

Traffic and Safety Committee Meeting

January 4, 2011 Minutes

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CITY OF
REXBURG
America's Family Community

Mayor Richard Woodland

Traffic and Safety Committee Members:

Rick Robbins-Chairman
Reed Nielsen-Vice Chair
Roscoe Orton
Stephen Smith
Eric Sundberg
Lyle Wakefield
Jodi Weimer
Trudy Porter

Adam Stout-City Council Liaison
Stephen Zollinger – Staff Liaison/Attorney
John Millar – Staff Liaison/Public Works
Randy Lewis- Staff Liaison/Police Captain
Doug Barker-University Police Liaison
Natalie Schneider-City Staff/minutes

Review and Approve Minutes: Reed Nielsen made the motion to approve the December 7th, 2010 Traffic Safety Committee minutes. Stephen Smith 2nd the motion. All voted Aye. **Motion carried.**

New Business: The Committee reviewed By-Laws and discussed the term limits of current members. Graydon Burton has served on the board for approximately eight years. Graydon stated he would like to be released from his position on the Committee. The Committee members in attendance thanked Graydon for his many years of outstanding commitment, teamwork, and dedication to the Traffic Safety Committee. Roscoe Orton stated his term of one year serving as the Chairman of the Committee is up and he would like to be released. **Reed Nielsen** nominated **Rick Robbins** to serve as the new Chairman. **Roscoe Orton** seconded the motion. All voted Aye. **Motion carried.** **Roscoe Orton** nominated **Reed Nielsen** to serve as the Vice Chairman. **Stephen Smith** seconded the motion. All voted Aye. **The motion carried.** There will only be eight voting members on the Committee after these changes are made. The Committee submitted several names to be given to the Mayor for replacement of retired members.

Open discussion of relevant issues: Chairman Orton asked **Doug Barker**, who is the University Police Liaison, to report from his area. Doug stated he had read last month's minutes and was in agreement that something needs to be done about the Salt Lake Express Bus's current drop off and pick up location near the Hart Building. The buses are blocking traffic, both vehicular as well as pedestrian causing a serious safety concern. Chairman Roscoe Orton stated he has spoken to Tom Price with Salt Lake Express and Tom has agreed to go wherever the City and University designate. There was discussion on a better location. Doug Barker suggested that the City give up a couple of parking spaces further to the South and that perhaps the University could put up a shelter and bench there to help it become a true bus stop. There was discussion on details such as cutting the curb and gutter back to make a recess for the buses. John Millar stated that he has met with Phil Packer at the University, Phil was taking this issue up the chain and has not reported back to John as of yet. John stated he was at this location just this afternoon when the full size buses were there. The buses were causing a bottleneck with traffic and even blocking the crosswalk. John stated he will follow up with the University on this issue and work at getting a resolution to the problem.

Public Works Director John Millar was asked to report. Discussion on Ordinance 1019 concerning sidewalks being shoveled to maintain a safe pedestrian passage and also the concern regarding snow piles being an obstruction of view took place. John stated the City is working on our snow plowing capabilities. The sidewalks and driveways seem to be of greatest concern. There are residents and business owners that are working diligently to keep their sidewalks clear. There are also the snow plow

drivers that are working just as diligently to get the snow back off the road as far as possible so that the mailboxes can be accessible. In areas where the sidewalk and curb are contiguous that puts the snow right on the sidewalk. They are working on a solution that will get the snow to the sidewalk but not onto the sidewalk. The situation is that if the plows don't push the snow from in front of the mailboxes and off the road, there are complaints, if the postal service can't drive up to your mailbox they drive past your mailbox, however if the snow plows bury the sidewalks then there are complaints. John stated the new policy and instructions he has given to his drivers is that if people are obviously trying to maintain their walks then the drivers are to pull back and not intentionally bury the walk.

Public Works Director John Millar reported that the Pedestrian crossing signs on University near 5th West will be installed weather permitting. He also reported that the City has applied for a grant through Parks and Rec. for the continuation of the bike path that goes along the river back behind the surgical center and First American Title. The bike path ends on Barney Dairy Road and the grant has been applied for to extend the path between the football stadium and the subdivision connecting it to 1st North. The school board has agreed to an easement for the bike path.

Councilman Bruce Sutherland reported that in City Council they had a discussion with some concerned citizens about the safety concern on the corner of 3rd East and Main Street. He stated the concerns are centered around the low hanging pine trees as well as the height of the snow pile causing an obstruction of vision. Council member Sutherland stated he has driven over to review this location and feels that the line of site is as good as any other corner in Rexburg. He said as winter goes on it is not so much the trees causing an obstruction of vision as it is the ever growing pile of snow storage. John will instruct Greg to raise the skirts of the pine trees a foot or two as soon as the Christmas lights are down next week.

Public Works Director John Millar reported that another concern relating to traffic is the length of the yellow lights on the stop lights, in particular the light on the corner of Hwy 191 and 7th South near the Middle School. The complaint was that the length of the yellow light needs to be extended. John has met with the maintenance people of the Idaho Transportation Department and they have highly recommended not deviating from the standard three seconds. The complaints that are being brought into the City are the facts that with the speed limit being 45 mph on Hwy 191, it is difficult to get vehicles stopped on slick roads. Complaints are also being raised by drivers of larger trucks and the fact that they don't have enough time coming up to the light even on dry roads as it turns green. When they shift to go through the light and with little warning from the yellow light they find themselves running the red light. Councilman Sutherland said that ITD is not always right. John stated his gut feeling was to change the yellow light to five seconds; however the State said they wouldn't do it because they won't take the liability. The gentleman the City has do all their signal maintenance also works for the State. The hope is to come to an agreement somewhere in between. John stated that he has a programmer coming over this week to review all the timers on the signals/stop lights. Captain Randy Lewis stated that the green light, on the camera controlled stop light, south bound, at University and Hwy 191 is just way too short. The lights should remain on green long enough to clear the traffic. **Vice Chairman Reed Nielsen** made the suggestion that the university students set up a team and do a traffic study on these intersections and then report back to the Traffic Safety Committee. The University offers an Architectural 100 class which is the intro to construction management and architectural, the students have a service learning project that they need to complete. One of the teams could take a car and park at the intersections at various times and do that survey and then report back. The committee members were all in agreement, therefore Reed Neilson stated he would get it set up.

Police Department Update: **Captain Randy Lewis** reported on the recent accidents on the slick roads. He stated it is a matter of people just driving too fast for conditions. Discussion took place concerning dangerous intersections and the possibility of putting up more Sate Law Stop for Pedestrian signs. John Millar stated those signs do seem to work and the snow plow drivers have been instructed to

plow around them. The vehicles parked in the bike lanes on 7th South have been ticketed and this area seems to have cleared out. Captain Lewis stated he will work at adding to the list for the next meeting concerning locations that are in need of street lights and/or crosswalks.

Graydon Burton was asked to report. Graydon stated that his main concern is with the snow removal and it seems that there is just really no good answer. Plows throw frozen stuff up onto the sidewalks and the City doesn't have the budget to haul snow away on every road. He stated he has a 90 year old neighbor lady, along with his neighbors they try hard to keep her sidewalk clear but when the snowplow covers the sidewalk with chunks of frozen ice it is impossible to move. John Millar said the hard part is helping people understand the difference here in Rexburg. The complaints come in comparing Rexburg to Idaho Falls saying Rexburg just isn't plowing soon enough or Rexburg just isn't doing this or that because Idaho Falls roads are bare. Well, if you look at Idaho Falls there is no snow plow pile at the edge of road either because they haven't plowed. It's a two or three degree temperature difference that makes a huge difference. If you travel down to Burley there is no snow at all. Graydon stated that he has seen in other communities a machine that goes down the middle of the road where the snow is piled and lifts the snow onto a conveyer belt that transports the snow into dump trucks that are lined up ready to haul the snow away. John Millar informed the committee members that Rexburg does have a machine like that and that it comes out in the middle of the night. The City purchased it from North Carolina where they used it to remove brush. North Carolina has a problem with brush overgrowing the roads so they would windrow it and use the conveyer to load up the brush and haul it away. The City now uses it wherever they truck snow from, such as off Main Street, 2nd West and 2nd East. Idaho Falls has three of these types of machines.

Councilman Bruce Sutherland was asked to report. Councilman Sutherland stated that this spring when the City starts to do the re-striping on the roads, we need to make a note of 7th South and 2nd East both lanes, both going East and going West, the far right lane is a right turn only. John Millar reported that this was changed and taken care of just before snow fell. He stated the second arrow was painted allowing traffic to go straight or to turn right and then two days later it snowed. Signs indicating this change have not been put up as of yet.

Stephen Smith reported that he has noticed several locations that the snow is being piled up on the corners making it difficult to see around and see oncoming traffic. He mentioned the Pawn Shop on the corner of South Yellowstone and 5th West. Code Enforcement Officer Natalie Schneider stated that she had spoken to the owners yesterday concerning moving the snow pile. John Millar stated he had seen them out there shoveling the snow by hand this afternoon. Jerry Merrill's property on the corner of 2nd South and 5th West was also of concern. Natalie stated she will contact Jerry Merrill and ask that the snow pile be hauled away. She stated that she will continue working with the business owners that pile their snow on the corners and help to inform them of the dangers. Natalie stated that she has had complaints come in concerning the City lights shutting off. There is a link on the City website to report these outages or you can go directly to the Pacific Corp website to report locations as well. John Millar stated that concerning lights he has spoken to Phil with Rocky Mountain Power regarding the timeline on the University lights along 2nd East. The bases are already in and the power line will be relocated this spring. Natalie mentioned that concerning the Olive Tree compliant on Pole line Road and 2nd East, she has spoken with Bill Henderson who stated he will have the trees trimmed back at least 20' for better visibility. Also concerning Pole line Road, Natalie spoke with Dave Walrath who works for Madison County and he will be putting up 40 MPH signs along Pole line Road as there isn't any speed signs located there currently. The road is jointly patrolled by City and County. John Millar stated the street lights are out on 7th South, they have to get a transformer relocated by the new subdivision that was put in. Bill Henderson's crew will get a trench dug this week to relocate the power and the lights will be back on.

Meeting adjourned.