

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

Minutes of Public Meeting

July 3, 2001

Village of Downers Grove
Committee Room
801 Burlington Avenue, Downers Grove

Chairman Schnell called the July 3, 2001 meeting of the Public Works Committee to order at 5:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

PRESENT: Chairman Marilyn Schnell
Commissioner Martin Tully and
Mr. Jack Bajor, Director of Public Works

Staff: Mr. Bob Schiller, Mr. Stan Balicki, Mr. Mike Baker and Mrs.
Jenny Eccarius, Recording Secretary

Absent: None

Visitors: Mr. Philip Bartnicki, 825 Oxford Street,
Mr. Mark Smith, 4533 Forest Avenue.

Chairman Schnell stated the minutes from the past Public Works Committee meetings are approved as submitted. She stated that there is one correction that needs to be made to the June 26th meeting minutes and that when it is made those minutes will be approved as well.

Presentation: Franklin/Main Crossing, nine-minute video Reducing Pedestrian Fatalities.

Chairman Schnell asked if there had been any studies on snow and ice getting into the lights shown in the video.

Mr. Schiller explained that he had contacted the company and was told it is a completely sealed system. There have been no problems with moisture or ice getting into the system itself. It is a contained unit much like a traffic signal or power line.

Chairman Schnell stated that her concern was more with the snowplows and what happens if plows go over the units. The lights appear to be recessed.

Mr. Schiller replied they are raised a quarter of an inch from the pavement.

Chairman Schnell asked if the snow would stick to them.

Mr. Schiller replied the snow would stick until the unit is activated. The light is not of the fiber optic type it is a light that produces heat and the heat will actually melt the snow and ice off the lenses.

Chairman Schnell asked if they have these lights in communities where it does snow, like here in Chicago.

Mr. Schiller responded a college in Decatur uses this system.

Chairman Schnell believes it would be a good idea to check with the college and see if this was a good product. It would be interesting to find out how they work and what they think about them.

Mr. Bartnicki asked if this becomes an option, would it be placed on one of the crosswalks, or at all four-corners.

Mr. Schiller responded it would just be at the Main Street crosswalk.

Mr. Bartnicki asked if this would be an immediate flashing when you push the activation.

Mr. Schiller responded it would. You have about thirty-seconds or a set length of time once the button is activated. The company stated, if the button is activated more than once, it resets the time allowing large groups to get through the intersection.

Mr. Bartnicki agreed that he liked the stand up light. It will be visible to the people. This looks like a great option if the traffic light is not available.

Mr. Bajor stated he believed the video did not do it justice.

Chairman Schnell commented the video was hard to see it lit up during the day, however she understands how it functions.

Mr. Schiller explained the other issue about the video is they are taking the movie from the side, you can't see it straight on. You don't get the full effect looking at it from the side.

Chairman Schnell stated if this becomes an option they could take a field trip to Decatur.

Mr. Bajor commented this is very exciting to him and it seems to make sense so far as cost.

Mr. Schiller commented he would like to see retrofitting these into the crosswalks at Main Street and Burlington, between Burlington and Curtiss; and the one up by Grove.

Commissioner Tully asked if there were any warrant requirements for these units.

Mr. Schiller responded there is MUTCD information on the last two pages of the packet. There are very minor requirements to install the units. Pedestrian movement in an area warrants the installation.

Mr. Bartnicki asked if this option is the one the village would recommend. The crosswalk by the school meets the criteria.

Mr. Schiller agreed the school crosswalk meets the criteria.

Chairman Schnell asked if there was an education process. People need to be made aware these units exist and what they mean. This would become a public process to acquaint people with the purpose of the unit and function.

Mr. Schiller believes the Franklin and Main project would require very little public education because they already have a push button signal. The only difference would be going from yellow/red to flashing yellow.

Chairman Schnell wishes to check to see what kind of education process Decatur went through and what kind of a lead time there was for the public to get acquainted with the unit and feeling comfortable with the safety of the system. She would like to have all information available if this is an option. Also wants to know about the timeline and how easy it is to install.

Mr. Schiller responded it could be a couple of days for installation or the same day depending upon the epoxy and temperature. He feels the issue is getting everything in, and the first installation will probably take the longest due to lack of experience. The rest will be easy.

Mr. Bajor feels because we are one of the first, we may have the opportunity as well, to see a reduced price.

Chairman Schnell stated she felt there may be a way to apply for a grant or we become a showcase for the system.

Mr. Schiller stated he is already working on that.

Mr. Bajor feels this may bring a bit of recognition in an innovative approach to public safety.

Chairman Schnell commented there are a few more questions and answers that need to be heard about this system. If a traffic light is not feasible, there are other areas where push lights are currently installed. Dunham/Douglas/Prairie will never qualify for a traffic signal because of warrants regardless of installing this system at the intersection of Main and Franklin works. She also asks if there has been a study on Dunham/Douglas/Prairie and if there are any warrants.

Mr. Schiller responded yes, there have been studies, but there are no warrants.

Commissioner Tully asked when a vehicle approaches a crosswalk like this, with a pedestrian crossing sign, is the vehicle required to stop.

Mr. Schiller explained that a vehicle is not required to stop for a pedestrian crossing sign. The sign is to make drivers aware that there is something going on. Without a traffic signal or stop sign, vehicles are not required to stop.

Commissioner Tully stated it is the responsibility of the motorist to slow down, see there are pedestrians in the crosswalk and let them pass as a matter of courtesy.

Mr. Bajor asked if this is in conjunction with signs like we have downtown at Burlington to stop the pedestrians.

Chairman Schnell stated the small signs would not be enough. The points she stated were the crossing guard will still be there.

Commissioner Tully feels in addition, we should have signs posted that are similar to those on Main Street, saying stop for pedestrians in crosswalk. He envisions a motorist coming down the street looking at the flashing lights and wondering what to do. If the idea is to attract their attention and this does that, then notice signs may increase the likelihood of them stopping.

Mr. Smith suggested the committee find a place where there is a colder climate and the roads are salted, because the effect of salt on a steel material can accelerate corrosion.

Commissioner Tully asked what the cost is for one unit.

Mr. Schiller responded the list price is \$9000. He has received a quote price of \$6500, plus the cost of installation.

Mr. Smith asked if a traffic light is viable, who covers the cost of installing the traffic signal.

Mr. Schiller responded the village pays the cost of installing a traffic signal at about \$150,000.

Mr. Balicki stated this price is without decorative poles.

Mr. Schiller confirmed decorative poles on a traffic signal is an additional \$40,000.

Chairman Schnell asked for the Stormwater update.

Mr. Bajor stated per discussions with Bob Jungwirth, a quorum for the next Storm Water Advisory Committee. An agenda is being compiled. There will be monthly meetings. The next meeting is July 18th. Time and place is not available, but would like to use the Public Works Facility. Additionally, a meeting is scheduled with the County, Mr. Tony Carlton and staff to look at all the storm water issues, compliance with the County, MPES Phase II, and storm water requirements.

Chairman Schnell asked for the Public Works Safety Program update.

Mr. Bajor explained some research has been conducted on a Public Works Safety Program. A lot of videotapes are available for safety and training, put to good use. Commissioner Tully asked to be sure to contact Human Resource to verify current policy. Met with Greg Zimmerman today and gave him a copy of our intentions of the program for review.

Chairman Schnell inquired about the CBD Project.

Mr. Bajor mentioned at the last meeting, PSI was hired to do the work. Dave Conley was asked to provide a proposal. Within 2 weeks a report should be available. Two PHD and engineers will be reviewing our files, cost between \$1200 to \$1500 the most. The report will provide the necessary information if the compaction is correct. When it becomes available, will forward copies directly to Chairman Schnell and Commissioner Tully.

The CBD project is ahead of schedule per Dave Conley. There have been no problems thus far.

Chairman Schnell inquired about appearance of the wall on Warren

Mr. Schiller stated he has not seen the wall.

Chairman Schnell explained the color is beige or yellow and asked if anything is going on top of it to soften the look.

Mr. Bajor stated he did not believe anything was going over this but it may weather. It will be checked into.

Commissioner Tully inquired the CBD Project is scheduled for completion mid, early, late, August.

Mr. Bajor confirmed the project should be completed mid-August.

Chairman Schnell asked if there is going to be a celebration.

Mr. Baker stated September 7th is the date for the CBD Grand Opening Celebration.

Mr. Bajor asked if there is anything the committee would like him to prepare for the Grand Opening.

Chairman Schnell suggests contacting the coordinator of the Grand Opening, Linda Kunze.

Next item on the agenda is the Community High School District 99 South Parking Lot.

Mr. Bajor requested Bob Schiller present the High School South Parking Lot.

Mr. Schiller presented the update of information received since last week. After speaking with Healy, Snyder, Bender & Associates numerous times, a letter of intent was received. The letter

stated the school would install all the necessary equipment, allowing access to the gates on Forest Avenue 24/7. A traffic detector will activate the gates during normal school hours. After school hours, the gates will be closed allowing access by a code only. Mr. Smith has offered several options, which have been reviewed. In laying out and measuring the suggestions received, per code ordinances, we are removing about 2 feet off the aisles angling the parking stalls.

Mr. Smith added it was suggested to move the entire lot 10 feet east.

Mr. Schiller continued and passed along a copy of the response from Dave Patton of Healy, Snyder, Bender & Associates. The parking lot is set on the setback line for Main Street. If the lot were to be moved it would encroach the setback line, a problem will be created with the grade differences of the street and parking lot. The parking lot is set at the floor elevation of the high school. There is anywhere from 2 ½ feet to 5 ½ feet grade difference with the street. Moving the lot 10 feet closer to the road changes the slope of the parkway between the sidewalk and parking lot to greater than 3 to 1 which requires installation of retaining walls and guardrails at an additional expense. A Zoning hearing would be needed for variance. To go before the Zoning Board of Appeals, and request a variance, there has to be a hardship shown. All indications received, the reason this matter would be brought forward does not indicate a hardship.

Chairman Schnell inquired if the hardship of the residence, having a parking lot so close to their homes was sufficient.

Mr. Schiller stated at the original meeting, residence from Main Street attended. If the lot is moved 10 feet further east you then impact those residents.

Commissioner Tully added this is an issue of standing. How it works, it would have to be a hardship for the petitioner, which would be District 99. He asked if the setback was 25 feet off Main Street and 25 feet off the right of way.

Mr. Schiller confirmed both 25 feet off Main Street and 25 feet off the edge of right of way.

Mr. Smith asked if it would be considered to raise the grade of the whole parking lot.

Mr. Schiller stated he is unable to answer what is the set elevation level or grade of the parking lot. TOPO'S (Topographical Surveys) have not been seen. The drawings available are for planning stages.

Mr. Smith pointed out the plans that the southeast corner and northeast corner are low areas. The grade at the exit is at the high point. It was questioned if the exit at the southeast corner could be moved further north which would be more conducive to grade level.

Mr. Schiller stated the exit in the southeast corner is the best option for the grade of the property. The farther north it is moved the greater the grade difference between the parking lot and the road.

Commissioner Tully questioned the Village has authority over ingress and egress from the parking lot on Forest. The ordinance only speaks of restrictions on Main Street egress. It only makes sense, to restrict exiting out to Forest also and post a sign stating violators will be ticketed and fined. When the resolution is brought up at Council, the committee's recommendation would be to amend the resolution to include line (b) To exit westbound from the parking lot access drive at Forest Street, would be unlawful to do so".

Chairman Schnell agrees with this suggestion. There are still issues on how the area would be built with landscaping and access, which would be acceptable to the residents. How are we going to try to foster this with the District to make sure the residents continue to be in the loop.

Mr. Schiller offered to keep the lines of communication open with the residents, Healy, Snyder, Bender & Associates and the School District. As far as leverage with the District, we do not have that ability.

Chairman Schnell asked if there are ways we can encourage the lines of communication between the School District and the residents; to make sure they are totally open, and the resident's see the plans and have input into the plans.

Mr. Schiller stated this is not a problem. If the District does not have meetings, we will call a meeting with the resident's.

Chairman Schnell stated her concerns with landscape, screenings, noise buffer, little things that need to be done. The resident's have to be able to live with this. Everything we can do, we should. Keep open the lines of communication and also work with the School District. We have a Village Forester. Ask the Forester to review the plan and be sure the material is noise-buffering plants.

Commissioner Tully understands we can not arbitrarily withhold approval of this, which would not be appropriate, nor is the Commission empowered to do that. Nevertheless, District 99 should understand we have long memories. The District may want to listen to the Village as an entity of equal standing in the Community.

Chairman Schnell states by encouraging keeping the lines of communication open, we are doing our job at the Village to make our residents are protected.

Mr. Smith asked if the resident's review the TOPO's and a plan is presented that would meet all existing codes, and the District decides not to do this, is there anything we could do to move the lot over 10 feet?

Commissioner Tully stated he did not feel there is anything else we could do. It is the property of District 99. We can not tell the School what to do with their parking lot just as they can not tell us where to put the parking deck.

Mr. Smith asked if the teacher's lot on the eastside of Main Street was grandfathered or if a variance was granted. The parking lot is 10 feet off the sidewalk.

Commissioner Tully stated the setbacks on side streets intersecting Ogden Avenue were 8 feet and then changed to 25 feet. Unsure if this applies to this portion of Main Street. Zones where commercial districts intersect with residential.

Chairman Schnell inquired about the deadline for the lot.

Mr. Schiller responded that the District would like to have the lot completed before school begins.

Mr. Smith asked if we could get the District to put their intentions in writing. They make changes each month.

Commissioner Tully explained he did not think we could make the District put their intentions in writing other than the fact that it has been reflected in previous minutes of the Parking & Traffic Commission. We can re-emphasize the prior commitment tonight. The previous items recommended by the planning department that the lot will not be open to the public during extracurricular activities, sporting events formerly agreed to by Mr. Marty Schack, 2nd and 3rd shift custodians will not have access to the lot. We can certainly say a previous representation made by District 99 to the residents in the area the Village would encourage them to keep that commitment.

Chairman Schnell asked for the Pedestrian Plan update.

Mr. Bajor stated that Stan Balicki is the author of the plan which dovetails with the Bikeway Plan.

Mr. Balicki presented copies of the Bikeway Plan which we are working on putting on the web.

Chairman Schnell stated this is one of the best reports she has ever seen a consultant produce for the Village.

Mr. Balicki stated we were lucky to work with a lot of good people on this plan not only here in the Village but our consultant engineer, John LaPlant, formerly the Commissioner of Transportation for the City of Chicago. He was the principal author of the National Design Guidelines for Bikeways. State departments of transportation also use these guidelines. Bikeway Plan held several public meetings, various workshops, informational meetings and at that time, residents and council members wanted to look at pedestrian issues. There is a link between bicycle planning and pedestrian planning. A lot of the same things, which cause a crossing or intersection to be difficult for a bicyclist also, cause difficulties for a pedestrian to get through.

Planning for pedestrians is a little more difficult because pedestrians are everywhere. The scope of such a project could be huge. Some of the cities out west are well known for alternate transportation. These cities have done pedestrian studies that have been in hundreds of thousands of dollars in cost.

Downers Grove did not do this. Our consultants looked at our existing policies such as crossing guards, crosswalks and sidewalk matrix. Certain issues and areas that were identified as being difficult for pedestrians to cross or access were looked at more in detail. This way the recommendations would be able to be applied in other areas in Downers Grove. One example is the intersection at 75th Street and Lemont Road. This intersection is optimized for motor vehicle traffic, which are the largest users. The plan is in the very preliminary stages. A lot of work still needs to be done to have completed in the next couple of months. Eventually we will take this to the Parking & Traffic Commission for review and then onto Village Council for adoption. The results of this plan will not necessarily be a list of projects or capital improvements like the Bike Plan. It will be more a set of recommendations potentially for certain policies that council may want to consider. Policies, that we as a department of Public Works, Engineering or Planning, may want to look at when reviewing new developments or projects, that we are doing everything we can to make the areas pedestrian friendly.

Copies of recommendations received via e-mail from T Y Lin distributed.

Chairman Schnell we can review this copy and put it on a future agenda.

Mr. Balicki stated its interesting since there have been some changes to certain design policies that we would be following. One example is the intersection of Maple and 55th/Dunham. There is a large radius for turning. As you read through, you will understand more.

Chairman Schnell asked about looking at an underpass for pedestrians.

Mr. Balicki acknowledged the pedestrian underpass cost is quite extreme. There are plan commission minutes that date back to 30's or 40's suggesting a potential underpass in the vicinity of Lee. Unfortunately, there are a lot of utilities there with the DuPage Water Commission and the railroad. One thing we hope to accomplish with this preliminary work is give us the tools to be able to go out and seek Grant Funding for this type of project.

Chairman Schnell asked for the Public Works Project Update.

Mr. Bajor stated he was asked by the Committee to prepare a format for future meetings. Jenny helped with this today. List of PW Project Name/dates/description for quick distribution at the next meeting if that is acceptable.

The largest project listed is the Belmont underpass:

- a. Discussions with Metra and their engineers, URS
- b. Discussions with County, Morgan Cotton
- c. Not a lot of input or feedback from Morgan Cotton, County Department of Transportation
- d. Donato Brescia, Metra, Construction Engineer Manager works with URS Engineers.
- e. Using retaining walls to help minimize property acquisitions on the west side of Belmont
- f. Slope on the east side
- g. Upcoming meeting within two weeks

Commissioner Tully would like updates on the Belmont underpass, somewhat in the same manner as the update just presented.

The ordinance for the Public Works Committee was originally the Public Service Committee. Would like to suggest to Council to change the name officially to Public Service. Original intent was to encompass Code Services, Social & Health Services, CRC, Planning Services, Recycling, Transportation, etc.

Chairman Schnell mentioned it might be presented along with the mission statement.

Commissioner Tully agrees. Copies of a proposed mission statement distributed. As discussed would like to see the commission meet bi-monthly, or as needed and move back to 5:30 p.m.

Chairman Schnell would like to have the meetings bi-monthly or monthly by August and starting at 5:30 p.m. She will not be available August 14th. There will be no meeting next week, July 10th.

Commissioner Tully, on the record, thanks Jenny and Megan for an outstanding job on the minutes.

Chairman Schnell adjourned the meeting at 6:25 p.m.

MKD

I/word/staff/pw committee/minutes/7-03-01