

## Traffic and Safety Committee Meeting Minutes –

May 5, 2009

### *In attendance:*

|                    |                 |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| Mayor Shawn Larsen | Kevin Brady     |
| Randy Schwendiman  | Reed Nielsen    |
| John Millar        | Garth Gunderson |
| Randy Lewis        | Lynn Archibald  |
| Graydon Burton     | Steven Smith    |

**Approval of last month's minutes** – could not approve, there were not enough members of the committee to make a quorum.

### **New Business - Update on the 2<sup>nd</sup> East street light project**

John Millar said the area on 2<sup>nd</sup> East between 4<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> South there were four existing street lights that were put in some years ago with 70 watt light bulbs. They now have 400 watt lamps and 10 foot mast arms have been put in and they have lit the road up significantly.

Reed Nielsen asked if John Millar had checked lumens before and after to see if there is a difference, John Millar said they didn't and Reed Nielsen recommends that they check the lumens. Before being able to check the lumens, the City will need to obtain a light meter. Reed Nielsen said it would help to see if it is making a difference and to see if the money that is being spent is worth it.

John Millar said he knows it makes a significant difference and they paid attention to it when they did 3<sup>rd</sup> South and 2<sup>nd</sup> West, but they didn't get any numerical values. These lights are standard.

Mayor Larsen gave an assignment for all committee members, drive up on 2<sup>nd</sup> East carefully at night and see if you can notice a difference in lighting. The lights on 2<sup>nd</sup> East have been funded by the University. As we move forward in our lighting, eventually some of the lights will be changed out to be consistent with the lighting plan and the University, the committee and the City felt like it needed to be acted on immediately.

Mayor Larsen said the issue that came up at our last meeting; Gary came and was quite adamant that the committee look at 1<sup>st</sup> North. Mayor Larsen went on and said, if you've noticed we've put out the barricade there and he has noticed an increase in awareness at the intersection. The committee requested that John Millar prepare some information on 1<sup>st</sup> North and if it is feasible to go to two lanes and do a bike lane and center turn lane.

John Millar did traffic counts, and caught the tail end of when the University was leaving, so numbers might be a little on the low side. Traffic numbers at the peak hour were 500 cars per hour and about 8,000-9,000 vehicles per day in the vicinity of Center and 1<sup>st</sup> North. They also measured the speed, and 1<sup>st</sup> North was in the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile at 33 mph with it being a 25 mph street.

Lynn Archibald made the comment that Rexburg drivers are a bit more aggressive.

Mayor Larsen said that there was a bicycle accident on 1<sup>st</sup> North.

Randy Lewis continued and said the accident was near Broulims that involved a guy riding a bike and approaching 1<sup>st</sup> West. The bicyclist broadsided a car on the driver's side and the back tire ran over his leg breaking it. The driver was cited for failure to yield.

Mayor Larsen has another concern with 1<sup>st</sup> North and it is very difficult to bike on the south side of the road toward the library. And his question to John Millar is, would a two lane roadway and a center turn lane manage the 8,000-9,000 turn lane on that road?

John Millar set out a configuration, with the Jr. High playing field on one end and Maverick on the other end. The configuration would provide 8-9 feet for parking, 6 foot bike lane, 11 foot traffic lane, 13 foot turn lane. Dimensionally, it is doable and lanes with turn lanes can handle up to 12,000 cars. There will be additional stacking at Center St. The proposal would have the two lanes running all the way to 2<sup>nd</sup> East. If the cars start to stack, people will start looking at alternate routes, 2<sup>nd</sup> North being an example.

Mayor Larsen asked how the committee feels about the proposal, and Reed Nielsen asked John Millar if he thinks it will address the problem that was addressed a month ago.

John Millar thinks it will help, and Gary, the concerned citizen has reported to Captain Lewis that he approves of what the City has done in efforts keep the pedestrians safe at that intersection, and would like another sign on the other side of the intersection. Captain Lewis said that they did write a few tickets, but nothing significant because it isn't a problem road for the Police Department. There are not a lot of accidents, but accidents do happen.

Reed Nielsen asked if would make sense to do another traffic survey after the signs have been put up to see if it makes a difference in the speed, and John Millar doesn't think it would significantly change anything.

Mayor Larsen said that as the library expands there will be more pedestrians and more bicyclists going to the library.

Lynn Archibald asked if the dimensions on the various lanes are adequate, because they seem tight. John Millar said that the typical lane length is 12 feet and they've gone to 11 feet, and in doing so it has a calming effect, leaving room to maneuver, but narrowing it out will also decrease speeds. Defining the lanes creates better traffic calming. People seemed for focused on the speed.

Lynn Archibald also said that 6 feet seems wide for a bike lane. John Millar said that he and the Mayor traveled to Portland, Oregon and they have bike lanes and Portland has them all over town. They have gone as narrow as 4.5 feet which is too restrictive and use 6 feet as a standard.

Mayor Larsen said more than anything they noticed the attitude with the vehicle traffic recognized the pedestrians and bikes. There was awareness and people feel safe.

Mayor Larsen made the point that the wider the road, the higher the speed of the traffic.

Mayor Larsen would like John Millar to advise, and John says it will work either way. There are advantages and disadvantages. The advantage of going back to two lanes enables a bike lane, which the current configuration does not have safely. It will reduce the pedestrian crossing to one lane instead of

crossing two lanes. There will be a decrease in speed and it will be an interim change. Traffic levels will eventually go back to four lanes. In order to re-stripe it they have to re-seal coat it and cover up old striping to start with a fresh slate. John Millar said he can support it either way.

Reed Nielsen asked how long it will take before it should go back to four lanes. John Millar said within 10 years.

Mayor Larsen said that when the point when the road gets widened at the Steiner Elevator corner to four lanes, that may be the time when the rest of it gets changed as well.

John Millar said at some point going to 4 lanes and maintaining bikes lanes you get on street parking. Which happened on 2<sup>nd</sup> West and in order to get a safe road, they finally said no parking on 2<sup>nd</sup> West.

Lynn Archibald asked if any consideration has been given to eliminating parking on one side of the street and restricting it to either north or south, and how does it work safety wise. John Millar said that safety wise; it is not really an issue. Taking parking off one side doesn't benefit and it doesn't give quite enough room for all that the City would need, for example; turn lanes, bike paths. At this point leave the configuration as is, or make go to two lanes.

Captain Randy Lewis said that if the committee doesn't decide to change, something needs to be done with the intersection near Steiner's and Broulins.

Reed Nielsen asked how much it would cost to put another top coat and paint and John Millar said it would be between \$30,000-\$40,000 and it is something that the City would do. It's not a wasted expense.

Graydon Burton thinks that the two lanes will make it safe. The people are going 20 mph and the people that won't wait speed around, and two lanes will really make it safer for the kids who are going to school in the nearby area.

Reed Nielsen moves that the committee proceed with John's option in putting in the two lanes and bikes lanes in and reducing it to two lanes and putting in bikes lanes at the North and South. Reed Nielsen also said we should also look into putting in signs at all intersections in the immediate area.

Graydon Burton seconds.

Mayor Larsen says it has been moved and seconded to make recommendation to with this proposal to the Council.

Motion carries.

Mayor Larsen will now take this to the Council for their discussion and review.

Rexburg citizen wanted to take an opportunity to address a dangerous intersection at 7<sup>th</sup> South and 2<sup>nd</sup> East.

Mayor Larsen has an update on that specific intersection; he says that BYU-Idaho has been contacted to sharing some of the cost of a street light up at that corner. BYU-Idaho supports that idea and they are

taking it down to Utah to see if it can be done and to get a time frame. Mayor Larsen and John Millar have a meeting with the property owner next week.

John Millar said they have done studies, traffic counts and putting in a traffic light there are warrants that are supposed to be met.

There is a suggestion that until the light is complete, a 4-way stop would be an immediate response to protect people before something happens. John Millar said that the continuous East and West traffic is pretty minor, and the movement is either East to North or South to West.

Captain Randy Lewis said something they are experiencing is the vehicles North and South bound, especially going South, the vehicles that are trying to turn left turn onto 7<sup>th</sup> South, making a u-turn and then coming back around to avoid waiting traffic.

Garth Gunderson said that it has been going on for two years now, and the alley near the Kimball building is gone causing people to have to go around the University. If you travel up to that intersection in the morning, the traffic is backed up to the Stake Center and if you are in the left turn lane there are people who feel entitled to get through there quickly. There is a constant stream that comes over to the right lane and they will make a u-turn and it complicates the situation because you can't ever turn left.

John Millar said that the accident history is low. It was brought up that even though there have been no accidents it doesn't mean that there won't be. By doing something about the intersection it can make an effort to try and prevent the accident from occurring.

John Millar said that the downside to stop signs is that it would impede the traffic. It would cause a stacking problem going four different ways. Mayor Larsen said that the solution is a signalized intersection and it is a wait and see situation.

Garth Gunderson said that a small start would be to put a "No U-Turn" sign because it's really not a good place to make a u-turn. John Millar said that it can be done and Captain Randy Lewis said that it would make enforcing a lot easier.

Reed Nielsen said that he thinks there should be a 4-way stop and stripe it for that, so the lanes are all visible. There is more to it than just putting in a 4-way stop. There needs to be no u-turns, double yellow lines and then enforce it.

John Millar said that people think that putting in a traffic signal is the solution to making the intersections safe, but some of the highest accident points are at intersections. It's all comes down to what gets it the safest. The striping will get fixed and there will be proper signage, which is a priority. By the next meeting they should know if there are in a position to move ahead with the signal. The advantage of a signal is that the movements are so predominant that it gives flexibility.

Mayor Larsen said that it would be worthwhile to do an analysis on a 4-way stop and what it would do to traffic. By the next meeting, if we could have that information and have a time frame from the University for the signal.

Graydon Burton asked if further down the road if it would be feasible to put temporary stop signs, just to monitor how it would all work. John Millar said it would not be advisable because it is hard to get people used to them and even harder to get people used to them not being there.

Mayor Larsen said something that could be brought up to the University, to see if it would be feasible to have some kind of connectivity to the two lots that students are using 7<sup>th</sup> South to get to.

### **Old Business**

Mayor Larsen said that they will not report on the cell phone ordinance, and Stephen Zollinger will bring it to the next meeting. The Street Light Utility Ordinance is up for first reading tomorrow before the City Council. The committee put together priorities; top priority is the area around the University, arterial roads, and the lighting throughout the rest of the community. John has put together some numbers and it will be presented to the Council tomorrow.

Mayor Larsen said that the plan is to get some sample lights and put them out so the committee to drive around and look at the lights. The LED lighting is cost effective and it makes sense to change out some of the existing lighting.

Mayor Larsen wanted to commend John Millar for getting out and taking care of the things that are discussed in the committee. The crosswalk signs, the striping is all very noticeable. There is a higher sense of responsibility on the part of the citizens for pedestrian safety.

Reed Nielsen asked if the City is wasting their money on the pedestrian flags, and wants to know if anyone actually uses them. People have seen pedestrians use them, and the new ones are a lot more visible.

Mayor Larsen said they are looking at a proposal working closely with the University parking, and they are looking at creating a University Zone street parking. Drive around the University; take a look at the area. This would be a way to control some of the parking issues. There will be two zones, neighborhood residential zone and university zone. If you are a student you won't be able to park there without getting a ticket.

Both BYU-Idaho and the City will be selling the permits, which can be transferred to other vehicles. The City is working closely with the university so it will make sense to the students to buy this parking pass. No rates have been set, but the University is looking at \$8.

Meeting adjourned.