

Traffic & Safety Committee Meeting Minutes

June 2, 2009

In attendance:

Mayor Shawn Larsen	Roscoe Orton
Randy Schwendiman	Rick Robbins
Stephen Zollinger	Lyle Wakefield
John Millar	Jodi Weimer
Randy Lewis	Steven Smith
Kevin Brady	
Reed Nielsen	

Approval of Previous month's minutes:

No quorum to approve minutes.

Cell Phone Ordinance

Jake Moss, an intern who works with the legal department reviewed the three bills that failed in Boise and Jake said the all three of the bills had the same wording. Every bill died in committee and the connection couldn't be made that accidents had anything to do with cell phone use. All bills failed for similar reasons they couldn't articulate the lack of attentiveness. By implementing laws that outlaw cell phone usage while driving you would also have to implement bills that outlaw eating as well as grooming. In Rexburg no fatalities have been caused by cell phone use. In respect to fatality accidents the phone records are subpoenaed. If cell phones were outlawed then new parameters will have to come out that there are other attention distractions. Cell phones get the most attention because you can see people on the phones.

Researchers found at the University of Utah that cell phones are the most dangerous. And the follow up with the report said that eating, grooming and cell phone use are equally as dangerous. Cell phones were compared to drunk driving, but drunk driving is a chemically measurable control issue. Actually catching someone on the phone while driving is hard and enacting a law could be difficult. Drivers are cited for inattentive driving if they are caught using a cell phone while driving. States that have outlawed cell phone use while driving for example New York, and there is no tangible evidence that there is a reduction in accidents.

The pedestrian safety gear (signs, striping and flags) is new for everyone and the people are observing and they tend to follow the law, generating a positive response. The awareness is raised. Some people just don't care. They don't have any regard for the pedestrian safety.

Lyle Wakefield would like to let the cell phone issues die, and an ordinance is not somewhere we can go. We can't go any further because we've raised awareness and have tried to move and it's not going anywhere.

In Rexburg, statistically there have been more accidents with pedestrians who are audibly challenged than those with cell phones.

People need to rely on others doing the right thing. By incorporating cell phone usage into the Share the Road campaign and stopping drivers for minor violations and warning those to be safe and not use their cell phones while driving can make a difference.

Lyle Wakefield motions to table the Cell Phone Ordinance.

Rick Robbins seconds.

Motion moved and seconded.

Update on 1st North Road Diet

The biker, Gary who was injured in the accident behind Broulims, rides the streets in Rexburg and feels that the drivers are not being courteous to those who are biking in the streets. He suggests more bike paths.

The drivers are very aggressive and all but harassing the drivers. The lines near Steiner's are not painted very well causing the bikers to ride in the street. Kevin Brady and Stephen Smith presented at City Council and the Council will look at the issue and it is on the agenda for tomorrow's meeting.

Randy Schwendiman has several concerns that if this road diet is about safety or just about a bike lane. The speed and motivation for this road diet has been very surprising. There has never been a complaint on 1st N and there is one complaint about someone who can't get across in a wheel chair and now there is talk of reconfiguring the entire street. There are some serious intersections in town that need more attention. Studies have shown that minimizing the lanes will slow the drivers. This is about safety and the drivers who don't pay attention. Bike lanes wouldn't necessarily create safety because bikers don't own the streets. It will be on the agenda at the City Council meeting and it will be discussed.

Update on 2nd East & 7th South

This intersection has been an issue for years. The City has gone to the University and the Church, and they have taken it to the church. John Millar visited with the owner's representative. It would cost \$300,000 to fix the intersection to line it up. The "No U-turn" signs are going up this week.

At certain times of the day there is more traffic on 7th South than on 2nd East for about 20 minutes. There has been a patrol officer there enforcing the no U-turns and it seems to be helping.

Mayor Larsen asked the committee members to drive around 2nd East and look at the lights from what committee members said they couldn't tell a difference.

BYU-Idaho is looking to do more significant lighting on the crosswalks that are on the perimeter of the campus. They have also suggested additional crosswalks, mid block crosswalks, and the City will continue to work with the University, for example 2nd South and 1st West is a four way stop with lots of pedestrians. The University has done extensive study on pedestrian study and determined to get adequate lighting at the intersection there need to be lights at corners.

The University would also like to incorporate more mid-block crosswalks. Within the year additional lighting will be seen around the campus. A suggestion for a light meter reading for before and after to see if there is a difference was also brought up.

Update on community safety lighting fee

There is a public hearing tomorrow night at 8 p.m. The bill has been read twice and tomorrow if it is voted on it will take effect.

FEE STRUCTURE

Small business - \$3.30 per month

Large business - \$6.00 per month

Single Family Resident - \$1.65 per month

Apartments - \$1.65 per month/per apartment

There is a sunset clause after 9 years, based on the priorities of the committee and the costs of the projects are \$1.2 million dollars. And after 9 years it can be evaluated again.

Priorities:

- Area right off campus
- 2nd East pedestrian crossing
- South 2nd West
- Main Street
- Upgrade all 70 watt fixtures
- Add lights City Wide

Open discussion of relevant issues

Reed Nielsen brought up an issue with the roundabout signs that are placed at the start of the roundabout. There are signs going each direction but the sign as you are coming north is missing.

John Millar explained that a new sign has been ordered and the lane will be painted to show the separate lanes so people will be more aware of the direction of traffic.

Also, Main Street turning onto 2nd East will be changed. The lanes will be readjusted and the right lane will be forced to right and the center lane will go straight and the right lane will be forced to turn right.

Meeting Adjourned.