

PARKING & TRAFFIC COMMISSION
Minutes of Public Hearing
February 9, 2005

Downers Grove Public Works Facility
5101 Walnut Avenue, Downers Grove

Chairman Johnson called the February 9, 2005 meeting of the Parking and Traffic Commission to order at 7:00 p.m. Roll call followed and a quorum was established.

ROLL CALL:

Present: Commissioners Carlquist, Kren, Stapleton, Thurston, Wendt, Chairman Johnson

Absent: Commissioner Yeksigian

Staff Present: Mr. Dave Barber, Director of Public Works; Mr. Mike Millette, Asst. Director of Public Works – Engineering; Police Sgt. Jim Nehls and Recording Secretary Megan Dugard

Visitors: James Woods with Civiltech Engineering; Willis and Shirley Johnson, 603 Rogers St.; Rena Kuratko, 4917 Stonewall; Kelly Aguayo, 4811 Stonewall; Gary Wahlgren, 5325 Brookbank; Glen Ludwig, 1307 Turney Rd.; Christine Fregeau, 1918 Elmore Ave.; Paul Neustadt, 5326 Meadow Lane; Chuck and Mary Jane Faulkner, 1247 Hawthorn Lane; Peter Trucano, 5227 Brookbank.

Chairman Johnson informed the commissioners that the meeting was being recorded on Village owned equipment to aid in the preparation of the meeting minutes.

APPROVAL OF DECEMBER 8, 2004 MINUTES

COMMISSIONER KREN MOVED TO APPROVE THE DECEMBER 8, 2004 MINUTES AS PRESENTED. COMMISSIONER WENDT SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION PASSED BY VOICE VOTE OF 6-0.

NEW BUSINESS

File #01-05 Roadway Classification Map - Chairman Johnson indicated that some of the revisions made to the classification map (the “Map”) were based on the way the roads were being used. **Mr. Barber** was seeking input from the commissioners on the Map, noting the Map would be forwarded to the Plan Commission for their input. **Mr. Millette** proceeded to explain how the Village’s Roadway Classification Map was broken down and the traffic standards which engineers followed to determine roadway classification, i.e., locals, collectors and arterial roads.

Mr. Millette, explained that in his memo (page 2) seven road segments were identified whose characteristics were significantly different from what they were, and, in some cases, were functioning differently. Per a question, **Mr. Millette** discussed that the priority used for the Roadway Maintenance Program had the minor arterials and collector networks take precedence over the local network and volume of traffic would be considered. No special striping or signage would take place. The exercise was more of an acknowledgment of what existed. **Chairman**

Johnson clarified that two road segments: Sterling Road from Ogden to 36th Street and 35th Street, from Sterling Road to Fairview, were listed as collectors because they were a function of trying to complete a collector pattern so that specific section of the village had a collector street to take traffic to a minor arterial street. However, the volume on the segments were low. The same followed for Barneswood Drive, from Venard Road to Highland Avenue. Clarification then followed that Walnut Avenue, north of Maple was a collector street and Walnut south of Maple was not. The map was wrong. Regarding 59th Street, from Walnut to Belmont it was noted the segment was outside the village and the map should be corrected.

The chairman discussed in general how in the past residents have expressed their dissatisfaction when a reclassification to their street occurs and then express concern about the impact. However, the Village would try to assure its residents that by designating the street, it would not change the driving habits of motorists. Because this matter was a housekeeping matter, the Map would be forward to the Plan Commission for their input.

Dialog followed on an Ogden Avenue development just west of Lee Avenue and its impact on Lee Avenue and because of that, **Chairman Johnson** believed this commission should have input on all developments when they impact traffic. As to the specific development, **Mr. Millette** said he had not seen anything of late, but that at the last concept stage, there was a connection on Stonewall and Lee.

File #02-05 CDB (Central Business District) Parking Re-Assignments. The chair suggested that a thorough review of the CBD begin and commissioners provide their input. **Mr. Barber** presented the map of the existing and proposed parking in the downtown district, emphasizing that parking cannot be considered by "lot", but must be considered as a parking "system." As inventoried, approximately 2300 to 2400 parking spaces existed in the downtown district and included private lots as identified. The proposed parking included on street parking and the parking lots the village owned. **Mr. Barber** addressed some of the issues being raised, i.e., providing more parking for shoppers north of the tracks; parking issues near Village Hall, commuters parking in the police station, and not enough parking for employees, etc. Staff, after taking a holistic view of the parking situation, came up with a number of recommendations. **Mr. Barber** discussed how the parking spaces were either being shifted between lots, eliminated, or reduced in metered hours. Employees of the post office were re-permitted to park in any one of the employee parking spaces downtown just as the other central business district employees parked. Many have relocated to the parking deck. Further changes followed.

For informational purposes, **Mr. Barber** conveyed that this summer the reconstruction of Lot B and the Library Lot will take place with the goal of completion of both lots by June just prior to Heritage Fest.

Chairman Johnson added that a lot of 3-hour parking existed and believed this commission should see how it works first and discuss later because the parking plan will have to be flexible. **Mr. Barber** also indicated it was his first try at the plan and he still wanted input from others. Concern was raised that the 3-hour parking in the Forest lot north for 13 employee spaces was "lean" and it was increased to 20 spaces. It would mean another 7 or 8 employees would have to be moved into the lot, which the chair favored. Another clarification was the Burlington-Main-Washington overlay of parking spaces to meters. Staff indicated there seemed to be a need for meters in that location but explained that those meters could disappear once the final plans for the Curtiss block were seen. Staff did not see a need to place 13 employees on the street when it could be used for shoppers or longer-term shopper parking.

Another issue not addressed was the Belmont underpass project which could add over 600 parking spaces. Staff believed there may be point in time where there is a limit to downtown commuter parking. Conversation was then raised on whether overnight parking was an issue wherein **Mr. Barber** conveyed that it was not an issue except for those few who left their cars overnight on a regular basis and who probably lived in the downtown apartments and commuted to work. Concern was raised that if those individuals were put in the deck, the deck was not being used as it was intended and security issues arose. Staff felt that this may be an issue to discuss later.

Mr. Willis Johnson, 603 Rogers Street, appreciated the changes north of the tracks. He reminded the commissioners to review the 15 minute spaces in the district. He did not support having them. **Chairman Johnson** asked that staff return with the matter at some point.

Continuing, staff discussed that the seven motorcycle spaces were working well. However, some of the 15-minute spaces were not working well and were creating backup issues, etc. An explanation followed as to why the 12-hour spaces on the south side of Burlington were remaining, with staff explaining that the goal was to remove the employees out of the location and get them to the parking deck. However, three-hour parking was being considered for that area so the village would not have to change any meters. **Mr. Kren** recommending removing the stripes in front of the post office since cars were parking there every day, wherein staff conveyed there was a visibility issue but would review again. In closing, **Mr. Barber** indicated he would be meeting soon with the Downtown Management Board to get their feedback on the parking. He would like to speak to the Transportation Advisory Commission to get their feedback as well. After the feedback, staff would probably present a draft ordinance, bring it to the chair, and then back to this commission for recommendation to Village Council. **Chairman Johnson** concurred and believed the plan was a work in progress and would continue to evolve as different needs came to the forefront.

Mr. Willis Johnson, 603 Rogers, asked for the timeline on the above matter, wherein staff estimated about 30 days and did not want to drag beyond two months.

File #03-05 Parking on Mochel Drive. The chairman explained this was a housekeeping matter, basically to keep the cut-out zone on Mochel Drive as a No Parking area.

COMMISSIONER WENDT MOTIONED TO UPGRADE THE TEMPORARY NO PARKING RESTRICTION TO A PERMANENT “NO PARKING ANY TIME” RESTRICTION WITH SIGNAGE ON BOTH SIDES OF MOCHEL DRIVE BETWEEN CURTISS STREET AND THE PARKING DECK. COMMISSIONER KREN SECONDED THE MOTION. ROLL CALL:

AYES: Carlquist, Kren, Stapleton, Thurston, Wendt, Chairman Johnson
NAYS: None **MOTION PASSED: VOTE 6-0**

File #04-05 55th Street and Washington Street - Intersection Safety. It was noted that this matter was being brought to the attention of the commissioners and staff was looking for input on determining the next steps or whether additional information was necessary. **Mr. Millette** explained this study was initiated from complaints or concerns by the residents who reside at the corner. Staff reviewed the accident statistics for the corner, noting the most common accident was the failure to yield or too fast for conditions. From observations, there appeared no change since the parking deck opened and drivers appeared to use eastbound 55th to avoid traffic on Main Street. The speed reviews show slightly higher than the 85th percentile. Staff reiterated its findings for the intersection and offered to research further at the commission's request.

Sgt. Nehls reported on his traffic data for the parking deck for southbound traffic on Washington Street approaching 55th Street. Three accidents occurred from October 2004 to January 2005 after the parking deck was opened. From October 2003 to January 2004 there was only one accident. The main reason for the accidents -- most drivers were failing to yield. Traffic officers were out in the area on four separate dates and documented over 3,000 vehicles traveling east and west on 55th Street. In the 7:00 a.m. to 8:45 a.m. hours, the westbound traffic backed up from Main to Washington. Nine vehicles sped between 41 and 45 miles per hour and one vehicle traveled over 45 miles an hour. Speed was not a factor. **Sgt. Nehls** offered to review the intersection again during the spring or summer months. To date, the Police and Public Works Departments felt this matter could be tabled.

Mr. Wendt, after looking through the traffic reports conveyed that a majority of the accidents were occurring on 55th Street and not Washington.

Mr. Barber indicated it was important to communicate to the property owner that receiving feedback will be necessary before a recommendation can be made and that more work was necessary. As to improvements to the 55th and Main intersection, i.e., left turn lanes on Main Street, staff indicated that the water line project would have to be completed first before any other work, which could be several years out, but purchasing right-of-ways for appropriate left-turn lanes would be difficult. **Mr. Millette** felt those turns could be beneficial. **Mr. Barber** would speak with Dorin Fera to find out the schedule for the work and also speak to the property owner and bring this entire matter back to the commission in the spring.

OLD BUSINESS

Fire #08-04 Sidewalk Program. Staff provided a summary of the recommendations for the sidewalk program as discussed by this commission, to be presented to the Village Council. Staff was asking for support for the recommendations. Mr. Barber, however, announced that one change was already brought to the Village Council which revised the Village Code to require that properties on streets where sidewalks have already been installed through the Village Sidewalk Program, have to continue to pay for their sidewalks via a fee. All recommendations were included including the creation of the unique segments, which was the only recommendation, but staff wanted to make sure the record reflected that information. One of the matrix factors being removed was the State Hazard factor. After **Mr. Barber** spoke with a representative at School District #58, it was noted that by completing a few segments around the school, it could help the school district in eliminating bus routes which cost the school district approximately \$20,000 per year. Staff's understanding was that the Village was applying its factor improperly. In order to eliminate some bus routes, a list of the those specific areas would be forwarded to this commission from the school district. **Mr. Barber** expected to have that information shortly.

Correspondence received from Denburn Association President Gary Wahlgren, dated July 19, 2004, conveyed that the Denburn Association would like to remove its streets from the Village sidewalk matrix and not have sidewalks installed.

Mr. Gary Wahlgren, 5325 Brookbank, President of the Denburn Association explained the Association was 53 years old and believed that not enough of the commissioners saw Mr. Barber's presentation to place the association on Amendment "E" -- a separate, inactive matrix, which was the wish of the Association. **Mr. Wahlgren** spoke to five council members who were in favor of granting the inactive matrix Amendment E. He asked for reconsideration from this commission. In support, he discussed the financial costs involved due to the right-of- ways and

the cutting of trees. He expressed concern that this commission would be wasting its time year after year discussing the Denburn area and wanted the matter finalized.

Chairman Johnson explained precedent-setting was always a concern but also agreed that places such as Denburn Woods, and similar areas, were further down the road. However, he explained the Village Council directed this commission to consider all roadways in the community, which this commission had done. By approving the request, it became an issue for the Village and the council should make the final decision.

Mr. Pete Tricano, 5227 Brookbank, resides in Denburn Woods, has seen the village's installation of sidewalks over the years, noting it was nearing the end, but he explained that problems were inevitable and the village had to address the special areas. Rather than involve the Council on the decision, the people who work with the sidewalk program were best to make the decision. He favored staff's idea of creating a separate list to address special problems.

Mr. Ludwig, 1307 Turney asked the chairman for his other reasons why he did not endorse Exhibit E and accept the recommendations of staff, wherein the chair clarified he misspoke and explained the charge to the Parking and Traffic Commission. Again, he reiterated precedent setting was a main issue but at the same time, the program's focus was safety and to create a safe walking route for all residents in the community. **Mr. Ludwig** also could not imagine that another neighborhood in Downers Grove which would qualify under the new criteria that would put Denburn on another matrix and believed the chairman was making an assumption. Because an established homeowners association existed which represented the residents, **Mr. Ludwig** suggested that if the village allowed the Association to move onto the matrix, that if certain neighbors in Denburn Woods felt differently and came to this commission to address them, this commission, in turn, could tell them to return to the Association since they were the ones that represented you, thereby taking the Village out of the middle of the matter.

Mr. Ludwig further expressed concern that the program in place was not very popular and there seemed a better way to handle the matter. He emphasized that the streets in Denburn were safer because they were winding streets and vehicles tended to drive slower. He believed that criteria alone in other areas of the Village would not be able to justify it.

Mr. Barber reminded the commissioners that the recommendation he made last November and December 2004 to remove the 13 segments from the matrix were due to their unique conditions associated with constructability, of which 6 were in Denburn Woods and 7 in other areas. Until a decision was made on how to address the constructability of those areas, there could be no recommendation from staff. However, the chair believed it was the commission's responsibility to not remove them from the matrix.

Ms. Rena Kuratko, 4917 Stonewall, resides between Warren and Prairie, and discussed that the Village just noted a blind hill existed on her street and it was not part of the criteria. The bus service does not come to her area and she does not have sidewalks. She also expressed concern about the Belmont underpass and the 600 parking spots coming in and commuter cut-through. She has asked for the installation of speed bumps on her street but it has not occurred. She has asked for a speed sign to monitor speeding. She expressed concern about the new families moving into her block and their safety. She asked why and how the matrix continues to get reconfigured and continue to move down the list. The chair indicated her street did move up but the issue was money for the construction of the sidewalks and it could take some time to get sidewalks installed due to money constraints.

Ms. Kuratko was not familiar with the Stonewall segment closer to Ogden (No. 4 on list) and why it would require more safety when there was no school or public transportation near that area. In addition, she questioned whether the sidewalks were being added to safely get the children to school, explaining that the Pierce Downer bus system was removed from her street and was leaving the area's students to walk in the ditches or on the grass.

Ms. Kelly Aguayo, 4811 Stonewall, a 15 year resident, explained seven years ago she had a petition with every homeowner except for one who wanted sidewalks. Since that time, that homeowner moved and new families have moved in with younger children. The bus system did not come to her area because they were less than 1.5 miles from the school. Additionally, she spoke of her own eye impairment and the difficulty of navigating the streets when walking. To be told that her area was moving down the matrix after fighting for sidewalks was very disheartening. The chairman sympathized with her and explained the matrix was refined to make it more meaningful and not to punish anyone. He would check on the rating again. Even more so, **Ms. Aguayo's** situation was clearly why the village needed the matrix and the sidewalks. **Chairman Johnson** reminded the public that many of the areas on the matrix were not part of the original village but that they were brought into the village over a period of time in the condition that they were constructed. **Ms. Aguayo** expressed her surprise when the sidewalk segments on Woodward were completed and Woodward was not ahead of them last year.

It was explained by staff, however, that the sidewalks were done in accordance with what Village Council approved on the matrix last year. Projects, however, may not have been in the time schedule given because funding may not have been available. Staff surmised that the wait would be four years out if the same level of funding was approved by council.

Sgt. Nehls discussed the request for the speed trailer on Stonewall, noting the trailer just came back into service and a few other locations existed prior to Stonewall. Traffic officers were sent out on Stonewall and were providing enforcement. The trailer was expected to be on Stonewall in a week.

Mr. Chuck Faulkner, 1247 Hawthorne Lane has been a resident since 1951 and a member of the Denburn Association since it's inception. He and his wife viewed the community as a village where the residents come to solve issues in the best possible manner. He asked that the commission think about the importance of being flexible because if rules were rigid, there was friction and dissention, citing Lee Avenue as one of those instances. Those in Denburn Woods had a fear that something similar may be forced upon the Association. Mr. Faulkner reiterated that those on the commission were taking upon themselves a considerable amount of responsibility. He explained other ways existed to create a path, citing that the Village spends about \$200,000 a year to settle claims due to people tripping or getting injured by using sidewalks. He believed staff's recommendation was trying to comply with the ordinance and this commission's position. By not adopting the recommendation, it was going against the original ordinance. He asked for reconsideration of the matter.

As to taking consideration of unique factors regarding construction of sidewalks, **Chairman Johnson** explained it was done automatically every year when the sidewalk matrix was reviewed and staff had bypassed some segments in the past due to their unique situations. While they were not removed from the matrix, they were moved to a different position. He explained that the commission's mandate was to include all segments of streets within the village that do not have sidewalks on them. When the time arrives to review the unique segments, an exception could be made. The chair believed the sidewalks in Denburn Woods

would never be constructed because of the unusual right-of-way in the subdivision and the financial costs involved. He believed it was council's decision and not this commission's.

In response, **Mr. Faulkner** explained that because of Denburn's unique situation and consideration of aesthetics, he believed Denburn Woods was necessary and important to be on a separate list within the matrix.

Mr. Gary Wahlgren, 5325 Brookbank, felt that the commission was not open to any other deviations from the matrix and questioned the point of the discussion taking place.

Ms. Christine Fregeau, 1918 Elmore Avenue, stated she was before this commission many times on this issue and her concern was more global. She discussed the changes occurring to the village over the years and policy changes over time, but at the same time the similar goals and visions of this community's decision makers, committees, etc. as it relates to public safety to the entire community. Her concerns included whether the subdivision was trying to make a real difference or a distinction with the separation; concerns about the changing criteria; and concerns about taking exception to the State's bus hazard when there were still no sidewalks in areas around schools. She requested that **Mr. Barber** read into the record the correspondence received from **Ms. Laurie Pilster** (of School District 58) as the school addresses the bus matter very clearly and that by providing busing it does not actually work to remove students from walking. The sidewalks were there to separate pedestrian traffic from vehicular traffic.

In response, **Mr. Barber** clarified the comments he made were the way the school district applied them, but that was not the rules applied on the matrix. His comment was correct as to the way staff had applied it on the matrix. The school district had several factors they took into account for busing. Staff had only applied to the areas where pedestrians were crossing railroad tracks, 55th Street, or other major routes. **Ms. Fregeau** further discussed her concerns about the village making a decision on outdated data and traffic count data that was not really valid. **Mr. Barber** explained he was trying to create factors that could be measured which was why he was changing it. The school factor was a factor that was creating confusion.

Mr. Ludwig, 1307 Turney, explained his understanding of the chairman's position but recommended that staff incorporate the criteria into the overall matrix and assign negative numbers to move the Denburn Woods down to the bottom of the list, which would solve everyone's problem and not cause the Denburn Association to come to this commission every year. In response, the chair expressed his concerns when the village came to that separate list. He agreed that he did not want to see sidewalks in Denburn Woods but it was not the commission's decision.

After much discussion back and forth, **Mr. Wendt** indicated he supported **Chairman Johnson's** decision. **Mr. Carlquist** favored completing four times the amount of sidewalks in other parts of the village than in Denburn Woods due to the cheaper cost per foot than in Denburn Woods. He reminded everyone that the village must look at the matter as what is best for Downer's Grove.

Mr. Faulkner, 1247 Hawthorn, reminded the commission this process was supposed to be a democracy and that the village was determining that sidewalks were necessary. However, he explained that the ordinance which was established was to rate the desirability of sidewalks not to mandate them. After explaining his understanding of the matter he believed the commission was putting itself in the position of dictation.

Chairman Johnson indicated the commission was not dictating and that **Mr. Faulkner** misunderstood the direction of council's policy set 12 years ago. A history of that policy followed. The chairman indicated he could not recall any residents finding dissatisfaction with the sidewalks once they were installed. A majority of them wanted the sidewalks and believed it was a good idea. Lastly, the chairman explained to the residents that this commission was only a recommending body and that village council had the final say.

Lastly, in addressing the comment as to what happens when Denburn Woods gets to the top of the list and enough money exists to install the sidewalks, **Mr. Faulkner** explained that because the subdivision does not involve a thoroughfare and does not involve any parts of the community, a vote of the community is taken, which was his understanding of democracy.

Mr. Gary Wahlgren, stated he did speak to five commissioners who supported the Denburn Woods matter but apologized that they did not contact **Chairman Johnson**. He believed that this commission could recommend staff's recommendation to the Village Council. He further thanked this commission and **Mr. Barber** for all their time spent on this matter. He again asked for a separate list or to add criteria to drop Denburn Woods to the bottom of the list.

COMMISSIONER KREN MADE A MOTION THAT BASED ON THE DISCUSSIONS WHICH TOOK PLACE, THE FOLLOWING CHANGES BE MADE TO THE VILLAGE'S SIDEWALK PROGRAM:

- **Consider the Gap Sidewalk Program as complete and close this program;**
- **Remove sidewalk projects on State and County highways from the Village's Matrix;**
- **Support for Code change to collect sidewalk fees for new development (completed)**
- **Support consideration for collection of sidewalk fees during annexation of properties to the Village;**
- **Support adding summer season employees to develop GIS sidewalk database,**
- **Support annual vehicular traffic data for 25% of the segments on the Matrix;**
- **Eliminate the Sidewalk Cost Share Program as a separately funded program but continue to offer this cooperation through existing sidewalk construction programs;**
- **Amend the Sidewalk Matrix to eliminate two major factors (Pedestrian Volume and Existing Sidewalk), eliminate one minor factor (Street Lights), combine two minor factors into one factor (Roadside Sign Obstruction and Blind Hill signs) and add one new factor (Continuity); and**
- **Approve the updated 2005 Sidewalk Matrix which now includes 130 project segments.**

SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER KREN. ROLL CALL:

AYES: Carlquist, Kren, Stapleton, Thurston, Wendt, Chairman Johnson

NAYS: None

MOTION PASSED: VOTE 6-0

Dialogue followed that this matter will be on the March 22nd workshop agenda. **Mr. Barber** indicated he went to Village Council to hear the budget hearing and \$360,000 per year has been allocated for the sidewalk construction program. If council continues at that level, staff believes the first three programs on the matrix could be completed.

ADJOURN

**COMMISSIONER KREN MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. COMMISSOINER
CARLQUIST SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION CARRIED. VOTE: 6-0**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
(as transcribed by tape)

/s/ Celeste K. Weilandt
Celeste K. Weilandt, Recording Secretary