

**MINUTES
TRAFFIC SAFETY COMMISSION MEETING
JULY 27, 2000**

The agenda for the Traffic Safety Commission meeting of July 27, 1999, was duly posted in accordance with Government Code Section 54954.2.

A regular meeting of the Reedley Traffic Safety Commission was held Thursday, July 27, 2000, in the Reedley City Council Chambers, 845 "G" Street, Reedley.

1. CALL TO ORDER.

Vice-Chairman Johnson called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Commissioners

Present: Clements, Brockett and Chief Johnson.

Absent: Dale Kennedy and Jim Penner.

Staff

Present: City Engineer, Andrew Benelli; Sgt. Todd Lowery; and Kay Pierce, Police Department Administrative Assistant.

Others

Present: Paul Luther, Naomi Luther, and Antonio Morales.

3. PUBLIC DISCUSSION - None.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

C. Brockett moved, C. Clements seconded to approve the minutes of the April 6, 2000 meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

5. OLD BUSINESS

A. Request for Parking Restrictions on Manning Avenue West of Eleventh Street.

City Engineer Benelli reviewed the staff report stating that Council Member Gobby identified a need to prohibit parking on the south side of Manning Avenue west of 11th Street. The striping was recently modified in this area when a new medical office complex was completed and this has made it an unsafe area for parked vehicles. This item was presented during the April 6, 2000, meeting with the owner of Alta Oil, Richard Linzmeier, in attendance. Mr. Linzmeier is against the parking restriction due to lack of parking on site. An attempt was made to contact Mr. Linzmeier to invite him to attend this meeting, however, he was out of town on vacation.

City Engineer Benelli stated that he felt Mr. Linzmeier could rearrange some things on his property to secure more on-site parking. He does have plans to move the old service station canopy, but has not moved it at this time. This canopy does take up a large space thereby limiting much of the parking area that could be utilized.

C. Clements added that at 3:15 p.m. each day, the school bus route goes directly in front of Alta Oil and it does make it very difficult when a vehicle is parked near this business. City Engineer Benelli recommends restricting parking on this section of Manning Avenue due to safety issues. Most areas in town that have a left turn lane have restricted parking on either side of the street. In this particular area, there is not sufficient room for four lanes of traffic and a parking lane.

C. Clements asked if Mr. Linzmeier were allowed to have two spaces in front of the immediate office, how far away from the intersection is it? City Engineer Benelli pointed out the area on the map. The other option would be to remove the traffic striping for the bike lane, but at peak hour, the traffic stacks back beyond the Alta office. It would still be a problem. The volume of vehicles is increasing each year and it won't get any better. Mr. Linzmeier has lost land on both 11th Street and on Manning Avenue as each street has been widened over the years. The peak traffic hours for this area are at 7:30 to 8:00 a.m. and 3:15 to 3:30 p.m.

C. Johnson stated that it has been unfortunate that Mr. Linzmeier has lost so much land over the years, however, there is a safety issue to be taken into consideration. For westbound traffic on Manning Avenue, it's similar to coming upon a stalled vehicle when you approach Alta Oil.

City Engineer Benelli stated that staff could restripe the lanes, but it won't change the way people drive. They will want to go to two lanes when approaching the traffic signal on 11th Street. Staff can work around this problem if that is the direction the Commission would like. The striping can be changed and try to direct traffic to keep them in one lane, but it won't be a long term solution. The traffic will backup and the same issue will be back eventually a year or two from now. The volumes will increase and it won't be long before staff has to look at four lanes for Manning Avenue. This will be controversial because many people will then lose parking. C. Brockett stated that he is in favor of a continuous middle lane down Manning Avenue. City Engineer Benelli agreed that it is a good idea to go to three lanes the whole length of Manning and eliminate the bike lanes. That will probably be the next step for widening Manning Avenue. That would include the continuous center lane down Manning and elimination of the bike lane. This will help to make turning a little safer.

C. Brockett stated that he would recommend holding off on a decision on this item until all five members of the Traffic Safety Commission are present.

C. Clements added that his thoughts are to go ahead and remove some of the striping at this time and see what type of comments are received from the public and the property owner. The way the striping is set up now is dangerous for buses when a vehicle is parked in front of the Alta Oil office. Therefore, C. Clements moved, C. Johnson seconded to remove a portion of the striping on Manning Avenue, west of 11th Street. Motion carried as follows:

AYES: Clements, Johnson, Brockett.
 NOES: None.
 ABSENT: Penner and Kennedy.
 ABSTAIN: None.

B. Request for Stop Signs at the intersection of Cypress and Acacia Avenues and also at the intersection of Acacia and Carob Avenues.

City Engineer Benelli reviewed the staff report stating that this item was brought back from the last meeting with the Commissioners asking for traffic counts in this area. The traffic counts have been included in the packet, and they included Cypress and Acacia only. No counts were taken on Carob. The streets are all classified as local streets, however, Cypress has a center stripe and has higher traffic volumes than most local streets. Staff recommends stop signs at Cypress and it's not a bad idea to install stop signs at Carob as well. There are many cars parked on Carob and it does restrict visibility.

C. Brockett moved, C. Clements seconded to approve the installation of stop signs at Cypress and Acacia and at Acacia and Carob. Motion carried as follows:

AYES: Brockett, Clements and Johnson.
 NOES: None.
 ABSENT: Penner and Kennedy
 ABSTAIN: None.

6. NEW BUSINESS

A. Request for Stop Signs on Columbia Avenue at Ponderosa Avenue.

City Engineer Benelli reviewed his staff reported stating that this request was accompanied by a letter and petition which requested that stop signs be placed on Columbia Avenue at Ponderosa Avenue. The petition has 22 signatures (more were turned in the night of the Traffic Safety Meeting). The letter stated that slower speeds on Columbia would benefit all the neighborhood children and that stop signs would be a very effective speed deterrent for north/south traffic. There was not sufficient time for staff to study the intersection before this report was prepared.

City Engineer Benelli added that it would be difficult to make a final decision on this request tonight because it there is a petition, but staff would like some direction as to how the Commission would like staff to proceed. Perhaps traffic counts and a study of the intersection would be in order. Columbia Avenue is a collector street in the City's General Plan, while Ponderosa is a local street. The pocket park is located at Columbia and Cypress. There are many apartments located on Ponderosa Avenue. Recently, there have been crimes in this area reported to the Police Department. The City has since installed additional lighting in the alley near Ponderosa, to help reduce the crime associated with the apartments. There were no traffic counts for Ponderosa Avenue.

Paul Luther of 1016 N. Columbia, stated that he has lived on Columbia long before it was designated a collector street. He has been before the City Council several times on speeding issues on Columbia Avenue. Speeding has always been an issue on Columbia Avenue. At one time, the City Council was kind enough to place a twenty-five mile per hour speed limit on Columbia. Then the City received some Federal money and paved Columbia Avenue and turned it into a collector. Columbia is still the same width is always was. Now that Columbia is a collector, the City did a traffic study. The City found out that sixty-five percent of the people were speeding. In order to solve the problem, the City made the speed limit thirty miles hour and maybe then fifty percent of the people won't be speeding. Mr. Luther would like the City to just enforce the existing speed limit rather than increase the speed limit, but he was told it was unenforceable. Mr. Luther has called the police department several times about the speed limit. After he called the police department several times about speeders, his daughter received a speeding on Manning Avenue in front of St. LaSalle and Mr. Luther thought this might be in retaliation for calling the police department so many times, so he stopped calling. Mr. Luther submitted an additional 27 signatures to the original petition that he already submitted and stated that he could get one hundred more signatures if needed. He feels it would be more beneficial to install stop signs on Ponderosa and Columbia so that traffic doesn't have a free run on Columbia Avenue. He would like the Commission to consider installing stop signs at Cypress and Columbia also, because there is a park at Cypress and Columbia. There is a short fence to keep the balls in, but it's only three feet high. Mr. Luther appeared before the City Council several years ago requesting speed bumps for Columbia Avenue. Speeders on Columbia Avenue has always been a problem and the installation of stop signs would be a great help.

C. Brockett asked if it is legal to install speed bumps on a collector street? City Engineer Benelli replied that it is legal, but he doesn't recommend them. He recommends stop signs as the better solution for many reasons. A collector is designed to move the traffic in and out of the neighborhood. When a speed bump is installed, it defeats that purpose. Columbia is designed to be a collector, which means that the people that live on Ponderosa and live on Cypress would use Columbia to get to Manning or Parlier Avenues. There is a lot of traffic that is coming through town and using Columbia as an arterial to get from Manning to Parlier. The traffic would have to slow down for the stop sign, but would accelerate as soon as they left the stop sign. It may help to reduce the traffic volumes. Some people that are using Columbia now might rationalize that they could use Frankwood Avenue and not have to stop for a stop sign. If a stop sign is installed, he would rather see the stop sign at Cypress Avenue because Cypress is more mid-way on Columbia. The traffic flow would be better. He doesn't feel that a stop sign will solve the speeding problem.

Mr. Luther added that his only complaint is the traffic speed, not the volume of traffic. He would be happy if the City installed speed bumps every ten feet.

City Engineer Benelli stated that he does not recommend speed bumps, that there are other things that are being done in other communities that are "traffic calming" which is a popular term for many things that are being done. For instance, at the Rail Trail, the street narrows and that tends to slow traffic down and this is a better way to slow down traffic rather than using speed bumps. It's not as irritating to people. When there is a restriction in the traffic, they slow down. The other things that are done are the installation of circular planters in the middle of the intersection as was done in

Sacramento. This forces the traffic around the planter and slows down traffic. The most inexpensive thing to slow down traffic would be stop signs. Typically, a four-way or a three-way stop is placed where the volumes are equal from each approach. That's not true when you have a local road and a local road coming together, but when there is an arterial or an intersection of two collectors or even a collector and a local street, typically to meet the warrants, you want the volume from both directions to be about the same. However, there are areas all over town that have stop signs where the volumes are not the same at all approaches. A stop sign at Ponderosa would slow the traffic down from Manning to Ponderosa, but as soon as they left Ponderosa, they would accelerate and get back up to speed. This is not an uncommon problem on collectors.

C. Brockett asked how it would be if the stop sign is installed and then the speed limit lowered? City Engineer Benelli replied that the reason the speed limit is where it is at is because the speed limit cannot be enforced where more than 85 percent of the people are traveling more than the posted speed limit. We could reduce the speed limit, but it is not enforceable.

Chief Johnson explained that where there is a small residential area the way Columbia Avenue was when Mr. Luther moved there, the speed limit was 25 miles per hour. Columbia Avenue was eventually widened and is no longer considered a residential street. The Police then must enforce the speed that meets the 85th percentile. That means if out of one hundred vehicles, eight-five of them travel 35 miles per hour, the speed limit would then be raised to 35 miles per hour.

Mr. Luther suggested installing stop signs at Ponderosa and Columbia and Cypress and Columbia. With two stop intersections so close together, the speed limit would be lowered and the posted speed could then be lowered to 25 miles per hour.

Antonio Morales of 1082 N. Columbia, stated that he lives at the corner of Columbia and Ponderosa. Since the new houses have been built on Parlier Avenue, the traffic has increased significantly. He has lived at his address for over thirty years. When he moved there, the traffic was very light and all his children grew up in this house. One of his sons was run over in Columbia Avenue when the traffic was light and the speed was down and he was in a coma for a couple of weeks. When he gets home from work, he notices that people travel Columbia from Parlier to Manning and the speed is very high. He has witnessed many near accidents due to speed. There are still many children that live on Columbia and Mr. Morales is concerned that another child will get hit by a speeding vehicle. Traffic is heavy on Columbia in all hours of the night and day.

C. Brockett added that this is a growing area that contains a playground and if two stop signs would help slow traffic, he is for it.

Naomi Luther stated that they have been living on Columbia Avenue since 1971 and her husband, Mr. Luther, is the one that goes after people when they are speeding and talks to them about their speeding. She and her husband also call the police when there are many speeders. However, by the time the police can respond, the speeders are gone. Approximately 15 years ago, of the two guys that always drag race down Columbia, the one that lived on Parlier Avenue got killed and the other guy was involved in a bad accident. Mr. and Mrs. Luther attend a Council meeting over 15 years ago to

complain about speeders and they felt that the Council ignored them, and they dropped their complaint. They are not going to drop their complaint this time. They would like to have something done on Columbia. She asked why Columbia couldn't have speed bumps as the have on Riverview? And if they can't install speed bumps, then please install stop signs. There are approximately 140 school age children that live in this area. Mr. Morales' son still suffers from disabilities from the accident he was involved in on Columbia Avenue many years ago. There have been other children that have been hit by speeders on Columbia Avenue. People backing from their driveways also have a difficult time backing into the street, especially senior citizens. Mrs. Luther offered to make dinner for the entire Commission so they could come over and watch the speeders and see what they have to live with. They would like to have the City help their neighborhood. They don't live in expensive homes and are humble people and would just like a safer neighborhood for their children.

City Engineer Benelli stated that the speed bump policy that the City has in place does not allow for speed bumps to be installed on collector streets or on arterial streets. In order to have speed bumps installed, at least 75 percent of the residents have to approve and each property owner has to pay for half of the speed bump installation. However, there is no policy like this for stop sign installation.

Chief Johnson added that he has been out to Columbia Avenue and has met with many of residents in this area. They have told him the difficulty they have in backing out into the streets due to high rate of speed from vehicles. He stated that he would definitely like to see a stop sign at Cypress and Columbia because of the park located there and for the safety of the children. He then asked if many children cross at Ponderosa and Columbia? Mrs. Luther responded that there are many children that cross and there are many school bus stop also. C. Clements stated that there are approximately 140 children that live in this general area all the way down to Cypress Avenue, and they range in age from kindergarten to eighth grade. Chief Johnson stated that he doesn't feel the stop sign at Cypress and Columbia will be sufficient and that stop signs should also be installed at Ponderosa and Columbia.

C. Clements added that most of the school bus stops used to be on Columbia, but the district changed them to Ponderosa because the volume of traffic.

After additional discussion on this subject, C. Brockett moved, C. Clements seconded the motion to install stop signs on Columbia at Ponderosa and on Columbia at Cypress. Motion carried as follows:

- AYES: Brockett, Clements, Johnson
- NOES: None.
- ABSENT: Penner and Kennedy.
- ABSTAIN: None.

On an unrelated subject, Mr. Luther asked if the city has ever considered a pedestrian overpass on Manning Avenue at Fisher? He stated that he always see people trying to cross at this location. City Engineer Benelli replied that the City has installed two signals on either side of this location. The most recent signal was installed at Haney and Manning. It is unfortunate that people do not use

either of the signalized crosswalks, but he does not see the installation of a pedestrian overpass. The existing signal at Columbia and Manning is not set up for a pedestrian walk sign which is why there is no pedestrian crossing marked on the pavement.

B. Request for a Stop Sign on "B" Street at Twelfth Street

C. Johnson reviewed the staff report stating that a request was made during a Neighborhood Watch meeting that a stop sign be installed on "B" Street at 12th Street. 12th Street intersects with East Avenue approximately 100 feet to the east. Vehicles on "B" Street often turn onto 12th Street without yielding to oncoming traffic. Staff recommends approval of the request. A memo from Community Service Officer Marina Meek requesting the stop sign is included with this report.

City Engineer Benelli stated that both "B" and 12th Streets have low traffic volumes. The complaint received stated that traffic is going southbound on "B" Street, turning left and not slowing down and this is a school zone. It would be easy to install one stop sign at this location and paint the traffic markings.

C. Clements moved, C. Johnson seconded the motion to recommend the installation of stop signs on "B" Street at 12th Street. Motion carried as follows:

AYES: Clements, Johnson, Brockett.
NOES: None.
ABSENT: Penner and Kennedy.
ABSTAIN: None.

7. COMMISSION REPORTS

City Engineer Benelli pointed out the monthly traffic reports that have been included with the packet. There was a discussion at the Council level recently and the Council feels that the Traffic Safety Commission should be more pro-active. It is not the fault of the Commission, but perhaps the fault of staff that the Commission has not been given the opportunity. This matter came up due to the Walmart project that is proposed and also regarding the discussion of Hollywood Video and some traffic problems that are associated with Hollywood Video. Because of these projects, the Council feels that the Traffic Safety Commission should be more proactive. City Engineer Benelli has included several reports with the packet and will continue to include these packets with each agenda. That way the Commission can see where accidents are occurring in Reedley. It will take time to go through the reports. Sgt. Lowery discussed the reports with the Commission and explained the different symbols and printouts. These reports help Sgt. Lowery determine where the problem areas in Reedley are located.

City Engineer Benelli added that if the Commission identifies an intersection that is a problem, they can then try to solve the problem whether it be through enforcement, rumble strips or a traffic signal. The intersections that City Engineer Benelli feels are problems are Reed and "I" Street, where

eventually a signal will be installed; Kings River Road and Manning Avenue has quite a few accidents which involve higher speed of vehicles. Even though the vehicle volume is low on Kings River Road, the accidents usually have injuries involved.

C. Johnson stated that the Police Department has submitted a grant to the State for two motorcycle officers. If and when this grant is awarded, the police department will have two officers specifically assigned to traffic enforcement.

C. Johnson also reported many complaints received from Eymann Avenue on excessive speed. They have requested extra patrol from the police department.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Penner adjourned the meeting at 8:37 p.m. The next meeting will be held in October, 2000.

Jim Penner, Chairman
Traffic Safety Commission

ATTEST:

Kay L. Pierce, Secretary