

TRAFFIC COMMISSION

City of Findlay
August 17, 2020

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE:

MEMBERS PRESENT: Service Director/Acting City Engineer Brian Thomas, Police Chief Robert Ring, Councilman Jim Slough, Fire Chief Josh Eberle.

STAFF PRESENT: Matt Stoffel, Public Works Superintendent; Jeremy Kalb, Assistant City Engineer; Kathy Launder, City Clerk.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Request to review pedestrian safety downtown Findlay.

6/17/2019

Councilman Grant Russel stated that a resident that was struck in a crosswalk recently downtown approached him with ideas to make downtown streets safer for pedestrians. A suggestion is to make all intersections in Downtown Findlay "No Turn on Red." Also, installing left turn lights on all traffic lights Downtown. DeMuth stated that plans are already in place for traffic light upgrades which will include left turn lights on all intersections that have left turn lanes in Downtown. Director Schmelzer stated that we can look at the Capital Plan, and in the interest of pedestrian safety downtown, we can move the request for signal upgrades up on the list to have them completed sooner. Discussion regarding "No Turn on Red" during certain hours. Have not done research on other downtowns or how this affect the Uniform Traffic code. Used to be No Turn on Red prior to 2003. Director Schmelzer stated that it makes sense for special hours. May back up traffic. What do we want to do in the interest of pedestrian safety. See what introduction to no turn on red would make on stacking. Maybe not on Main Cross and Sandusky intersections, but all other intersections in downtown have the "No Turn On Red" designation. Have DGL take a look at. Demuth stated that if you can't see to turn right on red without entering into the crosswalk to see to turn, then it should be "No Turn On Red." Director Schmelzer stated this should be part of the criteria along with stacking. Director Schmelzer requested the Engineering Department to do a study on the intersections with the criteria and come back with a list of intersections and a map to determine where we want to introduce the No Turn On Red. If we don't have anything conclusive, then look at engaging DGL. Director Thomas will contact DGL for a cost to do the study, if needed.

Motion to review the Capital Plan as it relates to the traffic signal upgrades in Downtown to determine if those projects can be moved up in the schedule; have Engineering Department study each Main Street intersection in the Downtown using the two criteria for right turn on red: 1. Do you have to encroach into the crosswalk to make a decision as to whether or not it safe to move forward in your vehicle, and 2. Stacking, then bring it back for further discussion, by Director Schmelzer, second by Chief Dunbar. Motion passed 4-0.

7/15/2019

Remains tabled.

8/19/2019

Motion to lift from table by Director Thomas, second by Director Schmelzer. Motion passed 5-0.

Director Thomas stated that they looked at the intersections downtown, looked at which intersections if you stop at the stop bar you can see and which ones you can't when you turn right. Director Thomas will be checking on pricing with DGL to do a model regarding stacking with data relative to traffic counts that we collected for the Downtown project, provide level of service projections for those intersections if those movements are restricted.

Motion to table request, by Director Schmelzer, second by Chief Dunbar. Motion passed 5-0.

8/17/2020

Remains tabled.

2. Request of Cathy Weygandt, 204 Greenlawn Avenue, for a traffic signal at Sixth Street and Washington Avenue due to concerns of pedestrian and cyclist trying to cross over Sixth Street.

8/19/2019

Lee Weygandt stated that it is difficult and dangerous to cross Sixth Street at Washington Avenue. Suggests installing a signal similar to the one at South Main Street and Baldwin Street, a traffic tripped light and a button to push for pedestrians. Some children cross there to get to Jefferson School. Would like a study done. Director Thomas stated that there are crosswalks there but no signal. Schmelzer wants to differentiate between how long you have to wait to cross a busy road and something we would put in place to actuate to stop traffic. Would take a look at adding a midblock crossing with signalization if a significant number of students cross there to get to Jefferson School. Would like to see what the changes look like around Jefferson School before making a decision. Will be doing additional monitoring in the area due to changes we are making around Jefferson School and will monitor this area as well.

Motion to table request pending additional investigation and analysis of the proposed changes of traffic patterns around Jefferson School, by Director Schmelzer, second by Councilman Slough. Motion passed 5-0.

9/16/2019

Remains tabled.

10/21/2019

Director Schmelzer requested Chief Dunbar to place the camera trailer near the intersection of Washington Avenue and Sixth Street to monitor the number of cars and pedestrians at this intersection, and bring back results.

11/18/2019

Remains tabled.

12/16/2019

Chief Dunbar stated that the camera trailer has been set at the intersection of Sixth Street and Washington Street to monitor pedestrian and bicycle traffic traveling Washington Street across Sixth Street. The trailer has not been up long enough to gather sufficient information. Will have a report at next month's meeting. Item remains tabled.

8/17/2020

Item remains tabled.

3. Request of Sonja Huffman, Center Street Block Watch, to make the intersection of Center Street and Carnahan Street a four-way stop.

9/16/2019

Ms. Huffman stated that Findlay is growing and more people are going to Riverside Park. There are also more activities going on at Riverside Park than there used to be. Ms. Huffman stated that members of the block watch approve the intersection Center Street and Carnahan Street becoming a four-way stop. Director Thomas stated that the City does not install stop signs for speed control. Traffic warrants need to meet requirements for an intersection to become a four-way stop. Motion to obtain traffic counts for Center Street and bring back to Traffic Commission for consideration of a four-way stop at Center Street and Carnahan Street, by Chief Eberle, second by Chief Dunbar. Motion passed 3-0.

10/21/2019

Director Thomas stated that there is some merit to activity of summer vs. non summer traffic. Traffic counts will be taken as soon as able to do so.

8/17/2020

Item remains tabled.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Request of Dave Honse and Jeremy Kalb to make West Pine Street one-way going east after reconstruction of the street due to safety concerns.

Kalb stated that West Pine Street is a very narrow street. Street Department was getting ready to resurface the street. In looking at the sidewalk, there were multiple cars parked across the sidewalks. The street would be paved up to the sidewalks, however there would be three AEP poles in the roadway if we were to do that. The road is only 18 feet wide and it is currently a two-way street. Kalb is meeting with AEP to discuss relocating the AEP poles back behind the sidewalk. If they can't relocate them, then the plan is to turn West Pine Street into a one-way eastbound with a 12 foot driving lane and an 8 ½ foot area on the south side that would be the pedestrian walk route as well as undesignated parking. This plan allows for the AEP poles to be out of the roadway. Chief Eberle suggested to change it to westbound. Kalb will also get letters out to the residents to get their opinions on the change.

Motion to approve making West Pine Street one way after reconstruction, by Councilman Slough. Director Thomas suggested that we should wait for response from AEP before moving forward. Thomas stated that if AEP is willing to move the poles that would be better. Also, without having sent any letters out to residents/homeowners of the proposed change. Chief Eberle inquired if AEP will move the poles is there enough room to keep it two-way. Kalb stated that it will still be narrow, and will still have the issue of people parking over the sidewalk. The sidewalk should be removed since it is illegal. If we put curb in, the residents will be upset that we took away parking. With the street being changed to one-way that allows the paved walking/parking area to be installed. Chief Ring and Chief Eberle would prefer the one-way to be westbound vs. eastbound. Motion dies for lack of second.

Kalb stated that if AEP comes back and they say they can move the poles, then will come back with a new plan showing what that would like.

Motion to table request by Chief Eberle, second by Councilman Slough. Motion passed 4-0.

2. Determine policy on speed bumps in alleys.

Director Thomas stated that at a Council meeting Councilman Russel asked that the Traffic Commission develop a city-wide policy for speed bumps in alleys. Director Thomas stated that speed humps at the intersection of alleys were discussed. One of the issues with speed humps is that it would cause drainage issues and not all alleys have storm drains.

Safety Director Paul Schmelzer asked the following statement be read into the record: The Traffic Commission has discussed speed bumps in public right-of-way in the past. Alleys present an even more challenging environment for speed bumps. Many of the alleys are not paved, and it would not be possible to hold an asphalt speed bump without the cost of paving. Speed bumps do not slow traffic to a crawl unless there are many of them. This approach would make traversing the alleys in the winter very difficult for most vehicles. Alternatively, speed humps at the intersections are an alternative. This would slow traffic at key points where visibility is sometimes low. The speed humps are more expensive, but could be done intermittently by paving an intersection in lieu of the whole alley. It was recommended by the Traffic Commission that speed humps or bumps not be placed unless a city-wide approach to using them to control speed in alleys was examined and adopted. This would also include a construction standard and placement criteria. Maintenance dollars would also need to be budgeted. Given that the frequency of speeding complaints and accidents are low in alleys, the pursuit of a policy for placing for said controls city-wide is not warranted at this time.

Motion that the policy for speed bumps is that the City of Findlay does not allow speed bumps to be placed in alleyways, by Director Thomas, second by Chief Ring. Motion passed 4-0.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned. The next meeting of the City of Findlay Traffic Commission will be held on Monday, August 17, 2020, at 2:30 p.m. in the third floor conference room of the Municipal Building.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy K. Launder
City Clerk