MINUTES
BLOOMINGTON TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2018 4:00 P.M.
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL
109 EAST OLIVE STREET
BLOOMINGTON, ILLINOIS

MEMBERS PRESENT: Ms. Angela Ballantini, Ms. Jill Blair, Ms. Katherine Browne (at 4:10 pm), Mr. Michael Gorman, Ms. Elizabeth Kooba

MEMBERS ABSENT: Ms. Maureen (Reenie) Bradley, Ms. Kelly Rumley

OTHERS PRESENT: Mr. George Boyle, City Attorney; Assistant Chief Greg Scott; Mr. Jim Karch, Director of Public Works; Mr. Kevin Kothe, City Engineer; Mr. Philip Allyn, City Traffic Engineer; and several members of the public.

1. CALL TO ORDER: Mr. Gorman called the meeting to order at 4:02 pm.

2. ROLL CALL: Mr. Allyn called the roll. With four members in attendance, a quorum was established.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT:
There were no public comments.

4. MINUTES: Reviewed and approved the minutes of the October 16, 2018 regular meeting of the Bloomington Transportation Commission. Ms. Kooba motioned to approve the minutes. Ms. Blair seconded the motion. The motion was approved by the Transportation Commission unanimously via voice vote.

5. REGULAR AGENDA:

A. TC-2018-07: Approval of Proposed Policy on Establishing Reduced Speed Limit Areas

Mr. Allyn indicated that this is the first item to come from the previous discussions on speeding. We have developed a policy to establish a defined area where the statutory speed would be reduced from 30 mph to 35. The policy was developed with three goals:

1. Provide a process that requires significant involvement from the residents of the area. This involvement will create personal investment in the change by the residents of the area. The highest likely hood of a lower speed limit resulting in slower vehicle speeds requires the buy-in of the people driving in the area. Without buy-in from the affected community, this policy will not be nearly as effective at making our streets safer.
2. The areas targeted by the policy are areas with a high likelihood of pedestrians and other users that are more vulnerable to vehicles traveling at higher speeds. The policy is not limited to these areas, but they are the main focus.
3. Create larger sized, well-defined areas so that it is more obvious to drivers that they are entering a new area. This should increase the likely hood that drivers will reduce their speed in these areas as opposed to not realizing that the speed limit changed.

Mr. Allyn indicated that the process moving forward would be to gain comments from the Commission first. A revised draft would then be provided to other stakeholders (police, planning department, etc.) for comments. Mr. Allyn will then compile comments into a final version to come back to the Commission for approval along with the application and a draft ordinance for recommendation to Council.

Ms. Blair indicated that the policy is very detailed with a lot of information. Is it good to start with a detailed policy and strip it back if needed or start general and add details? For example, why require 85% buildout on a subdivision before the area will be considered. Mr. Allyn indicated that if there are specific thresholds and/or criteria, it is much more transparent and more defendable when a decision is made. If an applicant does not get what they want, we can point to the reason. There is less chance of appearance of special treatment. The reason for the 85% number is so that the subdivision is a known entity when this change is considered. If it is considered when only 30% is built out and implemented, there could be significant pushback once it is 60 or 90% built-out. Mr. Gorman asked if it could be implemented as part of the initial preliminary plan approval for a development. For example, if a developer wants to build a new-urbanist style subdivision with skinny streets, smaller lots, etc., could the developer apply prior to the start of construction for the reduced speed as a feature of the subdivision. Mr. Allyn indicated that this discussion goes back to the need for resident buy-in for it to be successful. In that case, it would still work since people would be aware of the overall features of the subdivision and would not buy and build there if they did not buy-in to it. The 85% threshold was meant more for traditional subdivisions with the goal of not imposing a reduced speed limit on a large number of residents who are opposed and will thus not respect the lower speed. It should be possible to incorporate an allowance for consideration during the initial design approvals.

Mr. Boyle shared that there are often conflicts between having standards to avoid arbitrary decisions based on opinions and having too many standards so that there is no room for flexibility. Typically, to have flexibility, you end up with a lot of standards to be able to cover a lot of different situations.

Kate Browne arrived at 4:10 pm.

Mr. Gorman indicated that when people are choosing where to live, they would still have the opportunity to choose whether they want to live in a reduced speed limit community. Regardless of the level of build-out the development, prospective new builders/property owners would still have the ability to decide whether to purchase there. Mr. Gorman suggested removing the requirement for area buildout from the policy. There was general concurrence from the Commission.

Mr. Gorman asked about the difference in minimum area for the Campus land use (80 acres) versus the other uses (20 acres). It seems that a more relevant metric would be the amount of street rather than overall land area. Mr. Allyn indicated that the campus land use, whether educational or corporate, will often have a larger percentage of area that is parking lot, green space or building. The 80-acre number is somewhat arbitrary. It was determined based on looking at what a defined area around Illinois Wesleyan could look like and it was around 70-80 acres. There is certainly room for discussion on this number. Mr. Gorman suggested setting the same 20-acre minimum for all three uses. Several potential areas were looked at as a frame of reference. Ms. Blair asked about other examples of the campus use. Would a hospital qualify? Mr. Allyn indicated that he believed that it would. However, care will need to be taken to apply this policy to areas with a number of streets rather than a large area with just one or two streets. In that case, it would be more appropriate to study the street of concern rather than try to apply a blanket to a large area that is primarily parking lot or buildings. There was general concurrence to make the minimum area 20 acres for all three land uses.

Mr. Gorman asked about the reference in 3.b.ii to the Bloomington-Normal Street and Highway Plan as the source showing arterials and collectors. Mr. Allyn indicated that was a hold-over from another policy that needs to be updated. IDOT previously distributed paper and then PDF's of the functional classification map for the Bloomington-Normal area, which the City would then post to the website. They have since incorporated this information into a website called gettingaroundillinois.com. For the final version, we will be incorporating this website rather than the previous map.

Mr. Gorman asked about criteria 5 relating to areas with 85th percentile speeds of 27 mph or less being assumed to be self-policing and will not be considered. If there is an area where everyone already drives

25 mph, wouldn't it make sense to still post at 25 mph so everyone is in agreement about the speed? Mr. Allyn indicated that this criteria was meant to help be efficient with everyone's time due to the effort required to implement the changes as well as future the signage maintenance and monitoring. It would be one more area that could cause confusion for drivers and/or police officers as to what the actual speed limit is. Mr. Gorman asked if it would be possible to have the area fall to a lower priority with implementation occurring after other areas rather than denying altogether. Mr. Allyn indicated that the goal of this policy is to slow down drivers. It would still require cost and staff time to implement and maintain for an area where there is not a speeding problem and thus negligible benefit. Ms. Blair asked about the 85th percentile speed. Mr. Allyn indicated that the 85th percentile speed is the speed at which 85% of vehicles travel at or below. For example, if a street has an 85th percentile speed of 27 mph, 85% of vehicles are traveling 27 mph or slower. 15% are traveling 28 mph or faster. Ms. Blair indicated that if even 10% of drivers are greatly exceeding the speed limit, this is still a problem. Mr. Allyn responded that if a driver chooses to ignore a 30 mph speed limit, they are likely to also ignore a 25 mph speed limit. Ms. Ballantini indicated that she understood the financial impacts of an unneeded implementation and was fine with the criteria remaining. Ms. Kooba indicated she believed that if the majority of people are driving slower, it is likely that other people coming into the area will follow suit and agreed with the criteria remaining.

Discussion was held pertaining to who gets to vote during the decision period. The reasons for residents voting include that they are most impacted, they are most aware of the traffic conditions of the area, and they are predominately the drivers on the streets in the area. The reasons for owners voting would relate to potential impacts (good or bad) to property values as well and owners are more consistent. Renters are typically more transient and would potentially be making a long-term decision for an area in which they will not reside in a year or two. Property owners are more likely to remain for the longer term. With regard to the viability of administering the voting, property owner information is generally readily available. There will be greater difficulty identifying all renters. For example, the City is not always aware of all rental agreements or how many units a house may be split into. There was consensus that both property owners and residents will get to vote. Each party will only get one vote, regardless of how many properties are owned. This will be changed in both the voting section and the application section.

Mr. Gorman asked for clarification on the percentages of votes required. Mr. Allyn confirmed that, as currently written, to be successful, 60% of ballots must be returned and 70% of those returned ballots must vote in favor of the reduced speed limit. Mr. Gorman expressed a concern that requiring a percentage of ballots to be returned could make it very difficult. There could be a large number of people who are indifferent and may not bother to return the ballot causing it to fail even though there may not be significant opposition. Mr. Allyn indicated that again, for it to be successful at impacting vehicle speeds, we need buy-in from the residents. If people do not care enough to make the simple effort to mark a vote and put it in the mail, they will not care enough to honor the lower speed limit and it will not be successful at lowering speeds. Ms. Blair indicated that it also puts some duty on those that do care to make the case to their neighbors. Mr. Allyn added that this is a special treatment. Requiring most of the people to vote demonstrates that it truly is something that most people want, not just a small vocal group. It was suggested to drop the returned ballot threshold to 50% plus 1 vote to ease the requirement but keep it in place. There was consensus on this change.

Mr. Gorman asked for clarification on the statement under the Preliminary Review section "If a request does not meet the requirements … and advised that the issue may be resubmitted in one year for further consideration if conditions change." It may conflict with statements previous in the document about Staff working with the requestor on the application to meet the requirements. Mr. Allyn indicated that Staff would work with the requestors to modify their application if it does not meet the requirements when possible. For example, the proposed boundaries could be modified to include additional area to meet the minimum acreage or they could be extended to a logical boundary rather than stopping in the middle of a neighborhood. The statement under the Preliminary Review section pertains to criteria that simply cannot

be met resulting in the request being denied. If there is a change in conditions, they can reapply in one year. For example, if a neighborhood applies and, if granted, it would result in four speed limit changes within a mile. The request would be denied. However, if an adjoining neighborhood applies and is successful, the first neighborhood could reapply if the four-speed-limit-changes-within-a-mile criteria is now met. Mr. Gorman indicated that he would like to see the Preliminary Review statement expanded a bit to make sure it is clear.

Mr. Gorman asked for clarification on the third paragraph under Implementation. Would a minor collector that is currently not posted, and thus 30 mph per the statutory speed limit, stay at 30 mph or be reduced to 25 mph? Mr. Allyn indicated that it would likely depend on the road and how it fits within the proposed area. If it is on a border, it probably stays the same. That paragraph was written to try to clarify between major collectors, which usually are more like arterials than local streets, and minor collectors, which are often more like local streets. There is a provision stating, "Variances may be evaluated in rare extenuating situations based on the character and use of the roadway." This may come into play if there is a street that should logically be changed or not changed contrary to the policy. There are also provisions that indicate variances would come to the Commission for concurrence. The outcome would also come back to the Commission as a City Code change for a recommendation to Council.

A discussion was held about how the criteria relating to full build-out and multiple phases of the same subdivision would apply to various areas. In general, this is somewhat of a grey area that would depend on factors such as the area proposed in the application, the likelihood of imminent construction of future phases, the size of the area, how well defined the area is currently and how the future phases will affect the border delineation, etc. There may be some discussion during the application process to make sure that the ultimate area makes sense for all parties. However, once the area is defined, and ballots are sent out, it will not be changed due to voting results.

Ms. Ballantini asked about the time frame that it would take between the initial application submittal and an ultimate decision. Mr. Allyn indicated that once ballots are sent out, the draft policy is currently written so that they need to be returned within 2 weeks. Any other time frames are highly variable based on staffing available at the time, weather impacts to data gathering, timing of the request in relation to holidays or staff construction obligations, size of the areas and the volume of addresses to be gathered and ballots to mail, etc.

Ms. Ballantini asked if the Commission would be notified of any application denials. Mr. Allyn indicated that the Commission would be notified of any applications, status updates (potentially via the monthly citizen comments/complaints report), and the outcomes. If the petitioner does not agree with the outcome, they can request an appeal to the Commission.

B. Information: November Citizen Comments/Complaints Summary

Mr. Gorman inquired about Item 19: request for traffic calming on Gloucester Circle between Hersey and Dover. Gloucester Circle looks to be a long straight street were there could be an issue with speeding. Would the intersection of Gloucester Circle and Dover be a candidate for an all-way stop? Mr. Allyn indicated that stop signs are not recommended to be used for speed control because they teach people to run stop signs as well as they increase the occurrences of speeded between stop signs. The concern pertained to the perception of vehicles turning off of Hershey and speeding to Dover. The speed data gathered indicated that this was not the case; it was a perceived issue rather than reality. Mr. Allyn indicated that we could gather traffic data at the intersection to see if all-way stop criteria are met. Mr. Gorman mentioned that the report indicated traffic data was already gathered. Mr. Allyn indicated that volume data was gathered on Gloucester within the area of concern to evaluate the traffic calming criteria. We did not gather at the intersection itself or any volumes on Dover.

Mr. Gorman inquired about Item 51: number of crashes at Lee and MacArthur. Mr. Justin Boyd spoke during public comment several months ago about speeding and requested painting the parking lanes. How

close did the painted lines get to this intersection? Mr. Allyn indicated that at each intersection between Oakland and Center we painted the triangles defining the parking area. This would have been done at this intersection as well. The primary issue we are seeing at this intersection is with people running the stop sign on Lee or not properly yielding to traffic on MacArthur. We have tried a number of things over the year. Pavement markings are established. The next step is to install LED stop signs. We have been working on this intersection for at least five years. Mr. Kothe indicated that in the past we have also installed oversized stop signs and additional signage.

Mr. Gorman inquired about Item 53: request for curb painting at Summerfield and Hershey. What does "curb painting" main in this context. Mr. Allyn indicated that the request was to paint the radii curbs yellow so that they can be better seen. Current policy is to not paint curbs yellow due to cost and lack of staff availability. Mr. Allyn plans to visit the intersection during the evening to evaluate whether the existing lights at the intersection are not producing sufficient light or if there is a parking issue.

Mr. Gorman inquired about Item 55: request for temporary traffic signals at Rhodes Lane and US 150 and Item 67: request for right turn lanes at Rhodes Lane. What is the timeline and status of this project? Mr. Allyn indicated that we are still negotiating with the railroad on the details for the new Hamilton Road crossing. Mr. Kothe indicated we are currently finishing Phase I engineering and will be starting Phase II engineering soon. The project is programmed for construction in 2021-2022. The project is funded through Federal Surface Transportation Urban (STU) funding. The project is moving forward, but it takes time to get through all the environmental reviews and all the other pieces. Mr. Gorman asked about a confidence level on it happening in a 3-4 year timeframe. Mr. Kothe indicated that we are working with all the stakeholders. We are confident that it will happen, but cannot say for sure that it will be in 2021-2022, but that it what we are currently moving towards. Mr. Gorman indicated that he knows there is a significant backup on Rhodes Lane that could lead to poor decisions on turning onto US 150. If this project is that far out, could we install a temporary signal like we did at Streid and Ireland Grove? Mr. Allyn indicated that with US 150 being a State and Federal highway and with the involvement with the railroad, it would likely take several years to get even a temporary signal installed and would likely cost noticeably more than the Streid signals. Mr. Kothe added that the railroad involvement would require an ICC order, which could easily take 5-10 years itself. We have currently been working on the ICC order for the Fox Creek Road Bridge for about 5 years.

Mr. Allyn provided a brief overview of the Hamilton Road, Bunn to Commerce and the Fox Creek Road Bridge projects. Hamilton Road is the main arterial across the south side of town and connects the State Farm campus to Main Street as well as Veterans Parkway, I-74 and I-55, and extends west to the Fox Creek area. The Fox Creek Road Bridge project will replace a narrow, substandard bridge over the railroad and provide a sidewalk and path connection across the new wider bridge. The Hamilton Road extension will connect the intersection at Bunn to the intersection at Commerce and will include a new railroad crossing. Rhodes Lane will "tee" into Hamilton Road. Rhodes Lane will be disconnected from US 150 and have a cul-de-sac added, eliminated a dangerous intersection. State Farm traffic coming from the west of south currently uses one of three paths: Veteran's Parkway to Commerce to eastern Hamilton, western Hamilton to Rhodes to US 150 to eastern Hamilton, or Main Street to Woodrig, to eastern Hamilton. Both Rhodes and Woodrig are narrow roads that are not build to withstand the current traffic. The Woodrig intersection at Main Street does not function well and the sharp curve stop of its intersection to US 150 is not ideal. The Hamilton cross section will look similar to Hamilton to the west with four lanes and both a bike path and sidewalks. The project eliminates a significant gap that will get allow drivers to use safer roads designed for the actual traffic volumes and eliminate several dangerous intersections. It will also provide a path connecting the two distinct south side branches of Constitution Trail that run along Hamilton Road.

Ms. Blair inquired about Item 54 and others pertaining to delays on Ireland Grove Road at Towanda Barnes Road. The Commission voted previously on a full project but when it went to Council, the project

changed and only the southbound right was constructed. As constructed, the project does not seem to accomplish anything close to expectations with the westbound traffic. Are there plans to construct the rest of the project? Mr. Allyn indicated that the current Council indicated that they did not want to construct improvements on the Ireland Grove legs of the intersection.

Ms. Browne inquired about Item 18: request for traffic calming on Eastport between Clearwater and Empire. Ms. Browne is interested in the outcome of this item. A lot of people try to avoid the intersection of Clearwater and Hershey to avoid the school and Country Companies traffic during the morning and afternoon commutes and to try to avoid the left turn from Empire to Hershey. Ms. Browne would be interested to see the data when it is available.

6. OLD BUSINESS:

A. Ms. Browne requested revisiting the approval of the meeting minutes. She would like to see the phase "wheelchair bound" changed to a more preferred phase. Ms. Browne motioned to amend the minutes from the October 2018 meeting to reflect the change of the phase "people who are wheelchair bound" to "people who use wheelchairs". Motion seconded by Ms. Kooba and passed unanimously by voice vote.

7. NEW BUSINESS:

A. None

8. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

None.

9. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting adjourned at 5:18 pm unanimously by voice vote; motioned by Ms. Blair and seconded by Ms. Kooba.

Respectfully,

Philip Allyn
City Traffic Engineer