

APPROVED

TRAFFIC SAFETY ADVISORY BOARD

Minutes
April 15, 2014

The April meeting of the TSAB was held at 7 pm on Tuesday, April 15, 2014 in the training room of the municipal building (room 104).

Present were:

Gene Dunaway, William Polfus, Jane L. Shelton, Aditya Savara, Andrew Howe, Bill Davis, Steve Byrd (City staff representative), Ben Redmond, Jana Humphrey, Emeline Brown

Non board members:

Councilwoman Trina Baugh, Councilwoman Anne Garcia Garland, City Manger Mark Watson, Ellen Smith, Kathryn Howe, and a couple of others

1) Minutes from the March 18, 2014 meeting were amended as follows:

Item 12: "Howe informed the board he had done a quick analysis of the flow data available from TDEC TDOT and passed on the meager results to Council and City Manager Watson."

Amended minutes approved unanimously.

2) Steve Byrd provided a presentation and information on item 2 of the agenda, followed by an open discussion that included a presentation of the situation by City Manger Watson, and ended with a vote upon a motion of recommendation to the City Manger.

Back Story

With the Alexander Inn being converted into an assisted living facility, the owners wish to install a gate between their private drive and the end of East Madison Rd, which is currently a one-way street owned by the city. Presently, cars going down East Madison Rd use the Alexander Inn's private drive to reach Kentucky Ave, as do the people living in the apartments along East Madison Rd and the residents of the private home at 103 East Madison Rd.

Because East Madison Rd a one-way street, a gate would block drivers from what is now their path of egress. As a solution to this problem, Family Pride Corp, the owners the Alexander Inn, offered to give up a portion of their property on their southwest corner to RMS, the owners of the apartments, so that a new private drive could be made between the end of East Madison Rd and Broadway Ave, thus allowing drivers to exit without affecting East Madison Rd. The city approached RMS with this plan, and it was refused.

The next option proposed was to convert East Madison Rd from a one-way street into a two-way street, which would require widening the north side of East Madison Rd to accept two lanes of traffic and creating a new "hammer head" dead end to allow vehicles space in which to turn around. RMS has not yet been responded to this proposal.

The Facts

Family Pride Corp will be paying for the cost of the work to be done on this project.

Family Pride Corp hopes to open the facility around mid to late summer, so work needs to begin shortly.

The new private drive in the first proposal would be at a rather steep grade, and any options to reduce this grade would put the new drive close to the front of the Alexander Inn.

The gate can be opened by Family Pride Corp to allow emergency vehicles, delivery trucks, etc to reach the Alexander Inn when needed but would primarily remain locked for the safety of the residents there.

To achieve the space needed for two-way traffic, the angular parking would have to be replaced by parallel parking, which would remove roughly 40 of the current parking spaces available along East Madison.

The spaces along East Madison Rd are primarily used by the residents of the apartments, but also at times by visitors to Blankenship Field and Jackson Sq.

Although people presently drive up on the sidewalk in front of the apartments, leaving East Madison Rd as it is would not be feasible with the gate.

There is sufficient parking along Broadway Ave and Michigan Ave to handle the vehicles owned by tenants of the apartments, although the walk to those spaces could be much farther and along steeper terrain than the walk to the spaces on East Madison.

Regardless of this board's recommendation to the City Manager, if RMS decides they prefer the first option presented to them, the city may move forward on that design plan.

Discussion

All recognized that a reduction of spaces would create a hardship for the residents of the apartments.

Andrew Howe felt it would also create a hardship for RMS, as it would reduce the convenience of their tenants, thus making it harder for them to find tenants.

Ellen Smith pointed out that limited spaces along East Madison, and more cars using spaces along Broadway Ave and Michigan Ave, could cause issues for police and emergency vehicles.

It was pointed out that the dead end would be large enough for most emergency vehicles to turn around in, and most fire trucks are used to having to back out of the places after responding.

Aditya Savara proposed that a short-term loading and unloading zone would help the tenants of the apartments by giving them a reserved place to unload their vehicles or drop off passengers.

Decision

After much discussion weighing all the pros and cons of the two plans, the board generally felt that the first option proposed to RMS was more ideal to both the city and to RMS. We recognized the drawbacks of a steep-grade private drive, but felt they outweighed the drawbacks of converting East Madison Rd into a two-way street.

However, in the absence of an agreement to move forward in the original direction, the board was unable to find any other acceptable solution than to convert East Madison Rd into a two-way street.

MOTION

Ben Redmond made the following motion, which was seconded and passed unanimously:

"The Traffic Safety Advisory Board recommends to the City Manger to follow the city's plan to convert East Madison Rd to a two-way street, and to include short term loading and unloading zones, unless an alternative plan is presented or accepted by RMS."

3) Steve Byrd provided a presentation and information on item 3 of the agenda, as well as a review of the traffic and pedestrian count data collected on 4/8/2014, followed by an open discussion and an agreement to do more research on device options before the next meeting.

He demonstrated how the School Crossing is warranted based on gaps in traffic, and how the pedestrian hybrid beacon should be considered based on the information of Section 4F.01.06 of the 2009 MUTCD.

He explained the distinctions between three types of devices that might be possible for use at the intersection.

Standard Traffic Signal

Could be placed at the intersection.

The light would remain green along the turnpike until the device senses a vehicle exiting from the ORHS entrance or triggered by a pedestrian.

If the sensor type used is one utilizing road loops, the cost would be somewhere between \$150,000 and \$200,000.

Hybrid Warning Beacon

Primarily these are used for crossings that are not near intersections, as they consist of lights hanging over the road and facing bi-directionally.

These lights are a set of three lenses, two reds on top of one yellow, that remain dark until a pedestrian has activated them, then they go through the following phases:

- Flashing yellow
- Steady yellow
- Steady Red
- Alternating Red
- Dark

They should be installed 100 feet or more from an intersection, as cars coming from the perpendicular direction cannot see the lenses when viewed from the side.

To install such a light at the ORHS crossing should require a re-arch of the school sidewalk to divert pedestrians coming from the school away from the current crossing location, and it is doubtful all people crossing there would walk the extra 100 feet instead of jaywalking.

Flashing Beacon

Could be placed at the intersection.

This is the kind of beacon we now have on Emory Valley Rd.

These devices are a pair of bi-directional side-by-side white LEDs on a pole that flash for a period in an alternating pattern when activated by a pedestrian.

They have been found effective on Emory Valley Rd.

It was noted by Mark Watson that the ORHS marching band often crosses the Turnpike but rarely uses the crosswalk, choosing to jaywalk instead. It was recognized that we should correct that behavior, especially if a crossing light is installed.

During our discussion Jane Shelton discussed the 'all red' phase of lights that occur in larger cities when all four directions of traffic are halted and pedestrians cross all streets at the same time.

Aditya Savara proposed a solution at the intersection of a pair of synchronized hybrid beacons, one over the Turnpike crosswalk and one over ORHS crosswalk, thus also indicating a pedestrian crossing to vehicles exiting the ORHS parking as well as those driving along the Turnpike.

Other options discussed briefly were:

- Doing nothing
- Using crossing guards
- Removing the crosswalk and requiring pedestrians to cross at the signals on the end of the block
- Tunnel or Bridge – cost is prohibitive (~\$1.4M) due to utilities infrastructure complications and the ADA requirements

Steve Byrd indicated that to get a light installed by next school year, the board would have had to make a decision much sooner than now.

4) City Manager Mark Watson informed the board that Redflex is willing to continue capturing data with their cameras for a month after our contract with them ends and asked if we would like that to happen.

After an extremely brief discussion, Ben Redmond motioned to continue the Redflex collection of data for the 30 day period, and the motion passed unanimously

5) A motion to adjourn was made and passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:25 pm.

Andrew Howe
TSAB Secretary

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andrew L. Howe". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.