

Traffic and Safety Committee Meeting Minutes

April 7, 2009

In attendance:

Mayor Shawn Larsen	Lyle Wakefield
Stephen Smith	Kevin Brady
Capt. Randy Lewis – Rexburg Police	Jodi Weimer
Stephen Zollinger – City of Rexburg	Graydon Burton
John Millar – City of Rexburg	Reed Nielsen

Approval of Previous Month's Minutes

New committee member, Kevin Brady introduced himself and he is an economics teacher and BYU-Idaho and is interested in serving in the community.

Mayor Larsen wanted to make sure there is a quorum to approve the minutes.

Stephen Zollinger clarified that a quorum is 50% of the committee plus one.

Mayor Larsen said that having now established a quorum, he asked that if there are any changes to the minutes.

Graydon Burton motioned
Steven Smith seconded
Motion carried.

Before new business, there is a concerned citizen who would like to address the committee. Gary Hall lives across the street from the library at 1st and Center St. He says that the corner is dangerous. There was a blind man that couldn't cross the street because the cars wouldn't stop long enough for him to make it across. Finally, Gary went out and stopped the cars so he could make it across. Gary says that there needs to be signs up (pedestrian signs) because someone is going to be killed at that crosswalk.

Gary says that people will not stop for the handicap or elderly and they won't even stop for him and he's fed up because nothing is being done and Gary ends up walking people across the street.

Mayor Larsen said that there can be an unmarked patrol officer in the area to enforce. There is a concern because there is the library and a lot of young kids.

Gary says that there is speeding all year round. Gary said he see's people go through the stop signs.

Randy Lewis asked if the Pedestrian Flags are working. Gary said that they're not really working, because people aren't using them. He said it all depends on the driver, because the drivers will not wait. He said that this is the worst driving he's ever seen and that there is constantly speeding and if the City doesn't do anything about it, he will.

Mayor Larsen said it's not only a concern at that crosswalk but there are others.

Gary went on to say that the police needs to educate or start passing out fines. He would appreciate it if people will start doing something about it.

Mayor Larsen asked John if there are any more of the crosswalk signs and John will move one to that crosswalk. The mayor wants to look at the crosswalk wondering if there is proper signage at the crosswalk.

Lyle Wakefield wanted to know if it could be in the middle of the lane, where the double line is so it can be seen and John Millar said it will.

John Millar said that they usually don't put signs at a 4-way stop because the theory is they're stopped.

Stephen Zollinger said the problem is it's a two lane road, and they don't recognize there the only lane there. With four lanes the timing would be wrong; there would be a zig zag of cars.

Mayor Larsen asked how often you have a four way stop when you have two lanes; it isn't a very common practice.

Stephen Zollinger said the only thing that isn't common is that it's a low speed street. He doesn't know the answer and he and John don't agree on how to handle it. It's up to John Millar because he is the engineer.

Mayor Larsen asked for John's opinion and if there are improvements to be made.

John Millar said the width of the road is a problem.

Jodi Weimer asked if it has always been a four lane, and it hasn't, it used to be two.

Mayor Larsen said that maybe an additional lane at the next block would work. He and his family biked and it was difficult to bike that street. Or a suggestion could be a bike lane to the library, so it would be two lanes and a bike lane.

Reed Nielsen asked if maybe a turn lane down the center would help and if the road requires two lanes.

John Millar said that it would help reduce capacity.

John Millar said that they could there are not a lot of turns down and that it is more of an alternate to driving down Main Street.

Lyle Wakefield said that the light on 2nd North helps and it has also made it an alternative to Main Street.

Mayor Larsen asked if the committee feels comfortable to give John direction for placement of additional signs. John Millar said that they will put the signs up, even redundant signs up.

Jodi Weimer asked if there was a possibility of putting in flashing yellow lights at the crosswalks.

Stephen Zollinger said this isn't a stop for pedestrians, this is a stop sign. Next step is a stop light and the unmarked cars only work when they're sitting there. They could sit there and write tickets all day

long. There is a patrol car sitting in the library parking lot probably 5 days out of the week. When school lets out there are more cars on that street.

Mayor wants John to come up with a proposal for the next meeting; and take a look at the intersection.

John Millar's fear with a flashing light gives the pedestrian a false sense of security. It would entice more potential for accidents.

Graydon Burton said that the ones who are jay walking are very careful.

Randy Lewis commented that there are a high number of elderly people and handicap people who live (Village Community Garden) near that crosswalk.

Mayor Larsen suggests that John Millar look at intersection and do a traffic count and find out how much traffic the City can have there and if maybe four lanes could be warranted.

Lyle Wakefield said it would be a good idea to do a bike path if they decide to go back to two lanes so people don't go back to bad habits.

Mayor Larsen said On 5th West the bike lanes really slow people down opposed to a wide open street. And have John present analysis at next meeting, but for now, they'll put the signage.

He also said it would be a good idea to go and talk to Gary and tell him what the plan is to address this issue so he doesn't lose his temper.

Randy Lewis said he would go and talk to Gary about what was discussed at the meeting.

Graydon Burton saw three boys taking the flags and one crossed the street and threw it back.

Current Projects

John Millar said that the big project for 2009 on traffic safety is the reorientation on Pioneer Road. The bridge is complete and City of Rexburg will obtain that property on May 1st. The ITD it does meet a warrant analyst for the traffic signal. The ITD will pay for the traffic signal, and things are coming together at that intersection. It is a high traffic and accident intersection.

Jodi Weimer asked John Millar the anticipated completion date and he said it would be in October.

Graydon Burton asked if there was going to be anything done about the backup on the exit ramp.

John Millar said that the ITD will look and analyze it with traffic studies. John said they will look at it and analyze the conditions not only there but also at University. There will be times after the high school is completed and the Kartchner project is completed it will be considered a level B and cars will be packed up significantly and it can become hazardous. John said that they are working with the ITD to move the project along to get it completed.

Mayor Larsen asked if there were any other projects and John Millar went on to explain that interchange lighting at the ramps is under construction. There will be lights on the ramp, similar to those at Hitt Road as well as the Main St, University and Salem Hwy so all will be done this summer and they will then

landscape the off ramps. They have also met with ITD to help with the funding. They're also looking for some money for landscaping.

The concrete has been poured for bridge on Barney Dairy Road and it must be done in two weeks.

The City is also working with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter day Saints and BYU-Idaho on getting funding for the traffic signal on 7th S. and 2nd E and so far they are in discussion.

Lyle Wakefield asked if that road is offset, and John Millar said they will widen the south east corner it to 5 lanes .

John Millar wanted to add one more item and he went on to say that the area is getting gridlocked and he isn't sure where it is coming from and there is a 30 minute window where there is traffic and he thinks the window will just get longer. There could be maybe a light in the future at 3rd and 2nd E.

Mayor Larsen asked if there has ever been a neighborhood signals before and he doesn't think there has been. John Millar said it could be a single standing light at each corner and with a light it could be done significantly cheaper.

Summerfield Project

Mayor Larsen introduced Troy Kartchner and Dan Larsen from Summerfield project. It has gone before the council. The City Council moved forward on the final plat, and now they are presenting it to the Traffic & Safety Committee.

Mayor Larsen met with the project and school district concerning the crosswalk safety at the new Burton Elementary School and he thinks they've come up with a good solution.

Dan Larsen will present, and he laid out a plat for the committee to review, to give them an idea of what the project looks like.

The concern that came before the council and what they discussed with the school board is the traffic along 12th West. Between the new high school and the new elementary school it will create a lot more traffic. They have already lowered the speed limit in there and they're will be a crosswalk to get from development to development.

As the committee reviewed the map they identified the different routes the Kartchner project would like the elementary school kids would walk to school.

Graydon Burton asked is there has ever been a discussion about having an overpass for pedestrians and with that overpass it will show a concern for pedestrians and not nearly as liable.

Stephen Zollinger said there are very few places where pedestrian passes are used, BYU has a \$600,000 pedestrian over pass and no one uses it, they all walk under it. An overpass will never be practical.

John Millar said that a long term goal would be for the school district to provide crossing guards and that they're the most positive safety aspect you can do, and they are the most effective.

Jodi Weimer asked if the traffic will be coming from the north or south or both. And John Millar said the only access to the elementary school is to the north. And the high school will go down 12th West.

Stephen Zollinger said the high school traffic study says that they will turn right on 12th and take the north/south road and it won't be near the crosswalk near the elementary. The kids coming from Burton will, but they don't anticipate much traffic.

Mayor Larsen said that something that is relevant to this discussion is that this will be done in phases.

Dan Larsen shows the first phase to the committee which includes 58 units, and there will be sidewalk all along there.

Mayor Larsen thinks the main concern within the committee is 12th West and Kartchner is willing to work with the City and possibly an LID. How an LID works is the city would figure out the cost and the property owner would be assessed their portion of that cost and it is one way to fund infrastructure improvements. It does put a heavy burden on the property earners who are assessed that LID.

Mayor Larsen said that he wanted there to be a discussion about the Summerfield project, and he thinks there has been so, the meeting will move on.

Street Lighting

Mayor Larsen would like to quickly go over the street lighting on 2nd East and where we stand on that.

John Millar said that he has ordered lights for the upper area near Central High School for the four existing lights and they are a few weeks out.

Street Light Ordinance – Utility Light

Stephen Z – update on STO priorities and where it stands:

SZ – Met and went over fees and there will be three different fee rates they are:

Fee zone (rates)

Residential

Small non residential

Large non residential

The fees are set based on demand the projects that we articulate and the committee articulates that are of high priority and propose to council that we proceed immediately.

The \$1-2 range for residential and the \$6-8 range for business, these fees will pay for street lights to light street.

Reed Nielsen asked if the utility is covered under existing budget, the cost of the power.

Depending on the projects John can get build each year and set the budget on what can be done in a year.

Stephen Zollinger went on to talk about the goals of the ordinance.

Goals:

To raise \$100,000 – 200,000 collect and construct each year.

Working toward getting proper street lights for all residential areas.

Costs to light and change lighting.

John Millar would like to make existing light more efficient, increase the intensity. And on S 2nd W the goal is to raise the level of lighting areas around BYU-Idaho, for better pedestrian lighting, need more project lights.

Reed Nielsen said the original ordinance from a few months ago there was a minimum lumens based upon work area and he asks if we had checked and the city has not.

John Millar said the newer ordinance hasn't established lumens.

Mayor Larsen said it will be introduced at the next City Council meeting and would like to have representation for the meeting on Wednesday from 7:30 – 8:00pm. Reed Nielsen said he would be going.

Cell Phone Ordinance

Stephen Zollinger said the committee was going to wait to see what the state is going to do and the state of Idaho failed miserably and it's looking like this state will not have a cell phone restriction in the near future.

Mayor Larsen asked Stephen to gather the information and it will be looked at the next meeting.

New Business of Relevant Issues

Graydon Burton was walking around the Splash Park and he saw kids swinging from the nozzles and the ropes, which looked frayed. Graydon thinks they should have been removed at the end of the season and the City could be liable. Mayor Larsen said that it will get taken care of.

John Millar said one issue that came up today was the speed at the Nature Park. Temporary speed bumps will be put at the Nature Park because there are many kids around. They will also be put back at the Spray Park in the spring.

There are not many residential complaints about the temporary speed bumps.

Lyle Wakefield brought up the concern about Millhallow by the new church, the road goes East and West, there are no crosswalk lines, it's hard to tell where the road goes and the stop signs go north and south. John Millar said that there are yield signs there now and eventually that will be the main road. There isn't enough traffic either way for the stop signs.

The 7th S. stop is an awkward place for a stop sign. Mayor Larsen said that the neighborhood petitioned to put a stop sign there and it is a dead end. He has had a number of comments that it is a huge mistake where the stop signs are placed.

John Millar said that it is better off without a crosswalk for the people walking to church because while in a crosswalk think they're safe because they're walking in a crosswalk. There is an illusion that being in a crosswalk you're safe.

Reed Nielsen said that 4th East is the best place to put a stop sign because the kids speed up the hill and they can't see you and you can't see them.

Mayor Larsen asked if there were any other issues and Mike gave a few suggestions.

There were three suggestions for speed limits around the city.

1. 2nd East going passed the temple. The speed is 25 right outside the temple.
2. 7th South there is a sign when passing the middle school there is a 35 mph sign, and it would be better to move it east.
3. S 5th W is a narrow road and it would be a good idea to put it at 25 mph because there are a lot of strollers.

John Millar said that drivers will do whatever they want to do, regardless of the speed limits.

Mayor Larsen said they will address all the suggestions at a future meeting.

Mayor Larsen mentioned that anyone who would want to be the chairman of the committee to please send an e-mail to him.

Kevin Brady, is a teacher at BYU-I and is looking for a project for his Cost Benefit Analysis Class and has spoken with John about performing an analysis for the City and has a possible project and is looking for another project he hopes the committee can help with an idea.

Mayor Larsen said a good idea would be a neighborhood signal on 2nd East.

Stephen Smith said that the Kartchner sidewalk project and the widening of the road.

John Millar gave the idea of street lights and new technology and energy savings. It could include the purchasing of new heads and bulbs and new light bulb technology.

Meeting Adjourned.