



## **TRAFFIC AND SAFETY COMMISSION**

### **REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

**CITY OF ALBANY COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
1000 SAN PABLO AVENUE  
CITY OF ALBANY APRIL 26, 2007**

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#### **I. Call To Order and Roll Call**

The meeting began at 7:03 p.m. by Richard Treat, Chair.

Members present: Richard Treat, Ray Anderson, Marsha Atkinson, Lubov Mazur

Absent: David Madson

Staff: Aleida Andrino-Chavez, Lt. John Geissberger, and Ann Chaney.

#### **II. Consent Calendar**

Treat asked if there were any corrections to the two sets of minutes. In the March 22 minutes, Clara Rae Genser's name was misspelled. In addition, it was requested to add to the vote that one member recused herself.

Mazur moved and Anderson seconded the approval of the February 22 minutes. The vote was 3 in favor, 1 abstention, and 1 absent.

Anderson moved, Treat seconded the approval of the March 22 minutes. The vote was 2 in favor, 1 abstention and 1 absent.

#### **III. Public Comment**

Nick Pilch announced that Bike to Work Day was May 17. Albany Rollers and Strollers will have an energizer station at the corner of Marin and the Ohlone Greenway from 7:00 to 9:00 a.m.

Sol Strand raised a concern that cars are parked in the red zones in front of Pacific East Mall. Buses cannot make a right turn onto Central because approximately 6 cars are parked on the red zone, and sweeping trucks are also parked there. Lt. Geissberger said that Albany Police does not have jurisdiction in the City of Richmond in Contra Costa County. Treat suggested that staff call AC Transit to contact the City of Richmond regarding this problem.

Anderson announced a BBQ on Sunday afternoon, April 26, 2007 at Memorial Park.

Mazur said she noticed a sign in another jurisdiction that states: “No Right Turn on Red During School Hours.”

#### **IV Unfinished Business**

A. Study Session on how to best address neighborhood inquiries for traffic calming devices

Chavez reported on how other cities approach the speeding problem. She said that most cities started with speed and volume surveys and that in some cases, they begin the process by installing the most easy to implement measures, such as posting speed limit signs along the street. Chaney gave background information on the adopted Traffic Management Plan and referred to the list of projects generated by its public process, which is included in the Capital Improvement Plan. This list was the result of a formal process and it is now adopted by the City Council.

Treat asked if we should look at these requests on a case-by-case basis.

Mazur suggested that the community be canvassed/invited to bring to the Commission meetings those streets where residents believe there is problem. She suggested dividing the City in neighborhoods the same way it was done when the Traffic Management Plan was being developed. She suggested that speed and volume surveys be taken, and then decide what measures should be implemented to fix the problems.

Anderson suggested conducting an informational session, but that the Commission should work down this list.

Mazur said priorities could be given to situations where documented hazards exist.

The discussion was open for public comment.

Edmund Pizzo, 515 Curtis Street, is very opposed to speed humps because of aesthetic concerns. He thinks that they connote crime and low-income areas, and they also contribute to global warming. He said that some of his neighbors want a speed hump, but he would support a stop sign at Visalia and Curtis.

David Bozzi, Curtis Street, said that most people are courteous drivers but asked what was the best way to deal with the few people that speed?

Joe Good, Curtis Street, lost a cat recently and does support a speed hump. He concurred that neighborhoods on the “list” adopted by the City Council should receive priority.

Dave Greer, Curtis Street, suggested that animals be kept inside if there is a concern for their safety. He did not know of others who had lost an animal. He opposed speed humps and said that alternatives should be looked at but did not want Albany to be like

Berkeley, which is nearly “impassable” to the automobile. He felt there are some speeders but destroying the look of the street penalizes everyone. He stated that the speed humps are visual pollution. He supported the idea of a stop sign at Visalia and Curtis.

Sharon Reineman, Cornell Street, noted that the stop sign causes longer waits along Cornell toward the Plaza. Consequently, trying to cross the side streets intersecting Cornell takes a long time.

Mike Larkin, Curtis Street, expressed concern about the possibility of a young child being harmed by a speeding vehicle. He said that the City should see whether a slowing measure is warranted on his street.

Nick Pilch, Pierce Street, noted that certain traffic calming measures can be detrimental to bicyclists and asked that this issue be taken into consideration.

Mr. Good asked that the speed trailer be placed appropriately. A member of the audience stated that the speed trailer is always on display mode, then it acts as a traffic calming measure. Mazur said that the speed trailer can be turn off and still record data.

Good suggested that when the petition is done, staff should ask the residents for a suggestion on the best location of the speed trailer.

Anderson suggested that the Commission worked with the community. Mazur asked people to bring their concerns to the Commission, so they could take a look at the problems.

Chaney suggested inviting a Traffic Engineer to the discussion.

Chair Treat suggested taking a look at what other cities have done. He said that although the majority of drivers are reasonable, the problem the Commission faces is what to do with the 15 percent that drive above the posted speed limit.

Chair Treat asked that this item be placed on the next month’s agenda and that we had an education session.

#### B) Report on Speed Surveys: Masonic Avenue and Curtis Street

800 block Masonic:

Chavez reported on the findings of the speed survey along the 800 block of Masonic Avenue. The 85<sup>th</sup> percentile was 25 mph, which is the posted speed limit. The maximum speed recorded was 93 mph. This occurred at 8:15 am on a weekday. However, the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile, which is the speed reasonable drivers tend to drive on a particular street, suggests that there is not consistent speeding on the 800 block of Masonic.

Curtis Street:

The survey showed that the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile was 25 mph. This shows that there is not consistent speeding on the 500 block of Curtis Street.

900 block of Carmel:

Chavez asked if she could discuss the speed findings on the 900 block of Carmel Avenue. Since it was not on the Agenda, Mazur asked her just to inform the Commission on the findings, but no action could be taken on this item, if that were the case. Chavez reported that the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile was 28 mph still, within the 6-mile threshold. The maximum speed recorded was 45 mph.

Joe Good, Curtis Street, agreed that the problem of speeding is not necessarily endemic but that there are a few inconsiderate speeders, and agrees that we should not punish all, but is concerned about the safety of children.

Mr. Pizzo, Curtis, said that as a child he was told not to play in the street. And we should all take responsibility for our children. They should not be allowed to play in the street.

A member of the public was concerned about her child and felt offended that someone said she may not be a responsible parent when her 3 year old might run out in the street.

Tony Sobolisky, Berkeley Park, asked if the City of Albany coordinated with Kensington when conducting speeding surveys. He believes that the Colusa Circle affects Albany's traffic speeds.

Mazur suggested that we allow people to file a petition.

Treat asked that a consult might help how to distinguish between perceived and real problems, what other cities do, and how we might address those speeding drivers. He said that the basic data recognizes that there are specific individuals who create speeding problems but that the data showing 25 mph for the 85<sup>th</sup> Percentile does not appear to warrant the need for traffic calming.

The item of speeding vehicles will be place in next' months agenda for further discussion.

## **V. New Business**

### Oral report on School District meeting regarding Traffic and Safety issues around schools during drop off/pick up times

Chaney reported on School District meeting that she and Commissioner Anderson attended. Members of the Board suggested the following:

1. Conduct a survey to find out the mode of transportation to school among the students.

2. Police presence as a mean to influence a change in behavior
3. Use of positive reinforcement: Reward kids when they look both ways, or when they do not let thier parents drop them off at an unsafe location
4. Find out why parents drive so often to school. The assumption is that they fear something could happen to their children, but the general consensus is that it is more convenient to drive since they are on their way to work.

Chavez mentioned that TALC (Transportation and Land Use Coalition) applied for a grant through the Safe Routes to School Program and the Alameda County Coordinated Call for Projects for the implementation of a Safe Routes to School Program clearinghouse that could serve the different school districts in Alameda County. Some districts in Berkeley and Oakland are included in the pilot project, which is subject to one of the grants. The Albany Unified School District will be included in an expanded version of the program, if the second grant is awarded.

Nick Pilch said that the school board is doing the right thing by keeping an on-going discussion on these issues and by advocating the education of students. He said that parents could walk their bike when walking their child to school and then bike home.

Anderson felt that kids will listen and liked the idea of educating kids.

Atkinson said that walking or biking to school is not as safe from her neighborhood because people park on the sidewalk.

Treat thanked the school board for conducting this effort, and he suggested putting TALC on next month's agenda.

Treat thanked the School Board for placing this on their agenda and asked Aleida to provide more information on the organization she mentioned on next month's agenda. He supports the idea of the walking bus. He also asked Lt. Geissberger if they could use a white car rather than the regular police car.

## **VI. Police Updates/Reports**

Lt. Geissberger reported on collisions between March 22 and April26, 2007.

There were 3-injury collisions, none of these near schools.

11 collisions involving property damage, 6 of them were "hit and run." One of the hit and run resulted in DUI arrest.

There was one non-injury bicycle collision that involved a 12-year old on Washington Avenue and Talbot Avenue riding his bicycle on the wrong side of the street.

One collision on Marin Avenue, but no accidents happened during school hours.

Officer Maiden went to Ocean View and presented two safe crossing assemblies at the school.

Anderson asked about use of cell phone while driving.  
Geissberger said hands free law will go into effect in 2008.

## **VII. Status report**

### **A) Pierce Street Restriping**

Chaney reported on Council's action supporting a Class I bicycle path along the 500 block of Pierce Street, addressing the safety concerns of the residents, the provision of a loading and unloading area for Bridgewater, and working out the design details with the residents of the condominiums. Sol Strand felt that there should be a uniform travel lane on Pierce Street from Buchanan to Central Avenue because AC Transit is concerned with travel time.

### **B) Marin Avenue Reconfiguration status**

Bill Burton has submitted a scope. Chavez said that we should hear soon about our grant for new "modern" traffic lights at Jackson (with left turn) and Buchanan and Santa Fe and Marin. These will include pedestrian countdown signs and solar speed feedback information.

### **C) Crossing Guards at Marin Avenue and Santa Fe Avenue**

Anderson said he thought there should be a crossing guard on the southwest corner of Marin and Santa Fe. He has observed that children attending Bright Star are not being assisted. The crossing guards are currently situated at the southeast and at the northeast corners. Geissberger said the crossing guard positions are difficult to staff because of the relatively long hours (at least 4 hours/day) and the relatively low pay (\$1,000/month without benefits). The City funds the Crossing Guard positions, but the program is administered by the Police Department. Geissberger said that two crossing guards are stationed at the southeast corner of Marin and Santa Fe. One covers pedestrians crossing Santa Fe, and the other covers pedestrians crossing Marin Avenue. He said that he would pass this information to Lt. Adams.

### **D) Street Closure**

Chaney mentioned that the Council had approved the first phase of the work to be the implementation of traffic calming measures only. Staff held a kick off meeting with Fehr and Peers, the consultants working on this project, and they are preparing the traffic calming options that would best work in the area.

E) Buchanan Bicycle Pedestrian Path

Chavez reported that the City had been successful in obtaining the ACTIA grant for the development of 35% plans, environmental work, and Traffic Analysis for the proposed Buchanan multi use path. City had received a draft funding agreement for comments and final documents are expected to be fully executed by the end of June 2007.

**VIII. Correspondence – None**

**IX. Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 9:20 pm. Next meeting will is May 24, 2007.