

PARKING & TRAFFIC COMMISSION
Minutes of Public Hearing
January 16, 2001

Downers Grove Public Works Facility
5101 Walnut Avenue, Downers Grove

Chairman Ross Johnson called the January 16, 2001 meeting of the Parking and Traffic Commission to order at 7:06 p.m. He then asked for a roll call.

ROLL CALL

Present: *Commissioners:* Mr. Fera (7:10 p.m.), Mr. Kren, Ms. McNamara, Mr. Thurston, Mr. Yeksigian and Chairman Johnson

Absent: Mr. Stapleton

Present: *Staff:* Ms. Marion Heinz, Police Department, Mr. Bob Schiller and Mrs. Megan Dugard, Recording Secretary

Absent: None

Visitors: Mr. Scott Rausch, 826 Rogers Street, Ms. Erica Rausch, 826 Rogers Street, Ms. Pam Krebs, 822 Rogers Street, Ms. Cheri Erdman, 4921 Whiffin Place, Mr. Terry Erdman, 4921 Whiffin Place, Mr. Keith Kasper, 4925 Whiffin Place, Ms. Carol Kazwich, 4919 Whiffin Place, Mr. Ken Lerner, 4933 Whiffin Place

Chairman Johnson informed the public that the meeting was being recorded on Village owned equipment to aid in the preparation of the minutes of the meeting. Chairman Johnson asked the Commission if there were any comments or changes after their review to the minutes of the November 21, 2000 meeting.

COMMISSIONER MCNAMARA MOVED THAT THE MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 21, 2000 PARKING AND TRAFFIC COMMISSION BE ACCEPTED AS SUBMITTED.

COMMISSIONER THURSTON SECONDED THE MOTION. *Motion carried 5:0*

NEW BUSINESS

File #01-01 Parking Restrictions on Whiffin Place

Chairman Johnson stated the first item on the Agenda is a request to change parking restrictions on Whiffin Place. He read the staff report to begin this discussion.

Public Works Staff Report
File #01-01
Parking Restrictions on Whiffin Place

BACKGROUND

During the past several weeks the Public Works Department has received requests by mail from several Whiffin Place residents to restrict parking at all times on both sides of Whiffin Place. Currently parking is restricted on the west side of Whiffin Place and three hour parking from 6 a.m. and 6 p.m. on the east side. Whiffin Place is not a through street and is only 14.5 feet wide; therefore this presents a life safety issue. When a vehicle is parked on the street emergency vehicles, refuse trucks, snow removal equipment is unable to access all residents on the street.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that a positive recommendation be forwarded to the Village Council to:

Restrict Parking at all times on the east side of Whiffin Place from the north line of Rogers to the end of the roadway.

Bob Schiller added this is a life safety issue. Vehicles parked along Whiffin Place disrupt normal traffic flow and activities such as snow removal, refuse pickup, and emergency response vehicles if an emergency should occur.

Commissioner McNamara looked at Whiffin Place herself today and was unable to maneuver along the roadway. One vehicle was parked along the east side of Whiffin Place. This made the street inaccessible. Parking needs to be restricted.

Mr. Schiller stated Whiffin is a short roadway. Parking is available on Elm and Rogers Streets. Visitors then would be required to walk around the corner to their destination. Residents expressed concerns to Mr. Schiller for their safety and the inconvenience of approaching neighbors to move their parked vehicles allowing them to exit driveways at the north end of the street.

Ms. Cheri Erdman, 4921 Whiffin Place, a letter signed and submitted by the residents stated they were asking to enforce the restrictions presently in existence. The existing restriction is 3-hour parking is permitted between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m. on the east side of the street but no overnight parking and no parking on the street during the day for snow removal. Residents are not asking to eliminate parking completely.

Chairman Johnson feels the commission understands the resident's request as stated in the letter. Staff's recommendation to the commission is to restrict parking at all times.

Mr. Terry Jones Erdman, 4921 Whiffin Place, questioned if a fire engine is able to pass down the street when a car is parked against the curb.

Mr. Schiller stated that none of the cars are parked against the curb every time. Fire apparatus measures well over 9 feet wide; the roadway measures 14 ½ feet wide. Therefore fire equipment would not be able to pass a parked vehicle. To enforce 3 hour parking restrictions requires a parking officer or police officer to mark the tires of the offending vehicle and return 3 hours later to issue a ticket. There is not enough parking enforcement staff available on a regular basis to do this.

Mr. Scott Rausch, 826 Rogers Street, stated that the parking issue is not a problem during the day as much as it is one family that continually parks on the street overnight. This is the problem. There is more than one car every night. Mr. Rausch had to ask the neighbor at 7:00 a.m., to move their vehicle to allow a delivery of construction material to his home.

Ms. Cheri Erdman stated the regulations in effect are not being enforced. Banning parking on both sides of the street is not the answer.

Chairman Johnson clarified the point. If the “No Parking” restriction is posted, and there is a car on the street, this is a violation of the restriction. A police officer can issue tickets without marking vehicles and returning 3 hours later.

Ms. Marion Heintz confirmed that if a street is posted No Parking, tickets are issued. The Chief will be advised of the continued problems on Whiffin Place. The shifts will be instructed to patrol the area more closely over the next few weeks. Residents are reminded to call the Police Department and report vehicles violating the parking restriction. The construction traffic and construction vehicles are a concern. These matters will be discussed as well. Call 911 to advise police that there are parked vehicles on the street violating regulation and need to be ticketed.

Mr. Keith Kasper, 4925 Whiffin Place, stated that he has access to Rogers Street for parking. However, the “No Parking” restriction on Whiffin Place causes safety concerns for people parking and walking down to Rogers.

Ms. Heintz reminded residents permission to park on the street could be granted due to a party, etc. Residents need to call the Police Department to request permission.

Ms. Pam Krebs, 822 Rogers Street, did not feel that there were any problems up until recently. One resident parks vehicles on the street overnight every night. There is a speeding problem on Rogers. This is a high traffic area.

Whiffin Place is very limited on parking now. Keep in mind these residents are taxpayers also. The laws on the books need to be enforced.

Mr. Keith Kasper inquired about the possibility of widening the street if Council approves no parking restriction.

Mr. Schiller explained that widening the street would be costly. A project of this magnitude is very long-term. A cost estimate would be about \$150,000. This project would be placed in a pool and compete for funding with all other roadway projects. The projects that provide the greatest benefit the community for every dollar spent.

Mr. Scott Rausch, 826 Rogers Street, agrees with enforcing the existing parking restrictions. Mr. Rausch clarified that residents would be required to call the Police Department for approval when occasional overnight parking on the street is needed (i.e. overnight guest, construction etc.)

Chairman Johnson confirmed the Police Department would have to be notified. It appears all the residents have adequate driveway space.

Mr. Scott Rausch stated he is aware that his driveway and his neighbor's driveway are smaller. Parking is available on Rogers to them both.

Mr. Schiller advised that there are exceptions and exceptions can be resolved by calling the police for parking permission. This way everyone can be notified, especially if there is an emergency situation.

Ms. Erica Rausch, 826 Rogers Street, asked about the possibility of installing a stop sign at Rogers and Elm Streets to slow down traffic.

Chairman Johnson explained this is another issue and chances are very slim. Stop signs do not slow traffic. It has been proven that motorists slow down for a very short distance on either side of the stop sign and then speed up to make up the difference. Studies show that this creates more problems than it solves. Stop signs are placed to designate right of way. This is a very involved process. He explained there are certain warrants or standards, which must be met to post a four-way stop at this location. If there is a history of accidents, staff can perform a study before a stop sign would be considered for the area.

Mr. Scott Rausch inquired about installing speed bumps that would make people aware they are traveling at high speeds.

Chairman Johnson is aware that there are cities using speed humps. The law states speed bumps are illegal on public streets. They are used on private parking lots and driveways. There is a liability problem when using speed bumps.

Ms. Pam Krebs remembers that a request was made to install a stop sign at the time when Rogers was made a through street, 15 years ago, which increased traffic. A comment was made then, that when there is a fatality, it would be considered. There has been continual speeding, continual traffic down Rogers. Perhaps this Commission could look into putting up a stop sign.

Chairman Johnson agrees this is a safety issue. However, he does not believe a Village Official would make such a comment. He assured Ms. Krebs this is not how the Village conducts their studies or makes their recommendations.

Mr. Ken Lerner, 4933 Whiffin Place, stated that an incident occurred today. A garbage pick up crew knocked on his door and asked his wife if the vehicle parked in the street belonged to her. The crew needed the vehicle moved so they could get down the street. These are the issues. A vehicle parked on the street blocks the passage and the ability to receive basic services. Mr. Lerner is in favor of the parking ban. If the matter were an occasional vehicle parked on the street, these discussions would not be needed. This is not the case. This has been a problem for some time and more a problem with all the snow.

Mr. Yeksigian inquired about the condition of the street without snow and a vehicle parked along the street.

Mr. Scott Rausch stated that he does not know if you could get a fire truck to the end of the block or not, even without the snow.

Mr. Schiller confirmed that a fire truck could not access the end of the block if a vehicle is parked on the street even if there isn't snow.

Mr. Scott Rausch described the area as very tight. It is very difficult for residents to back out of their own driveways.

Mr. Kren remembers an agreement when Whiffin Place was constructed. Overnight parking was not an intention. This is a Village Ordinance. It is a police matter, contact the police and report the violation.

Ms. Erica Rausch is concerned because it is one family that is abusing the system and causing everyone else to make changes. Residents have talked to them several times in the past. They just are not cooperative.

Mr. Terry Erdman was informed by police dispatch to call when the vehicle is parked on the street. He has done this as early as 5 a.m. The vehicle was ticketed during the snow and the vehicle was towed. Up to this point nobody responded to his past calls.

Ms. Heintz reported that the 2 member parking unit wrote 14,000 tickets for the year between the two members.

Chairman Johnson stated he is concerned and sympathizes with the residents. The fact that the residents do call the police and are not getting a response will be addressed.

Ms. Cheri Erdman explained that once the vehicle was towed, the resident did not park on the street for two weeks. Towing had more of an impact than just issuing ticket after ticket. It seems towing vehicles rather than issuing ticket after ticket is a possible solution.

Ms. Heintz stated that towing is a last resort. Police do not tow unless a vehicle is blocking a driveway or creating a hazard, as in snow removal. Different communities handle parking problems in different manners. Downers Grove mainly tickets the vehicles.

Ms. Pam Krebs asked what happens if people ignore the repeated tickets.

Ms. Heintz stated that we continue to issue tickets. Either the fine is paid or the cost goes to a collection agency. This then goes on their credit report. There must be extenuating circumstances before the police will tow a vehicle. Towing is a last resort.

Chairman Johnson asked Marion Heintz whether the new Super Ticket would include the whole community.

Ms. Heintz responded that the new Super Ticket would not include the whole community.

Chairman Johnson feels the new Super Ticket would remedy this problem.

Ms. Heintz explained why it does not include overnight parking. The new Super Ticket computer system is stored in a hand held unit. The computer system in a police squad requires a police officer to hand write a ticket and place on the vehicle. The police officer would not be aware of previous tickets issued.

Mr. Ken Lerner asked about using the "Denver Boot".

Ms. Marion Heintz stated Downers Grove does not use the “Denver Boot” either. This involves numerous steps and measures to be taken before applying and installing the “boot”. It is required to hold a pre-boot hearing, a post-boot hearing, and this becomes very involved. Downers Grove looked into this for issues with commuters parking overnight.

Ms. Erica Rausch expressed concern about Police Patrol and calling every night for the next few weeks.

Ms. Heintz stated she will be meeting with the Chief and advise him of this meetings discussion. The officers during the day and midnight shifts will be instructed accordingly. More frequent patrols will be conducted for next few weeks until they are instructed to move to other areas. After this point the residents will be asked to call and report the violations to the Police.

Mr. Keith Kasper inquired about restrictions on parking vehicles in the front yard.

Chairman Johnson stated that there are restrictions on parking vehicles in the front yard.

Ms. Heintz stated it is a code enforcement violation issue. You are not allowed to park in the grass on your lot.

Chairman Johnson turned to commission members for resolution. He reminded the residents that this commission is a recommending body only. Our duty is to act as a sounding board for the Village Council. To change parking restrictions requires writing a Village Ordinance. Our recommendation goes to the Village Council who makes the final decision.

Mr. Kren stated that the residents here are requesting to enforce the present restrictions.

Mr. Yeksigian stated that he believes Whiffin Place cannot support parking vehicles on the street.

Chairman Johnson asked for any further comments. There was no further response. Chairman Johnson feels the restriction is justified from a safety standpoint. There is the provision available to call the police requesting permission to park on the street when needed. The village is very cooperative and in almost every instance grants permission. The enforcement of the restriction may be the problem. The best resolution may be to enforce the present restriction that is already in place.

Mr. Fera inquired if the parking ban could be enforced.

Chairman Johnson stated it would have to be enforced. The restriction does not require additional staffing. If there is a violation the police can issue a ticket immediately. This will require the residents to report the violation if tickets are not appearing.

Ms. McNamara mentioned that the residents stated they are calling and reporting violations. The violators are not paying attention to the penalties.

Mr. Yeksigian inquired if there is a way to watch over a period of time, on each police watch.

Ms. Heintz responded yes.

Chairman Johnson mentioned that if “No Parking” is posted on both sides of Whiffin Place, the violation fee is \$10 each time.

Mr. Bob Schiller stated that there is an ordinance revision before the Village Council to increase those violation fees from \$10 to \$20.

Chairman Johnson asked if there were any further comments. There was no response.

COMMISSIONER YEKSIGIAN MOVED TO RECOMMEND TO THE VILLAGE COUNCIL THAT PARKING BE RESTRICTED AT ALL TIMES ON THE EAST SIDE OF WHIFFIN PLACE FROM THE NORTH LINE OF ROGERS STREET TO THE END OF THE ROADWAY.

COMMISSIONER FERA SECONDED THE MOTION.

ROLL CALL: AYE: Mr. Yeksigian, Mr. Fera, Ms. McNamara, Mr. Thurston and Chairman Johnson

NAY: Mr. Kren

Motion Carried: 5:1

Chairman Johnson reiterated that this commission is a recommending body only. This issue has to go before the Village Council. An ordinance has to be written and it may be three or four weeks before there are results.

Mr. Yeksigian mentioned putting Rogers on the neighborhood watch program for speeding.

Chairman Johnson mentioned to the residents that if they wished to attend the Village Council meeting as it comes up on the agenda, it will be published in the Village Corner. Village Council meetings are on Tuesday and the residents can call the Village Clerk at Village Hall to see if this is on the agenda for the evening in approximately two weeks.

Ms. Pam Krebs pointed out that for the neighborhood watch on Rogers, the offenders are mostly at the top of the hill, possibly Elm Street.

Ms. Heintz responded that this depends on the site, and the ability of the officers to pull out from a location. The officers would properly position themselves to patrol the area.

Ms. Cheri Erdman asked what could be done for a month until the Village Council meeting.

Ms. Heintz stated she would make the Chief aware of the problems. The Chief will then issue orders to the midnight shift and parking units and highlight the area.

Ms. Erica Rausch asked about contractor vehicles doing construction on their home, and if this was considered an exception to parking on the street.

Ms. Heintz stated that permission from the Police Department must be granted every week.

Mr. Schiller stated that anything the contractors could do to limit or eliminate their vehicles from parking on Whiffin Place would be helpful. Parking around the corner was suggested.

Chairman Johnson thanked the residents.

File #02-01 Residential Speed Limits

Chairman Johnson announced the next item on the agenda is discussion of the reduction of all neighborhood speed limits to 25 mph. This issue was discussed at the Village Council and “Keep Kids Alive – Drive 25”. As staff reports we are in the 85th percentile range of 25-30 mph. We may do more research and review if needed.

Ms. McNamara inquired as to why we are looking to lower the speed limits.

Chairman Johnson explained it is in response to the #1 complaint of the residents in the community, too much speeding on our residential streets. It may be more evident due to less school bus service.

Ms. McNamara asked Bob Schiller why the concern.

Mr. Schiller responded Mr. Kren brought up the issue at P&T last year. The Village Council discussed this last year, in consideration with the program “Keep Kids Alive – Drive 25”. The changes in the bus service from 1 mile to 1-½ miles raised concerns and many requests were received for the reduction of speed limits around schools since more children are walking. All of these issues should be considered in this matter. Surrounding areas Woodridge, Naperville, Lisle and Elmhurst have 25 mph neighborhood speed limits. This has become a growing trend. Local residential roadways are being considered.

Mr. Kren agrees lowering the speed limit is a good idea. Some streets are a concern. We do not wish to re-post streets that were done in the past. If a street was posted at 20, leave it at 20.

Mr. Schiller stated collector streets are not affected. They are posted by ordinance as listed. If posted speed is lower than 25, these will not be changed. Before we can move forward, the commission needs to review and revise the roadway classification map and formalize this plan.

Chairman Johnson stated a roadway classification discussion is to determine which streets should be designated collector streets.

Mr. Kren questioned how the police department feels about the 25 mile an hour speed limit.

Ms. Heintz stated the concern is that if the speed limit is posted 25, the police can enforce the 25 requirement. In court, judges do not wish to see anything less than 10 miles over the posted speed to convict. This is reasonable. The Chief has reviewed the material and saw no problem as presented.

Chairman Johnson expressed his concern after reading the material. We have had past discussion on this matter. The end result is that lowering speed limits and installing stop signs does not affect vehicle speeds. This only provides the police with vehicles to ticket. Speeds only increase to make up the time.

Ms. Marion Heintz noted the continuity from an enforcement aspect is favorable. Local roadways are posted at 25. If there is nothing posted, it is known on a residential street, the speed limit is 25.

Mr. Fera mentioned Naperville has had their program in place for some time. The speed limit is posted at 25. Tickets are issued at 31, enforced by the police, and supported by the courts. It is working.

Chairman Johnson would like to do some further studies. He requested that the item be placed on the agenda for March or April. Bob Schiller will be able to provide additional traffic speed studies.

Mr. Schiller reminded Chairman Johnson of the document at hand. All speed information from 1988 to present is available in this document.

Mr. Kren requested a copy of the speeds on the collector streets and minor arterial streets. He stated that he did not see information on the documents at hand.

Mr. Schiller stated that he just received the speed limit map on Friday from staff. They surveyed the town and put together a speed limit analysis map of the entire community. One copy is available to pass around at this time.

Mr. Kren commented he is interested in seeing what the speed limits are.

Chairman Johnson noted that in the report at hand, there is a list of every street in town. There are some blanks waiting for volume studies. He read what is available in this report for everyone to review if they wish to have a copy or pass around.

Mr. Kren stated he feels it is more important to know the speed limits that are on the streets.

Ms. McNamara feels it should be decided to have 25 mph on the streets and just say this to the public. It is mostly to the benefit of the police.

Mr. Schiller shared the map with the members for their review.

Chairman Johnson asked Mr. Schiller if there was a need to check any further speeds.

Mr. Schiller feels the counts given are typical. There are many counts from the last 6 months. After corrections to the map are made copies will be available for the next meeting.

Chairman Johnson noted Andrew Marks and Tina Kidwell did a good job on the presentation of the map. In order to proceed, a hearing is required. A public announcement in the Village Corner is appropriate.

Mr. Schiller feels communication will be needed, whether it is press coverage or the program "Keep Kids Alive-Drive 25". It has been presented in surrounding areas by posting the "Keep Kids Alive-Drive 25" posters on fences in subdivisions to remind people to slow down.

Mr. Yeksigian inquired whether the 25-mph is an ordinance in other towns.

Mr. Schiller responded yes.

Chairman Johnson agrees communication is a big factor. It would be beneficial to the Village to be proactive, resulting in positive feedback from the residents. This would make motorists more aware and the residents would appreciate the response.

Mr. Schiller stated this is something the residents have been asking for especially with the reduction in school bus service.

Mr. Kren wishes to refrain from mentioning how other surrounding areas are using the program. The message is, the Village of Downers Grove is participating in this program mainly because it is what the Village wants to do. It is not because the surrounding areas are doing it.

Mr. Fera suggested putting the information on our web-site.

Mr. Schiller agreed. The web shows 3,000-5,000 hits per month. Agendas to all council meetings appear on the web.

Mr. Yeksigian inquired about posting it in the Reporter.

Mr. Schiller stated that the Downers Grove Advertiser is available on Fridays. The Friday publication is no longer called the Reporter.

Mr. Kren recalls discussing posting 25 mph in the past.

Chairman Johnson stated in announcing to the public the 25 mph restriction, should there be a big turnout, discussions can continue at a later scheduled meeting. There may have to be more than one hearing. Commissioners were asked if the Village should proceed.

Mr. Kren would like to continue discussion on posting 25 mph, but asked if the Village can wait until the May agenda.

Chairman Johnson asked Mr. Schiller if he needed more time compiling any further information.

Mr. Schiller stated he would like to gather a little more information. Additional speed counts would be taken to update the data on the map. Putting the program in place is a positive measure. This will provide a tool for the police and the village, to demonstrate to the community that we are trying to reduce speeds on local streets.

Chairman Johnson would like to continue discussion of the residential speed limit over the next couple meetings and a set time. He questioned Bob Schiller and Marion Heintz on any feedback or repercussions on school crosswalks/crossing guards.

Ms. Marion Heintz stated she has not heard anything. Bob Schiller was dealing with complaints or requests.

Mr. Schiller has not received any requests for guards lately. All the studies performed in the fall will be studied again in the spring. Possible revisions to crossing guard criteria may be submitted in May/June to the Parking & Traffic Commission.

Mr. Yeksigian stated that one issue raised by the schools was the 4-way stops at Grant & Florence, in the Lester School area.

Mr. Schiller stated that removing 4 - way stops is not received well by the public. He will check traffic count information. The history was not available, but he will check the issue again.

Chairman Johnson inquired if there has been any further conversation about installing a stop sign at Franklin & Linscott.

Mr. Thurston recalls a conversation to install a stop sign after the construction on Forest was complete.

Mr. Schiller remembers study counts were to be taken on the whole brick street area.

Chairman Johnson stated these are projects for warmer weather. A future agenda item was promised to the residents of Lee Avenue that the sidewalk issues would be discussed again in February or March. The residents requested to be removed from the Sidewalk Matrix. We responded that we could not remove Lee Avenue from the matrix. The sidewalk installation is not projected for this coming year, but somewhere down the line. It was agreed that the commission would get back to them.

Mr. Schiller stated that residents need to hear Yes or No to remove Lee Avenue from the Sidewalk Matrix.

Chairman Johnson concurs that the residents of Lee Avenue will be invited to the P&T Meeting for the month of March. Bob Schiller will call Barbara Zielinski. In the meantime, Chairman Johnson asked the members to think about the Matrix.

Discussion continued on the Sidewalk Matrix setting precedence, additional categories and the purpose of the matrix.

Copies of the Village of Downers Grove Bikeway Plan, dated June 2000 were provided to the Parking & Traffic Commissioners for review.

Chairman Johnson asked Bob Schiller to confirm if this is the final plan for the Bikeway Path.

Mr. Schiller stated that he understood from his conversation with Stan Balicki that this was final. He will ask Stan to put together a status memo regarding the Bikeway Plan.

Mr. Thurston would like to acknowledge Public Works staff for their hard work removing snow and ice. Good Job.

Mr. Kren inquired on the salt supply situation.

Mr. Schiller assured the commission the Village is in good shape. It is in better shape than most surrounding communities. Some have exhausted their supply or exhausted the budget for the year.

COMMISSIONER MCNAMARA MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. COMMISSIONER FERA SECONDED THE MOTION. Motion carried 6:0

The meeting was adjourned 9:28 p.m.
/md