

**MINUTES
BLOOMINGTON TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING
TUESDAY, AUGUST 27, 2019 4:00 P.M.
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL
109 EAST OLIVE STREET
BLOOMINGTON, ILLINOIS**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mr. Rob Ballantini, Ms. Maureen (Reenie) Bradley, Mr. Edward Breitweiser, Mr. Adam Heenan

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: Mr. Jim Karch, Director of Public Works, Mr. George Boyle, City Attorney (until 5:15pm); Mr. Billy Tyus, Deputy City Manager, Mr. Kevin Kothe, City Engineer; Mr. Philip Allyn, City Traffic Engineer; and members of the public.

1. CALL TO ORDER: Mr. Allyn 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.

5. REGULAR AGENDA:

A. Election of Chairperson and Vice Chairperson

Mr. Allyn asked for a motion to move the election of Chairperson and Vice Chairperson to the top of the agenda. Mr. Heenan made the motion, Mr. Ballantini seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Heenan asked if we could table the election until we have a full commission. Mr. Boyle explained that we have a quorum and were hoping to get work done today, so it would be beneficial to elect a chairperson rather than have staff run the meeting. The commission could hold another election after the commission is full or after a set timeframe. Mr. Allyn clarified it would be an option to elect an "Interim" Chairperson.

Mr. Heenan motioned to elect an Interim Chairperson for a 2-month term. Seconded by Mr. Breitweiser. Motion passed unanimously via voice vote.

Ms. Bradley self-nominated herself. Mr. Heenan seconded the nomination. Ms. Bradley was elected as Interim Chairperson by unanimous vote.

Ms. Bradley nominated Mr. Heenan as Interim Vice Chairperson for a 2-month term. He accepted the nomination. Mr. Ballantini seconded the motion. Mr. Heenan was elected as Interim Vice Chairperson by unanimous vote.

Chairperson Bradley asked the new members to introduce themselves.

Mr. Adam Heenan introduced himself, explained that he and his wife moved to town 3 years ago, he is civically engaged and does other activities around town. He said he was pleased to be on this committee.

Mr. Eddie Breitweiser introduced himself as being born and raised in Bloomington, moved away for college, and then he and his wife moved back her 6-7 years ago. He is civically engaged, attempting to be more engaged and thank everyone for the opportunity.

Mr. Rob Ballantini introduced himself, saying he has been in town for 40+ years. He indicated he will be moving to Danville, IL and that this would unfortunately be his last meeting. He hopes to be able to serve the City of Danville in the future.

Ms. Renee Bradley introduced herself as the only remaining original member of the committee. She has a background in traffic and industrial safety, lives in North Pointe, and she is retired. She has a real interest in traffic safety, as it has been her life work. She has taught people how to ride the city bus for 35 years and has worked with a diverse group of people.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT:

There were no public comments.

4. MINUTES: Reviewed and approved the minutes of the April 19, 2019 regular meeting of the Bloomington Transportation Commission. Mr. Heenan motioned to approve the minutes. Mr. Ballantini seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously via voice vote.

5. REGULAR AGENDA:

B. Information: April 2019 Citizen Comments/Complaints Summary

Mr. Allyn provided the background for the report and how it is organized.

Ms. Bradley asked about item 40 (Irving School Crossing Guard request). Mr. Allyn indicated that we have completed the data gathering such as the number of vehicles and pedestrians as well as measuring the gaps between vehicles. After reviewing the data, Mr. Allyn verified that the traffic does not meet the requirements of the warrant for a Crossing Guard and this information was being passed on to the school and Police Department. He explained that the school could continue the discussion with the police department as the budget for Crossing Guards come out of the Police budget.

Ms. Bradley asked about item 56 (deer crossing signage along Washington St.) Mr. Allyn explained that he drives this route regularly and has seen a large group of deer in this area before and that the city will be moving forward with warning signage at this area.

Ms. Bradley asked about item 63 (Beich Road sight distance). Mr. Allyn explained that the city received a complaint from the factory safety officer after several crashes at the plant entrance. After a review of the crash history, it appears that the predominant cause of the crashes is related to drivers not paying attention to the current signage and/or watching for opposing vehicles. It was suggested that the company update their stop sign with higher visibility signs and a supplemental "Cross Traffic Does Not Stop" sign which they did. The safety officer mentioned that there could be confusion for exiting traffic on whether southbound traffic is on I-55 versus Beich Rd, especially when it is darker and only oncoming headlights can be seen. This could be making it harder for drivers to determine whether there is an opposing car on Beich. Mr. Allyn has talked to the City Park department about planting trees or bushes between I-55 and Beich that would provide a break in southbound vehicle headlights telling drivers which road they are using. The company has agreed to pay for the trees. Mr. Allyn still needs to obtain approval from IDOT since the trees would be in their Right-of-Way.

Ms. Bradley asked if Mr. Allyn felt the list was decreasing in size and if it was manageable. Mr. Allyn explained that it was longer than normal because it covers back to the last meeting in April. There will be a larger number dropping off the list for the next meeting. Mr. Breitweiser asked how many items usually get added per month. Mr. Allyn indicated that it varies but typically is between 5 and 15. Mr. Allyn suggested that if a commissioner has a question about a certain number, they can email him prior to the meeting and he'll be able to have the background and status of that item handy.

Mr. Breitweiser asked about items 85 and 90 (left turns off Oakland Avenue just west of Veterans) and if plans were available to be seen. Mr. Allyn responded that there are a few ideas being researched but nothing firm yet. A change likely involving the addition of a raised median would likely be implemented when Oakland was next resurfaced in likely 2-5 years. Mr. Breitweiser indicated that he was not surprised that there were problems at this location.

C. Downtown Parking Configuration

Mr. Allyn reviewed the background information in the packet. After resurfacing Main St. downtown, staff was asked to review if the parking configuration could be changed from two traffic lanes with angled parking one side and parallel parking on the opposite side to a single travel lane with angled parking on both sides. This change was initially mentioned in the Downtown Taskforce Report, but the suggestion was never adopted or approved by the Council. The main driver of the change for the taskforce was to increase parking downtown.

Mr. Allyn reviewed the different layouts in the packet, including the table with the listing of parking spot number changes. The recommended alternative generally matches the existing configuration with some small modifications to meet current codes. For example, spaces for the disabled were adjusted to provide the proper minimum widths. The second option included angled parking on both sides of the street. The third option included angled parking on both sides of the street but added a designated loading zone area in each block to help keep delivery trucks from blocking the single travel lane. The alternate with one travel lane and no loading zones adds approximately 7 spaces over the entire 5 blocks but will likely not be functional during portions of the day. The alternate with one travel lane and added loading zones actually loses 6 spaces.

Ms. Bradley asked about the impact of 60° Angle Parking versus 45° Angle Parking and the risk of one lane of traffic with delivery trucks. Mr. Allyn indicated that on a road parallel parking is typically more safe than angled parking, but that he doesn't believe there is a significant difference between 60° and 45° angled parking if the proper isle width is provided. The closer the angle gets to 90°, more crashes could be expected if the isle width is not increased accordingly. He could not speak to how delivery trucks would operate if one truck is already in the designated parking spot. It's possible that the second truck may double park next to it and still block the single lane. Ms. Bradley asked about discussions with the Downtown businesses. Mr. Allyn was not sure how much information had been shared, but that at least some of the Main Street businesses are aware that this is being discussed.

Mr. Allyn indicated that the loading zone locations greatly impact which blocks gain or lose spaces. The locations chosen were based on staff's best estimate of need. If that option is moved forward, staff would discuss needs with the businesses in more detail and adjust the locations as needed.

Ms. Bradley indicated that she did not see a benefit to switching to one travel lane with angled parking on both sides.

Mr. Breitweiser asked if bike lanes are generally included in "pavement markings". Mr. Allyn indicated that when pavement markings are referred to, it would potentially include markings for bike lanes. The white and yellow lines seen on the drawing would show exactly what would be painted on the street. Regarding this location specifically, the City Bicycle Master Plan does not recommend bike accommodations on Main Street, so they were not provided with the proposed alternates.

Mr. Breitweiser asked about impacts to the number of parking spaces for the disabled. Mr. Allyn indicated that staff reviewed both placement and number of spaces to ensure adequate spaces are provided. These locations are generally the same for all three alternates.

Mr. Heenan asked if there were any impacts to buses. Mr. Allyn indicated that since buses typically stop immediately prior to a crosswalk, in all three alternates there should be adequate space between the parking and the crosswalk for the bus to stop without blocking a travel lane. In addition, since a bus typically stops for a relative short period and the driver remains in the bus, there shouldn't be the same negative impacts to traffic flow or the mobility of emergency vehicles that would be expected due to delivery trucks.

Mr. Heenan made a motion to recommend accepting the staff's recommendation to keep current mix of angled and parallel parking with two travel lanes in the Downtown area. Mr. Ballantini seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Allyn indicated that the next steps would likely be to share the parking evaluation and Commission's decision with the Economic Development Department to pass on to the Downtown businesses. Engineering will be coordinating with the Contractor to get the pavement markings completed.

D. Annual Street Maintenance Program

Mr. Allyn shared information about how the City has selected streets for resurfacing or pavement preservation in the past including rating the street conditions using PASER and shared with the public in GIS via the City website, determining the streets to be resurfaced based on available funds and numerous factors such as pavement conditions, other coordinating construction, etc. Information sheets about each street would be created to provide information to the public on why each street was chosen.

The new process moving forward will be to use new software that optimizes the street maintenance work to provide a minimum quality level. The program will identify street locations and type of work (resurfacing, pavement preservation, patching, etc.) for each of the upcoming 5 years. This will allow better planning and coordination with other City projects such as underground water main or sewer work to that old streets are dug up rather than newly paved streets. Each year will have a couple streets that are identified to potentially move up sooner or back later depending on the actual funding available in that year.

Mr. Heenan asked if the priority of a street could decrease once it's been selected. Mr. Allyn explained that each new year, the 5-year plan would be updated. However, we anticipate that there will not be significant changes from year to year. We should be able to code the planned work into the program so that the integrity of the plan could be maintained allowing better coordination with the other projects. If a street deteriorates significantly faster than anticipated, due to a new major development for example, it may be adjusted forward, forcing other streets back.

Ms. Bradley asked Mr. Allyn to speak to what is the difference in pothole repair versus larger street patching or resurfacing. Mr. Allyn explained that it depends on the amount and size of potholes and/or other cracks or pavement failures. Smaller potholes get filled with cold patch material. When there are larger sizes or numbers of potholes or cracks that are localized to a portion of the block, the area is removed and patched with new asphalt. When the whole block is failing, it gets resurfaced. Patching and pothole filling can delay a resurfacing since the road condition is improved. This is a good thing since the patching allows available funding to be used to resurface other, worse streets.

Mr. Allyn then discussed what input is needed from the commission to help optimize the DOT program. There are a number of inputs into the program that will impact the results. For example, the priority of arterial streets (bigger, higher volume streets) versus collector streets (medium volume) versus low volume residential streets; the importance of fire lanes, bike routes or bus routes; or the priority of commercial streets versus other roads. Another parameter may be to set a minimum rating for various streets such as arterials higher than residential. Staff will be looking to the commission to provide the

relative weighting of each of these factors since these are policy level decisions related to what is the most important for the City.

In the coming months, staff will continue getting the program setup and calibrated. We will be identifying the exact parameters as well as a staff recommended setting to bring back to the Commission for discussion and a formal recommendation. Staff will then take those priorities and run the program to determine the 5-year maintenance plan. This plan will be reviewed by Engineering and Administration for conflicts with other projects and adjusted as necessary. It will then return to the Commission with the reasoning for any staff modifications and the plan will be rolled out to the public with details on each of the streets as well as the priority factors.

Ms. Bradley appreciated how this could lead to more transparency and give more information to the public. She said the public has concerns about potholes and road conditions, but this could provide good information as to how the decisions are made systematically based on many real factors rather than being arbitrary.

Mr. Breitweiser asked if the commission would see all possible variables when the staff makes their recommendations, including the ones that are not anticipated to be changed from the defaults. Mr. Allyn indicated that was the intent, but that there may be some parameters that will not be able to be changed due to feasibility and available information. For example, there may be variables that would require extensive City-wide data collection that would not noticeably affect the results.

6. OLD BUSINESS:

A. Post Office

Ms. Bradley informed the commissioners about the Post Office move from the current Towanda Avenue location back to the location by Eastland Mall on the Empire Frontage Road. Mr. Allyn stated that the city received plans for internal work for the building but a response letter is being drafted expressing concern about the relocation impacting the surrounding streets and intersections, particularly the intersection of the Frontage Road and Fairway Ave. Past crashes and traffic flow problems on Fairway Drive and Empire Street were discussed. Mr. Allyn also discussed that typically when a developer or business relocates or builds new, the city requires a traffic impact study. We have requested this analysis for the area intersections but have yet to receive anything from the Post Office. When the move was originally announced July 2018, they indicated they would be moving by the end of this summer, but we do not have an updated move date. As a pseudo-federal agency, they are not subject to the same City authority as other businesses, so we likely can't stop the construction on their property. They do need to obtain entrance permits from the City for work in the Right-of-Way, and we are currently holding those permits. Ultimately though, if they continue moving forward and open without the City permits, we will monitor the crashes that happen in the area and if needed, we will consider modifications to the Frontage Road such as creating a cul de sac and eliminating the connection to Fairway. No funding is currently planned for this work. The situation is being monitored as a potential future problem.

7. NEW BUSINESS:

A. IDOT Illinois Route 9 Study

Ms. Bradley asked for a refresher and update about the IDOT Illinois Route 9 Project. Mr. Allyn explained that the state is working to complete before next spring the Phase 1 preliminary design for the entire stretch from near MLK Dr. to the Airport. The next step would be to complete Phase 2 Construction Plans, which would likely take a year. This would result in construction not starting prior to 2021 at the earliest. The project will get broken up into at least 3-5 different construction projects spread out over a number of years as funding is obtained. As part of the Phase I study, IDOT will be estimating

construction costs and looking at how the project will be broken apart. The project will consist of significant maintenance work such as resurfacing, sidewalk ramp upgrades, and signal modernizations rather than completely rebuilding the streets.

A significant part of the project will be to move the State Route designation from Lee Street to Center Street. Empire Street west of Center, and Lee between Empire and Locust will return to being a City street, which will be a significant benefit for the residential area around Bent Elementary School as these streets should no longer have the State Route trucks and heavier volumes.

Mr. Allyn reviewed the happenings of the last few months with the open house discussion from the State and another one from the City about changes on Route 9, including bike lane changes. There were many citizens that provided comments about the changes and the city provided these comments to the state. Detailed information on this portion of the project and the City's request to IDOT is available on the Public Works page on the City website under Current Projects.

B. Lutz Rd

Ms. Bradley asked about Lutz Rd. by the Luther Oaks Retirement home. Mr. Allyn provided a background on the road that was formerly a rural Township road that the city now is responsible for. The road is narrow, in poor condition, and does not have curbs. The city has construction plans ready to reconstruct the road and add curbs and sidewalks on the north side while allowing the construction of curb and sidewalk on the south side when/if the property to the south develops. There is currently no funding available for the construction, but it is ready if funding is identified. There are some construction easements that will need to be obtained once construction is ready to move forward.

8. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Mr. Allyn communicated information about the October 15, 2019 reception for board and commission members at the BPCA.

Mr. Ballantini thanked everyone for the opportunity to serve on the Commission.

9. ADJOURNMENT: Mr. Heenan made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Ballantini seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully,

Philip Allyn
City Traffic Engineer