

# Traffic and Safety Committee Meeting

March 1, 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  
Virginia Pratt  
Erick Wills

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 Security Liaison  
Natalie Schneider-City Staff/minutes

### Review and Approve Minutes:

**Reed Nielsen** made the motion to approve the February 1st, 2011 Traffic Safety Committee minutes. **Stephen Smith** 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion. All voted Aye. **Motion carried.**

**Unfinished / Old Business:** The Salt Lake City Express bus is stopping on 1<sup>st</sup> West just South of the Hart Building. When there are performing groups the buses will drop off at the back dock behind the Hart. John Millar stated the City has posted “No Parking” signs along 1<sup>st</sup> West near the south entrance to the Hart parking lot. The curb will be painted yellow as soon as the weather permits.

The list of Street light locations that need to be improved was presented to the City Council. City Council discussed and then approved this street light project. Please see City Council minutes from February 16<sup>th</sup>, 2011 for details. Further discussion took place concerning the lack of lighting on 3<sup>rd</sup> South, from 2<sup>nd</sup> East to 4<sup>th</sup> East. **Virginia Pratt** stated that it is quite dark going up to Lincoln Elementary School. This area will also be reviewed for additional lighting.

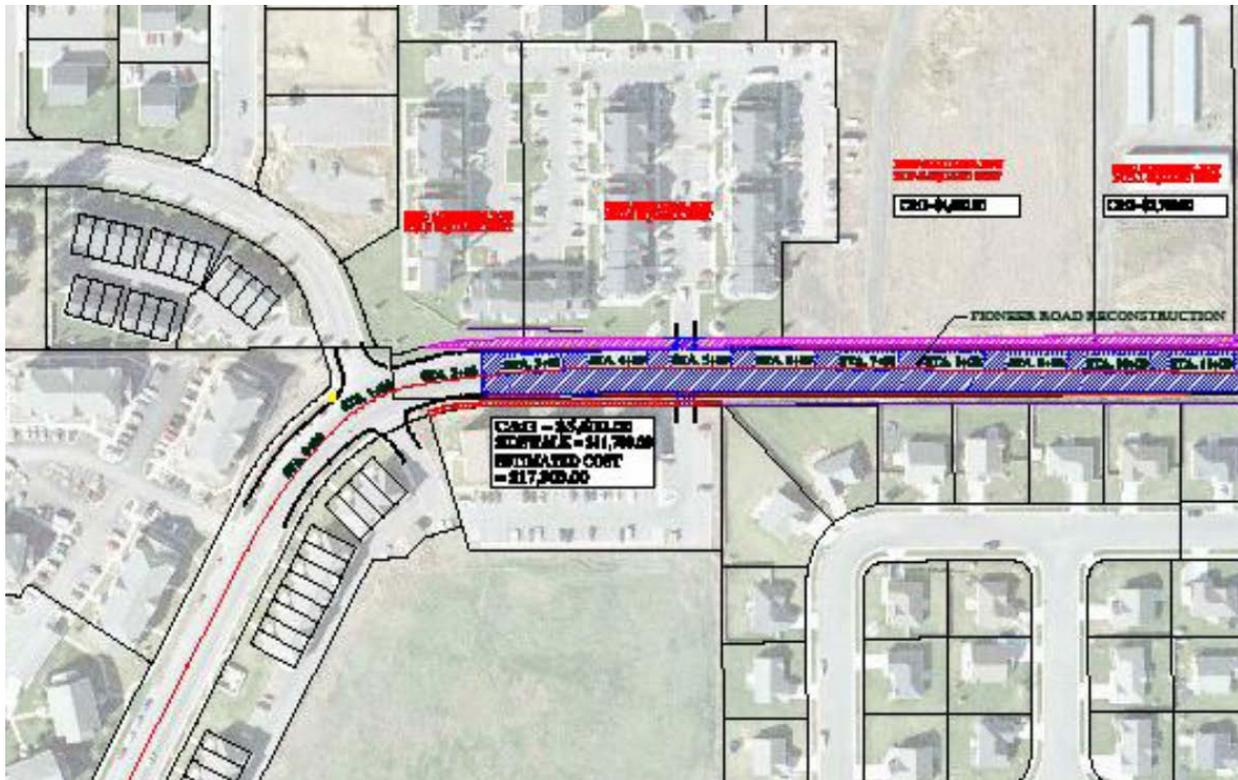
**New Business:** Trudy Porter and Jodi Weimer would like to be taken off of the Traffic Safety Committee. The Committee submitted several names to be given to the Mayor for replacement of retired members.

**Open discussion of relevant issues:** The City Council would like the Traffic Safety Committee’s view and input on the proposed ordinance on cell phone and texting use in the City. A copy of the proposed ordinance was e-mailed out to each of the Committee member’s for their review. Discussion took place concerning the draft ordinance. The committee supports the concept of regulating the use of hand-held wireless telephones and other wireless devices while operating a motor vehicle; however they were not supportive of regulating pedestrian use. Discussion took place concerning pedestrians within crosswalks using earpieces and other electronic devices. More education needs to be given to pedestrians informing them they are required to enter into a crosswalk safely and they need to be held liable for their actions. Many pedestrians will enter a crosswalk while texting and not even look up to make eye contact with the driver. Bicyclists, as well as joggers, on sidewalks and in crosswalks are treated as pedestrians. If the ordinance was to move forward, the committee preferred language that would restrict pedestrians from having *both* ears covered however allowing an earpiece in *one* ear. Joggers should be allowed to wear one earphone to listen to music while leaving the other ear uncovered to hear emergency response vehicles and so forth. Enforcement of this ordinance was discussed. The committee didn’t like the idea of having another ordinance that is not enforced. **Doug Barker** stated he understands the committee’s reluctance to make an ordinance to stop people from doing something; however this problem has gotten to be a real concern around the campus as well as throughout the City of Rexburg. He felt like pedestrians have a responsible to enter into the sidewalk safely as much as the driver has the need to be responsible in regulating the use of the sidewalks. Drivers are liable if they hit a pedestrian within a crosswalk, therefore the pedestrians need to take some responsibility to be

aware of their surroundings and enter crosswalks safely. This is not just a local problem. There have been several public service announcements put out trying to educate people about texting and driving. **Reed Nielsen** stated that the actions of a driver of a motor vehicle should be held accountable because the driver is in the position of power and potentially can hurt more than just themselves. Reed is supportive of the first part of this ordinance; however pedestrians are taking their own lives into their hands. He also stated that if pedestrians are held to a higher law then so should the joggers and bicyclists. **Chairman Rick Robbins** stated that the common communication between pedestrian and driver is being lost. The concern is certainly greater around campus, not that a law would solve the problem but the risk that someone will get killed is very high. Something has to be done to educate and try to prevent accidents. **Erick Wills** stated the problem is when pedestrians do something stupid they can affect drivers which can cause problems. Erick lives next to Porter Park and he has watched as pedestrians have run out into the street and the cars swerve to miss the pedestrians and in the process it causes an incident somewhere else. **Rick Robbins** discussed the vehicular use and the fact that it is a prosecution nightmare getting the phone records whereas if this ordinance was to be put into effect on drivers then it would be a much simpler matter to prosecute. The committee is very supportive of regulating the use of hand-held wireless telephones and other wireless devices while operating a motor vehicle. **Erick Wills** stated that if there is an accident with a pedestrian then at least it is on the books. It is not prosecuted from the stand point of pulling over every jogger that has earpieces and giving them a ticket. But if there is an accident involving a pedestrian in a crosswalk and you can show via their phone records that they were texting or on the phone at the time now the liability comes on them and not the person driving the car. **Doug Barker** stated for those in a crosswalk it is an educational thing such as the enforcement of seat belts is used to educate people of the potential dangers. A memo could be given to all new students educating them of this ordinance. Discussion continued. This issue will be scheduled on the City Council agenda for a public hearing. A motion was made by **Reed Nielsen** to proceed with regulating the use of hand-held wireless telephones and other wireless devices while operating a motor vehicle. The committee is not supportive of the Section II concerning pedestrians. Discussion took place concerning I-Pads etc. The Traffic Safety Committee is supportive of Section I of the ordinance with the suggestion that additional verbiage be used indicating that “no person shall use a hand-held wireless telephone or cellular telephone *or any other wireless device*, while operating a motor vehicle.” The motion was again stated by **Reed Nielsen** to recommend to City Council to precede with Section I of the ordinance with the added language of “any other wireless device” and to remove Section II as well as the part in the heading of the ordinance concerning pedestrians. **Erick Wills** seconded the motion. All voted Aye. **The motion carried.**

The next item on the agenda was the request from City Council to review the Millhollow & 7<sup>th</sup> South intersection and give suggestion concerning making that a four way stop. The Traffic Safety Committee had reviewed this issue in their last meeting which was held the same day as the City Council meeting, therefore the Committee’s decision hadn’t been passed on to City Council yet. The topic was once again reviewed by the Committee. The Committee still felt that main cause of the obstruction of vision was due to the snow piles on the corners of this intersection. Once the snow was removed there was no longer any problem therefore a four way stop wouldn’t be necessary. John Millar stated that the snowplow drivers will be more diligent in keeping the corners clear for visibility.

**Report on projects:** John Millar reported on the street reconstruction projects. The Committee reviewed the proposal on Pioneer Road with handouts.



Pioneer Road reconstruction was discussed on portions of Pioneer Road that have not been reconstructed yet; as well as pedestrian traffic. Last year the intersection on Pioneer Road was realigned next to Erickson’s and the road was redone, the proposal this year is to continue that same width of road on down and join in the corner where Casper Ave ties in. Funding will come from the Streets Department’s new road and reconstruction budgets, as well as water and sewer funds because they will install stubbed pipes to prepare for future growth and water and sewage needs. The stubbed piping will prevent them from having to tear up the street when the pipes need to be extended. Part of the curb and gutter would be paid for by the city and others will be paid for by the property owners. Properties where there is not enough right-of-way for a sidewalk will be excluded. As more of the area on Pioneer Road is developed then more sidewalks will be installed. The area next to Evergreen Subdivision will be finished this spring with fencing and landscaping. The southwest corner of the intersection at Pioneer Road and Main is owed by the City and will be landscaped this spring as well. Also, this spring the parking in front of Stone Brook Apartments on Pioneer Road will be done away with.

The next street discussed was 7th South. A new sewer line is being planned along 7th South beginning at 5th West and heading to the wastewater plant. Next year, they want to install a new sewer line to go east on 7th South towards the Stake Center. John continued the discussion of adding right-of-way or developing right-of-way on 7th South through the school property and Stone’s property west of the canal. The city has the right-of-way for these properties; they will need to discuss the price these properties owners will need to pay for their portion of the curb and gutter. For three of the properties on the south side of 7th South, the city would pay for the curb, gutter, piping and road in exchange for the right-of-way. Sewer construction funding will add \$110,400 for the project. A power line relocation and additional right-of-way will be added for phase two of this project next year. There was discussion on the 5th West portion of the road; this will included five lanes all the way to the Madison Middle School. They need to start moving on things now to prepare for next year. Next year the 7th South project will be completed.

**Heads up:** Scott Johnson reported that Joel Grey turned in the paperwork today for the Safe Walk to School sidewalk grant project. Rexburg has been very successful every year in obtaining grant money for sidewalks, crosswalk lights, etc. This time the area around Lincoln Elementary School is the main focus.

**Report from Committee Members concerning Safety Issues:**

**Rick Robbins** concerns centered around the snow piles at the intersections.

**Reed Nielsen** asked if the speed limit on South Yellowstone had been lowered from 45 to 35 mph. John Millar answered and said that it had been lowered north of 7<sup>th</sup> South per our previous month's discussion.

Between Rolling Hills and Terra Vista on 5<sup>th</sup> East there is a sewer manhole that appears to have sunk.

**Stephen Smith** stated that the paint striping on the road near Hogi Yogi needs to be sandblasted. John Millar stated as soon as the snow is off the road and weather permits the old striping will be removed and the new lines will be painted. The frost heaves have popped up the rails on the railroad tracks on 5<sup>th</sup> West near Les Schwab. The Railroad will be notified tomorrow.

**Lyle Wakefield** The stop light at the Court House coming down from the Hospital needs to be adjusted because two cycles went through without letting the west bound lane go.

**Jodi Weimer** was unable to attend the meeting however she sent an e-mail that was read concerning people running the stop sign heading West from Willow Brook to 12<sup>th</sup> West. A Special Watch will be issued through the Police Department.

**Virginia Pratt** stated she is very supportive of Safe Walks to Schools and clear bike lanes that go clear through and not come to an abrupt end or jog onto the sidewalk. The School District will need to be notified that the snow will need to be removed off the sidewalks at all the schools. Russ Wilson will be asked to move the snow off the school sidewalks, starting with Adams Elementary School. Days Inn has also pushed their snow up onto the sidewalk and needs to remove it. Ross Farmer has pushed his snow out onto the sidewalk. All property owners with snow covering their sidewalks will be informed of Rexburg City Ordinance 1019 and ask them to come into compliance by removing their snow of the City sidewalks. Another concern that Virginia had was the pine trees that seem to be planted too close to the road near Millhollow on 7<sup>th</sup> South. John Millar stated that they will need to be watched and trimmed as needed.

**Erick Wills** was concerned about the intersection of 2<sup>nd</sup> South 1<sup>st</sup> East and the lack of a four way stop sign. There is a stop sign for the East & West bound traffic, however there are no stop signs going North & South. There are crosswalks at this intersection but no stop signs. John Millar reported a federal traffic study has been completed twice on this location and it doesn't meet the warrants to justify having a four way stop. The pedestrian traffic is only high during class changes and only for short periods of time during the day and then it clears out. Going west out to the High School near Rexburg Motor Sports the old striping is still on the road. John Millar stated as soon as the snow is off the road and weather permits the old striping will be removed and the new lines will be painted.

**Meeting adjourned.**