



**TRAFFIC AND SAFETY COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES**

**CITY OF ALBANY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
1000 SAN PABLO AVENUE
CITY OF ALBANY
SEPTEMBER 27, 2007**

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:08 p.m. by David Madson, Vice Chair.

2. Roll Call

Members present: Ray Anderson, Marsha Atkinson, and David Madson. Lubov Mazur said she would arrive around 8:00 pm.

Staff: Aleida Andrino-Chavez, Lt. Daniel Adams, and Ann Chaney.

3. Consent Calendar

Atkinson moved the approval of the July 25 minutes; Anderson seconded the motion. The motion passed.

4. Public Comment

Nick Pilch announced that October 3 is Walk to School Day. He said he is spreading the word and awareness of the program. He said that he had talked to TALC the organization that is administering the Safe Routes to School program (SR2S) in Alameda County and he was informed that the official SR2S program would be targeted in Albany next year.

A resident of Ordway Street, said that she is concerned with the raised crosswalk that is located on Ordway Street and Manor Way. She believes that the raised crosswalk causes drivers actually go faster and use it like a roller coaster. She asked that an actual speed hump be installed, or at least that the white arrows be refreshed. She also requested a crosswalk at Peralta and Francis going to Terrace Park. Lastly she said it is difficult to back out of her driveway because people park too close to her driveway, and requested that a few feet on either side of her driveway be painted red.

Chaney said because this item is not on the agenda, the Commission might decide tonight if they want to put the item in a future agenda. Madson asked about the red curb paint request. Chaney said that it is not the City's practice to paint curbs red on either side of driveways in residential areas. Residents are encouraged to call the Police Department and report any driveway blocking. The resident said that she has called the Police, and asked what other measures she could be taken. She asked if she could put up a sign that reads: Do not block the driveway.

The Commission agreed to add the Manor Way/Ordway raised crosswalk issue in a future agenda yet to be determined.

5. Discussion and possible action on matters related to the following items:

5-1 Study session on criteria and process regarding future traffic-calming measures

Chaney asked if the Commission wanted to defer discussion of item number 5-1 until Mazur arrived to the meeting at about 8:00 pm. The Chair agreed and deferred discussion.

5-2 Request to limit overnight parking at Waterfront Park

Lt. Adams said the Police Department requests that overnight parking not be allowed by the Waterfront per the attached a letter, which would prohibit parking from 11:00 p.m. to 5:00 a.m.

Anderson asked if the hours could be changed to 10 p.m. Lt. Adams said that park closure hours start at 10:00 p.m. However, he said that the problems are observed later at 11:00 pm. They suggested 11 p.m. to give legitimate park users that extra hour and not worry about their cars being towed. Chaney said that this item requires a vote because it will be presented as a recommendation to the City Council.

Anderson asked if they could use the two-hour limit signs. Lt. Adams said that the two-hour limit does not have any influence on the type of user they are trying to target.

Anderson moved to recommend that the City Council approved the Police Department request to close parking at the Waterfront from 11:00 pm to 5:00 am. Atkinson seconded. The motion carried with a vote of 3-0.

6. Reports

6-1 Police Reports

Lt. Adams was reporting for a two-month period from July 25 through September 27, 2007. There have been 29 collision reports, 10 of which were injury collisions, and 19 were non-injury collision reports. Of the non-injury reports, three were hit and run on property damage reports (e.g., parked cars). One was to the Jerome Blank clock on Solano Avenue at about 2:00-3:00 am. Police Department still does not have a suspect.

One of the injury collisions was an auto/bicycle collision involving a child at the intersection of Masonic Avenue and Brighton Avenue. The child rode into the side of the car, which resulted in minor injuries.

There was an auto/pedestrian collision with minor injuries at the intersection of Solano and San Pablo Avenue that occurred at about 3:00 pm on Sunday. The vehicle was making a right turn onto southbound Solano. The motorist did not yield to the pedestrian. Madson asked if a citation was issued. Lt. Adams did not know. He said that the reporting officer has discretion as to whether to cite, and a citation can be issued later.

Another injury collision involved two motorcycles at Golden Gate Fields where it was reported they were driving recklessly. Both riders were thrown and taken to the hospital with significant injuries.

On Marin Avenue, there were four collisions reported, two of them were injury collisions. One was a three-car rear end collision on eastbound Marin at or near Ramona. The other one was at Marin and San Pablo when a vehicle stopped at the signal and another vehicle traveling eastbound was traveling too fast was unable to stop, and rear-ended the vehicle at the intersection. The other two collisions that were non-injury occurred at Neilson Street. One vehicle was rear ended when it yielded to a pedestrian at the crossing. The last collision occurred at Marin and Cornell. This was a rear-end collision.

The Solano Stroll was a very safe event this year. There was only one report of battery with only minor injuries involved.

An additional crossing guard was assigned at the corner of Cornell and Solano. Police officers are working very hard around schools.

Atkinson asked if there were statistics from last year that could be compared to the current year around Marin school. Lt. Adams said he has the information, but not with him.

Mazur arrived at 7:34 P.M. She asked about a collision near the Berkeley border. Lt. Adams said the collision happened within the Berkeley City limits.

Madson asked that in the future, Lt. Adams add whether citations are issued, whenever accidents involve pedestrians and bicyclists.

6-2 Discussion of the request to change direction around Cornell schools.

Madson thought they had concluded the issue at the last meeting, and the majority of people present opposed turning these streets into one-way streets.

Mazur said that a one-way solution was a more severe solution when the problem is usually more prevalent at school drop/pick up hours.

Lt. Adams passed out a notice being distributed to parents and guardians on the school's e-tree by the SRO. The notice identifies safe and unsafe behavior and announces that enforcement will begin October 1. Currently the Police Department day shift is staffed with four officers and a sergeant.

Atkinson said that she would like a to explore what could be done. She understood that the residents were opposed to change in direction along the streets, but they were not opposed to a study. She asked if the City had volume and speed counts. Chavez said that the City had not taken the survey yet.

Mazur was disappointed that the principal had not written a letter to the Commission asking for solutions to the problem the school has at bell times.

Atkinson asked if making a u-turn on the street illegal. Lt. Adams said that if a person does it in an unsafe fashion, the maneuver is illegal, particularly if it is done fast.

Atkinson asked about jay walking. Lt. Adams said that parents should not be dropping off their children on the wrong side of the street.

Atkinson said she believes the Commission should listen to the residents and do something about this problem. Madson said the Commission had listened by not taking any action on the item last time.

Chaney said that as the speed radar becomes available, the City will add Cornell and Talbot to the list and take speed and volume counts.

6-3 Pierce Street

Chaney said that a report went to the Council that provides the status of the conversations between the City and Caltrans.

Sol Strand said that the City should do an EIR for the path proposal in order to address the problems posed by the path. Transit access and ADA accessibility would be impacted by the

project because the bus stop located adjacent to the Gateview garage exit obstructs visibility of the drivers exiting the garage.

Madson reminded the audience that this is not an action item.

6-4 Pedestrian Plan Progress Report

Chavez said that the Pedestrian Plan Technical Advisory Committee direction was to prepare a survey to learn about pedestrian concerns. The survey has been developed and was first conducted at the Solano Stroll and at the Senior Center. Approximately 69 surveys have been received. She said that Fehr and Peers developed a Pedestrian Web Portal for the plan where residents can take the survey and it is automatically tallied. Residents can also cite problem areas and provide feedback using Google Earth.

6-5 Buchanan Bicycle/Pedestrian Path

The City is preparing the Request for Proposals to be issued in October and award a contract by November.

6-6 Speed Reports

Two speed surveys were taken, one on the 900 block of Madison and the other on the 1000 block of Kains. It was found that the 85th percentile falls within the 6 mph threshold. Of note was one vehicle traveling 74 mph on a Monday morning, and another at 44 mph about 4:00 pm. Anderson said that there is a motorcycle on the 900 block of Madison and that this vehicle could have been the motorcycle.

Haike Abeck, resident of 900 block of Madison asked if there is something that we could do to stop speeding on her street. Parked cars are being hit, and also a dog was hit recently.

6-7 Traffic Calming

The consultant was contacted for a progress report, which will be given at the next meeting.

6-8 Safe Routes to School

October 3 was “Walk to School Day” and Chavez worked with TALC and distributed materials to the schools advertising the program. Safe Routes to School is also a component of the Pedestrian Plan. A student from UC Berkeley is developing his Professional Report, a requirement for his Master’s Degree, on the Safe Routes to School for Albany.

Anderson asked if as part of the Safe Routes to School the City would try to reinstate the Block Parent Program. Mazur asked about looking into finding the documentation for this program.

Chavez said that she would ask about the details of the program for a future meeting.

6-9 City Car Share Program

The City had been approached by the City CarShare organization to explore the possibility of implementing the program in the City. Chavez contacted University Village representatives to work together and establish a Point of Delivery (POD). The City is interested in having a car available on weekdays from 8:30 am to 5:00 pm. City CarShare is costing out our options.

Mazur asked if they have a minimum number of vehicles that have to be placed in order to be profitable for them. Chavez said that it is based on membership. They are talking to UC Village to invite its residents to join.

Mazur asked if they advertise to the whole City. Chavez said that it can be done, but they rather have a select group, for example City staff, UC Village.

6-10 Transit Pass

Chavez reported that she is working with Councilmember Joanne Wile and City of Berkeley Councilmember Kriss Worthington on developing a high-discount transit pass program similar to the one UC Berkeley has implemented for students and staff. The student pass program is mandatory and every student, regardless of use pays about \$34.00 at registration for an AC Transit pass that is good for a year and is valid on all AC Transit lines, including Transbay. The staff program is another highly discounted program, but is discretionary and is paid by each employee who uses AC Transit.

Mazur asked if we are considering implementing the program citywide. Chavez said it would require a referendum, but that the idea is to start small with only one geographic area, and then expand the program to more locations in the City.

Sol Strand suggested to the City talk to car insurance companies to advertise the program because every time that a person decides to take transit instead of driving his/her car, there is less chance to be involved in an accident. Chavez said that she would bring that suggestion at a future meeting.

6-11 California Walk/ Bike Conference

Chavez attended the conference and said it was a great experience. She talked about the experiences of other cities in the US and in South America.

7 Announcement and Communications

7-1 TETAP grant

The City received a grant for \$15,000 to perform traffic analysis for the impacts of the proposed traffic signal at either Taylor or Pierce for the crossing of the Bicycle/Pedestrian Path project.

7-2 Training session for Commissions, Committees and Board members

Commissioners were reminded of the upcoming training session. The training will touch on Brown Act, conflict of interest issues and other aspects that every member serving a public entity should know.

7-3 Letter from Ms. D.M. Duperon regarding cars sliding into her property at 852 Solano Avenue

A letter was being sent in response to Ms. Duperon's letter. During a preliminary site visit Chaney had not observed a hazardous situation, but will talk to the City Engineer.

7-4 Electronic Distribution of the Traffic and Safety Commission Agenda Packet

Atkinson said that she is in favor of the hard copies. Mazur suggested sending the packet electronically and then distribute a hard copy at the meeting. In that fashion, the City would save on postage.

The Commission agreed to have the packets distributed electronically, and a hard copy distributed the day of the meeting. Anderson would still like his packet be sent via mail.

8 Future Agenda Items

8-1 San Pablo Avenue Medians

Chaney said that the City had a Streetscape Master Plan done many years ago. Loni Hancock's office has been very interested in trying to improve the image of San Pablo Avenue from Crockett to Oakland. Her staff has met with different cities along the San Pablo Avenue corridor in order to explore cities' views on this issue.

The question is whether the City of Albany would like to explore the issue of improving the San Pablo Avenue image. Should it be discussed in a future agenda? Madson suggested this be included on a future agenda the San Pablo Avenue Streetscape Improvements.

Madson also suggested inclusion of the Ordway Street raised crosswalk in a future agenda.

At this point the Commission went back to item 5-1.

5-1 Discussion the Study Session on criteria and process regarding future traffic-calming measures.

Chavez reported that in the packet there is a memorandum summarizing criteria used by other cities. However, she believes that the City's problem is basically what to do with the 15 percent of drivers that do not abide by the posted speed limit. She said that educational programs might prove successful in educating the community. Other cities have implemented this type of approach with great success. The City of Davis for example, has recently adopted the Street Smarts program and it is very obvious how drivers respect bicyclists and pedestrians by driving at the speed limit. The Street Smarts program was first developed in the City of San Jose which contracts with a graphic design company that for \$3,000 develops templates for the client to promote safe driving via banners, flags, and gadgets. This program is similar to the Safe Routes to School Program, with the difference that the Street Smarts is comprehensive and not only targeted to schools. Chavez also showed a sign that aims at alerting drivers to slow down. It is a removable sign that a resident could bring in and out.

Chavez went through the specific criteria used by four selected cities in terms of volume, speed, and physical characteristics that warrant the implementation of traffic calming devices.

Mazur asked if we could come up with a formula to make parameters of length, volume, speed, and width of a street more flexible. For example, the width of streets on Albany Hill is very different from the width of the street in the flat areas of the City. Madson said that the City already has a policy and that we should not try to change it. Chavez said that the City does not actually have a policy, but rather a set of criteria and guidelines that are included in the Traffic Management Plan. It is a matter of deciding if the Commission wants to continue using those same criteria or change them.

Chaney said that the City Council adopted a policy several years ago that basically says that residents may request traffic calming measures provided the project is included in the adopted project list developed through the process of the Traffic Management Plan. However, it may be time to revisit how to address the future requests for traffic calming. Chaney suggested that staff bring the updated list of projects to the next meeting so that the commissioners can understand what has been completed and what projects remain.

Madson suggested that staff recommend a policy because staff has the experience.

Mazur thought it was important to be prepared for the time when the Council asks that we revisit this issue. Chaney will get back the updated project list to the next meeting.

9. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 8:58 p.m. Next meeting date, to be discussed.