved, conditionally, by the commission to eliminate uncontrolled intersections, focusing on the four-leg intersections. Per Mr. Lorton, the first three cases fell within the first mini-study that was discussed in February 2017 and the latter two cases were resident-initiated.

File #10-17 35th Street at Pomeroy Court – Traffic Control Revisions: Mr. Lorton summarized the directional and dimensions for 35th Street and Pomeroy Court. Currently there were no posted restrictions on the north/south or west legs of the intersection. The east leg of the intersection allowed parking on the south side of the road only. There was no history of crashes. Staff recommended control for the north/south legs of Pomeroy Court/Pomeroy Road due to lower traffic volumes. Traffic volumes did not warrant an all-way stop. One voicemail and one email were received by staff regarding this case and both emails recommended no control at all.

Asked if 35th Street, classified as a local street, acted more like an arterial in the area under discussion, Mr. Lorton stated it would act like a collector street. Regarding the email received by staff, Mr. Lorton said the email discussed that there was no crash history.

Mr. Saricks and the chairwoman recalled that crash history was not one of the main reasons the village was moving forward with such approach.

Chairwoman Dunne opened up the meeting to public comment.

Ms. Barbara Staehle, 3540 Pomeroy Court, was “startled” when she heard stop signs were going to be installed on Pomeroy Court and Pomeroy Road. She noted that if one travels west on 35th Street and passes Pomeroy Court, it becomes a dead-end street, and three dead-end streets exist with a handful of homes. Since her move into the area in 1981, she has never seen or heard a crash and stated that vehicular and pedestrian traffic were low. However, Ms. Staehle stated there was traffic safety concerns on 35th Street at Saratoga. She suggested installing yield signs instead.

Per Mr. Saricks' query whether there was the expectation of future development in the area that could increase future traffic volumes, Mr. Lorton did not believe so. A brief dialog followed regarding the two-way stop at Saratoga and 35th Street.

Ms. Barbara Staehle, 3540 Pomeroy Court, added that when driving north on Saratoga there was a hill and if one stops where one is supposed to, one cannot see anything coming toward you from the east on 35th Street, which requires a driver to pull up further to get a better view. When a driver heads south on Saratoga to 35th Street, vehicles are usually turning east to get to Highland Avenue and sometime the trees/shrubs make it difficult to see. Drivers are expecting a four-way stop if unfamiliar with the neighborhood. She preferred the village "do something" at Saratoga and 35th Street, such as yield signs on Pomeroy Court/Pomeroy Road.

Mr. Lorton added that between Venard and Saratoga there were townhomes that were recently constructed.

Mr. Robert Svoboda, 3550 Pomeroy Court, said if he has one car that comes from his left (on 35th Street) as he heads right onto 35th Street, it was "a lot of traffic." He suggested having a yield street. He also said he does have to pull about a quarter into the intersection to make a left off of Saratoga onto 35th Street in order to see traffic coming from Highland Avenue, which was dangerous. He reiterated Saratoga and 35th was a very dangerous intersection, citing he saw squad cars on 35th Street near Saratoga. He did not understand why Pomeroy Court/Pomeroy Road were "dangerous intersections" when no thru traffic existed.

Mr. John Staehle, 3540 Pomeroy Court noted the village's data indicated there are no crashes. In other words, there was no real need for a stop sign at Pomeroy Court and it was more of a nuisance than a safety issue for him and the residents.

Per Mr. Schiller's question regarding the southbound traffic on Pomeroy that turns eastbound on 35th, Mr. Staehle stated he rarely sees traffic coming towards him on those occasions where he is leaving. He suggested staff obtain a vehicular count going south on Pomeroy Road. He and many of his neighbors turn right to go towards Highland or Saratoga.

Chairwoman Dunne closed the public hearing portion.

Mr. Schiller found the stop sign unnecessary on the south side of 35th Street if only five or six homeowners were being stopped before making a right turn and questioned whether the stop sign proposed for the north side of the leg would be justified for drivers coming down and making a full stop before making a left, which may make it easier for drivers coming in and out of the court. But a stop sign on the south side appeared to "not serve much purpose." Mr. Saricks also pointed out a previous recommendation made for 61st Street several meetings ago where the commission's recommendation did not include one of the two stop signs recommended, which was similar to this case.

After discussing the matter further and asking if there was something that could be generating additional traffic southbound on Pomeroy, such as cut-through issues or whether sight line issues existed, Mr. Lorton indicated there was not. Mr. Lorton further explained the village's policy for uncontrolled intersections becoming controlled.

Chairwoman Dunne also reminded the commissioners and public that while there may be some situations where the signs seem unnecessary, for the purposes of consistency, and because drivers may come to expect controlled intersections and coming to a random intersection that was not controlled, could become a safety issue if the driver was expecting someone to stop regardless.

She believed the commission stay firm with its decision to install stop signs at uncontrolled intersection regardless of low traffic volumes or low crash history.

Mr. Saricks reiterated his concern about sight line issues existing at 35th and Saratoga stating drivers will continue to travel through the intersection even though it was a two-way stop. He asked staff about the logic of not installing a stop sign for westbound 35th Street at Saratoga. Mr. Lorton suggested that the residents fill out an intersection control petition and have a separate follow-up study. However, he added that staff will have to pay attention to the traffic volume at 35th and Saratoga, otherwise crash history will have to be reviewed.

WITH RESPECT TO FILE #10-17, MR. SCHILLER MADE A MOTION THAT THE TRANSPORTATION AND PARKING COMMISSION FORWARD A POSITIVE RECOMMENDATION TO THE VILLAGE COUNCIL TO INSTALL A STOP SIGN ON THE NORTH AND SOUTH LEGS OF POMEROY COURT AND POMEROY ROAD.

SECONDED BY MR. SARICKS.

Mr. Saricks reiterated his concerns but also recognized the village's policy.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY VOICE VOTE OF 4-0.

File #11-17 Oak Hill /Court at Venard Road– Traffic Control Revisions: Mr. Lorton provided an overview of this case, summarizing that Oak Hill Road/Court is an east-west roadway classified as a local street 30 feet wide. Venard is a north-south roadway classified as a local street also 30 feet wide. No posted parking restrictions existed and the intersection was uncontrolled. Between 2005 and 2015, there was only one crash at the intersection. Staff recommended that the east and west legs have the stop control. One email was received by staff which was in opposition of the stop sign even though there was an accident referenced due to a failure to yield. The resident did, however, support yield signs.

Chairwoman Dunne opened up the matter to the public. None followed.

Per a question, Mr. Lorton believed the one car accident was from the east leg of Oak Hill Court but he would have to confirm. The issue of the roadway being used by cut-through traffic was raised by Mr. Saricks. The chairwoman also believed this case was similar to the one above.

WITH RESPECT TO FILE #11-17, MR. CARTER MADE A MOTION THAT THE TRANSPORTATION AND PARKING COMMISSION FORWARD A POSITIVE RECOMMENDATION TO THE VILLAGE COUNCIL TO INSTALL A STOP SIGN ON THE EAST AND WEST LEGS OF OAK HILL COURT AND OAK HILL ROAD.

SECONDED BY MR. SCHILLER.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY VOICE VOTE OF 4-0.

File #12-17 39th Street and Williams Street – Traffic Control Revisions: Traffic Engr. Lorton reported that 39th Street is an east-west roadway classified as a local street 30 feet wide. Williams Street was a north-south roadway classified as a local street also 30 feet wide. No posted parking restrictions existed with the exception of 39th Street having a No Overnight Parking sign restriction. Mr. Lorton clarified this intersection was incorrectly identified as a four-leg uncontrolled intersection; however, the intersection of 39th Street at Williams was currently under a Yield control (by York

Township) for the north leg only with a sign not maintained by the village but was within village right-of-way. There was a one-vehicle crash at the intersection with the vehicle running into a snow bank with no injuries.

Staff recommended replacing the north leg yield sign and placing the stop signs on the north and south legs.

Chairwoman Dunne opened up the meeting to public comment. No public spoke.

Staff reported there were two emails received – one in favor of the stop signs; the other more concerned about speeding on 39th Street. Mr. Saricks commented that 39th Street is treated as a through route to many of its drivers which would make it difficult because if you start imposing stop signs drivers may not be ready for them. He believed the signs were necessary for the cross traffic. Dialog followed as to what traffic volume warrants a four-way stop, that much of the traffic from 39th Street is cut-through traffic; and that installing stop signs in the area could increase traffic on 39th Street. Mr. Lorton mentioned this case will fall within the Neighborhood Study 6 and the area will be reviewed holistically. Mr. Carter mentioned he had no issues approving this request since it would also be reviewed in Neighborhood Study 6.

WITH RESPECT TO FILE #12-17, MR. SARICKS MADE A MOTION THAT THE TRANSPORTATION AND PARKING COMMISSION FORWARD A POSITIVE RECOMMENDATION TO THE VILLAGE COUNCIL TO INSTALL A STOP SIGN ON THE NORTH AND SOUTH LEGS OF WILLIAMS STREET.

SECONDED BY MR. CARTER.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY VOICE VOTE OF 4-0.

File #13-17 Jefferson Avenue at Brookbank Road – Traffic Control Revisions: Traffic Engr. Lorton noted this request was initiated by a resident. The intersection is new with no control currently. The resident requested a stop sign and a high visibility crosswalk on the east leg of the intersection. Jefferson Avenue is an east-west roadway classified as a local street 20 feet wide. Brookbank is a north-south roadway classified as a local street 30 feet wide. There are no posted parking restrictions within the intersection and no related crashes. Staff recommended installing a stop sign for the north leg and stripe a high visibility crosswalk on the east leg of Jefferson Avenue.

Two emails were received by staff – the first email supported the stop sign but not the crosswalk; the second email was from the developer supporting the stop signs but making reference to sight line issues on the north leg with landscaping concerns at the northwest corner.

An explanation followed on how the intersection was “new” and the fact that the development will be generating new traffic westbound on Jefferson in the future. Regarding the crosswalk on the east leg, Mr. Lorton explained the opposition indicated the crosswalk was not necessary due to it being in a quiet neighborhood, and while traffic would increase with the new Brookbank extension southbound to Jefferson, a stop sign was sufficient.

Mr. Saricks pointed out that if the current sidewalks were combined with the Safe Routes to School program, then a crosswalk would be needed to which Mr. Lorton concurred. The developer would provide the crosswalk.

Chairwoman Dunne opened up the meeting to the public.

Mr. John Skofield (phonetic), 1125 Jefferson, supported both requests yet did not know how much traffic would be generated. He agreed with the developer that the sight lines were an issue and just like the developer's letter alluded to, there was much traffic traveling north and south coming from 59th Street south and traversing Brookbank Road to the north. Mr. Skofield discussed that a lot of pedestrian and bicycle traffic was currently taking place in the area because the path existed; however, he suspected that when the road is added, there will be the potential for more conflict between pedestrian and vehicles. He supported the crosswalk for not only the school children but for all pedestrians and cyclists.

Mr. Skofield explained that parts of the Brookbank path to 59th Street are difficult to traverse and he has tried to get the village manager to add it to the ADA list of necessities but, to date, the manager has refused. Details followed with Mr. Skofield confirming that the path is highly used.

Mr. Mark Cronin, 1117 Jefferson, thanked the TAP for their volunteerism and their unappreciated hard work. Discussing this section of Jefferson, Mr. Cronin stated it was about two blocks long with much activity and younger kids on it. He supported the crosswalk and sign but believed drivers see the crosswalk first over a stop sign and expect to slow down because people are in the area.

Mr. Gene Davies, 1203 Jefferson, resides directly south of where the stop sign will be installed and discussed the challenges of pulling out of his driveway, and so he supported both the proposed stop sign and crosswalk.

Mr. Schiller asked whether a stop sign should be installed on the opposite side of Brookbank to stop drivers traveling westbound on Jefferson and to protect the crosswalk, since there was the expectation that the extension of Jefferson would create more traffic over time. Mr. Lorton cited a similar situation at Blanchard and Middaugh where a two-way stop exists and the crosswalk crosses both Blanchard and Middaugh but only Middaugh traffic was being stopped. He offered to take traffic counts once the development was occupied, and if necessary, add the additional sign. Mr. Lorton stated a warning sign that a crosswalk was approaching could also be added.

Further dialog followed on various warning alternatives for the crosswalk, considering that future development could be expected.

WITH RESPECT TO FILE #13-17, MR. SCHILLER MADE A MOTION THAT THE TRANSPORTATION AND PARKING COMMISSION FORWARD A POSITIVE RECOMMENDATION TO THE VILLAGE COUNCIL TO 1) INSTALL A STOP SIGN ON THE NORTH LEG OF BROOKBANK ROAD; 2) STRIPE A HIGH VISIBILITY CROSSWALK ON THE EAST LEG OF JEFFERSON AVENUE; AND 3) INSTALL A PEDESTRIAN CROSSING WARNING SIGN (ON BOTH SIDES) TO NOTIFY DRIVERS THAT A CROSSWALK IS AHEAD.

SECONDED BY MR. CARTER.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY VOICE VOTE OF 4-0.

File #14-17 Branding Lane at Scheldrup Street & Frontage Road at Oak Grove Drive – Traffic Control Revisions: Traffic Engr. Lorton stated this request was from a resident's concern. The area of concern is near Butterfield, Findley and Downers Roads. Each of them are three-leg intersections that are not controlled. A review of the crash information followed by Mr. Lorton. Staff is proposing to add stop control on the terminating leg as depicted on the overhead and as supported by traffic volumes at the location. Staff recommended installing a stop sign on the east leg of Frontage Road at Oak Grove Drive and a stop sign on the north leg of Scheldrup Street at Branding Lane.

Chairwoman Dunne agreed the area was quite busy and by adding signs would be a safety feature for the area. Mr. Schiller shared his personal experience in the area and agreed anything breaking up the traffic flow was a positive.

No public comment followed.

WITH RESPECT TO FILE #14-17, MR. SCHILLER MADE A MOTION THAT THE TRANSPORTATION AND PARKING COMMISSION FORWARD A POSITIVE RECOMMENDATION TO THE VILLAGE COUNCIL TO INSTALL A STOP SIGN ON THE EAST LEG OF FRONTAGE ROAD AND INSTALL A STOP SIGN ON THE NORTH LEG OF SCHEDLRUP STREET.

SECONDED BY MR. SARICKS.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY VOICE VOTE OF 4-0.

OLD BUSINESS: None.

COMMUNICATIONS – Refer to commissioners' packets.

ADJOURN

HEARING NO FURTHER DISCUSSION, MEETING ADJOURNED AT 7:53 P.M. ON MOTION BY MR. SARICKS. SECONDED BY MR. SCHILLER. MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE 4-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Celeste Weilandt
Recording Secretary
(transcribed from MP3 recording)