

**MINUTES
TRAFFIC SAFETY COMMISSION MEETING
JULY 16, 1998**

The agenda for the Traffic Safety Commission meeting of July 16, 1998, was duly posted in accordance with Government Code Section 54954.2.

A regular meeting of the Reedley Traffic Safety Commission was held Thursday, July 16, 1998, in the Reedley City Hall Council Chambers, 845 "G" Street, Reedley.

1. CALL TO ORDER.

Chairman Penner called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL.

Commissioners

Present: Brockett, Penner, and Police Chief Johnson.

Absent: Clements and Kennedy.

Staff

Present: Andrew Benelli, City Engineer; and Kay Pierce, Engineering/Public Works Secretary.

Others

Present: None.

3. PUBLIC DISCUSSION - None.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

C. Brockett moved and C. Johnson seconded to approve the minutes of the April 16, 1998 meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

5. OLD BUSINESS

A. Request for a northbound left turn lane at the Manning Avenue/Frankwood Avenue intersection.

City Engineer Benelli reviewed the staff report with the Commission stating that at the last meeting the Commission directed staff to install a northbound left turn lane at the Manning Avenue/Frankwood Avenue intersection. City staff has recently completed rewiring the intersection to accommodate the additional detection loops and to replace the old wiring that had worn insulation. The new loops will be installed by the electrical contractor that has the low bid on the Manning Avenue/Haney Avenue signalization project. The Manning/Haney project is currently being advertised for bids and the bids will close on August 3, 1998. The contractor has 120 calendar days to complete the signal project, but will be required to complete the work at Manning and Frankwood within 30 days of the Notice to Proceed.

C. Brockett asked if Frankwood Avenue would have to be widened? City Engineer Benelli replied that the lanes will be moved over and fit it in where it is now, but in the long term, we do need to widen it.

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C. Brockett stated that we need to install No Parking signs. City Engineer Benelli agreed that No Parking will need to be installed on both sides of the road because vehicles have been parking on the east and west sides of Frankwood Avenue. No Parking signs will be installed back to the alley on Frankwood.

C. Penner asked when Frankwood does get widen, how much will it get widen? City Engineer Benelli stated to where the curb return is now. The City does have right-of-way at this location, so it is just the matter of doing the construction which will probably be included in the next group of construction projects which will be done in the summer of 1999.

B. Reed Avenue Speed Limit at North City Limit.

City Engineer Benelli stated that at the last meeting the Commission heard testimony requesting a reduction in the posted speed limit on Reed Avenue at the north City limit in front of Ito Packing. The speed limit is currently 55 MPH. The City limit is along the center line of Reed Avenue. The City is responsible for the northbound lane and the County is responsible for the southbound lane. The Commission directed staff to perform speed surveys to determine if a reduction is warranted and to file a request with Fresno County. Staff has not been able to conduct the speed survey because all of the City's radar guns were inoperable. The City is currently testing new radar equipment and plans to purchase new equipment within the next two months. A request has been filed with Fresno County asking for them to reduce the speed limit to 45 MPH.

C. Johnson stated that the radar guns have been sent in to be repaired and should be back in a week or two. The P.D. has received approval for their OTS grant which would include the trailer and the additional radar guns, but the money hasn't been received yet.

City Engineer Benelli stated that he has talked with Officer John Rogers about the speed survey and when the new radar guns are received, a speed survey will be conducted. They will be mounted on an unmarked car so that the actual speed can be obtained. A letter was sent to the County to the attention of Lynn Gorman and she called back and stated that she was no longer responsible for speed limits. She was the person that staff corresponded with last time we approached this. She forwarded the request to another person who is unknown to staff, and to date he has not responded. She did remember working on it before and her letter is included in the packet. City Engineer Benelli believes that this a safety issue more than a traffic speed issue and with that angle, the County may approve this request. To reduce the speed limit in the City, we would have to go to the Council and place this item on the consent agenda. Hopefully, we will know the County's decision by the next meeting. From the last Traffic meeting, the direction of the Commission is to reduce the speed if the County is willing.

C. Southbound Right Turn Lane at the Manning Avenue/"I" Street/Manning Avenue Intersection.

City Engineer Benelli stated that this item was also on the last agenda and at that time the Commission took no action because the fruit season had not yet begun. The desire was to observe how it operates during the fruit season and see with the trucks and the additional traffic from Spencer Fruit. No one from City staff has been out to do observations. Officer Rogers may have been out there because he is aware of it. Staff has not received any other complaints either and because we haven't received any complaints, it must be working well. Officer Rogers said it was difficult for him to do much observation there because any place that he parks, the police unit can be seen. What is probably needed is an unmarked unit parked there to just watch for awhile. City Engineer Benelli would like to

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get together with Officer Rogers and they could watch traffic during either the morning or evening peak. Staff will report back to the Commission at the next meeting.

C. Brockett asked if an accident is caused because of the U-turn at this intersection, is the City liable? City Engineer Benelli replied no, that the driver making the U-turn has the right-of-way. The driver that turns right on a red light would be liable for causing the accident. There is a possibility that it could be argued that it is an improper design, but all of the manuals show that there is nothing about the intersection that would lead staff to believe that it is an improper design.

C. Penner stated very simply if the person making the U-turn has the green arrow, then the person making the right turn on the red light obviously is not paying attention to safe driving habits.

C. Johnson asked if the vehicles making the U-turns were big tractor/trailer rigs? City Engineer Benelli stated that there are some of those types of vehicles, but it's also the employees working at Spencer Fruit who make the U-turns. The original complaint was from an employee of Spencer Fruit.

C. Penner stated that this item can be tabled to the next Traffic Commission meeting after Officer Rogers and City Engineer Benelli take a look at this situation.

City Engineer Benelli stated that he has been out doing some observations at this location and one solution might be to move the right turn lanes closer to the right curb. There would still be two turn lanes, but place them so that the left right turn lane was as close to the curb as possible and make them both 12-foot lanes. As it is now, the further left lane has a pretty wide turn there. Here again, it's not a matter of just restriping it because of the loops; it's all brand new pavement. He really would hate to tear up the new pavement just to move the lanes over, but it would be the best solution if we decide that there is a problem.

C. Penner stated that maybe something like that can be considered after a study is done and get back to the Commission at the next meeting. City Engineer Benelli told the Commission that there is a proposal for a Jack-in-the-Box restaurant on the opposite corner and as that moves forward, the signal would be finished; one lane would be a thru-lane. He met with the developers today, and they are proceeding with the Jack-in-the-Box. It sounds as though construction is maybe a year away. C. Brockett asked, "a thru-lane to where?" City Engineer Benelli replied that the thru lane will go into the Jack-in-the-Box parking lot for now, but it will eventually go to Kingswood Drive which is on the south side, the southeast corner where Produce Trucking used to be. The developers are proposing a Jack-in-the-Box restaurant and some other stores on that property. So far they haven't got tenants for the other stores, but they do have a site plan showing the restaurant and three other buildings. They are moving ahead, but have not made a formal submittal to the City, so the deal could still fall through, but it seems to be proceeding.

C. Brockett asked about the underground tanks that Produce Trucking had on their property and asked if they had to dig up those tanks? C. Penner stated that has already been done. City Engineer Benelli stated that they have monitoring wells on the property. At any rate, the construction of the proposed restaurant would change that intersection, so those lanes would be moved over. City Engineer Benelli stated that he would hate to go in and move the loops, tear up the pavement, and then have to make more changes when the restaurant project comes in.

6. NEW BUSINESS

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A. Request for a four-way stop at "G" Street and 13th Street.

City Engineer Benelli stated that a request was received from a woman who lives on the 13th Street, who indicated that she has a lot of difficulty crossing "G" Street at 13th Street, and she also believes the sight distance is a problem. City Engineer Benelli stated that he did some research and this request was previously before the Traffic Safety Commission in 1993. No action was taken at that time. Traffic counts were taken in 1992. The warrants that need to be justified for the installation of a four-way stop sign are the accidents warrants and the traffic volume warrants. We have only had one accident in the last 12 months which means the accident warrant hasn't been satisfied. However, the volume warrants would be satisfied if the total volume entering the intersection from all approaches averaged 500 vehicles per hour for any eight hours of the day and the combined vehicular and pedestrian volume from the minor street averages at least 200 per hour with an average delay of at least 30 seconds per vehicle. The traffic counts that staff has are from 1992 and those counts do indicate that there are more than 500 vehicles per hour through the intersection, but the minor street, which is 13th, does not have 200 vehicles per hour. It might have increased since 1992.

C. Penner stated that the vehicle counts might have reached that number by now. He mentioned that one of his employees has witnessed several near misses at this intersection.

C. Brockett stated that this a nuisance intersection and he may have been the person who originally brought up signing this intersection.

City Engineer Benelli added there are a couple of other letters that are included in the packet from 1993 which makes three written requests over a period of five years for a four-way stop. He recommended that new traffic counts be taken at this intersection. However, the City does not have any traffic counters at this time, but a consultant can be hired to do the traffic counts. It will cost the City some money to do the study, but traffic counts should be taken and possibly look closer at the sight distance. The problem with the sight distance will be the parking at each corner. To increase the sight distance means eliminating some parking spaces and in this area, we are pretty tight on parking. If we do decided to eliminate some parking spaces, we will get some complaints, but that may be the best solution. His final recommendation is that traffic counts be taken and see what kind of volumes we get and go from there. He apologized to the Commission for not having traffic counts at this time, but since it is going to cost money to have the traffic counts done, he wanted to get the Commission's direction before the money was spent.

The consensus of the Commission is to direct City Engineer Benelli to have the traffic counts done at this intersection and bring this information back to the next meeting in October.

7. COMMISSION COMMENTS AND REPORTS

A. Receive and Discuss Reports from Commission Members Regarding Commission Member Activities.

1. Selection of a new Traffic Safety Commission Chairman. C. Brockett moved and C. Johnson seconded to appoint C. Penner to continue as Chairman. Motion carried unanimously.

2. C. Brockett stated that the railroad tracks near the College dorms are in really bad shape and you could loose a transmission going over those tracks. City Engineer Benelli stated that he has been trying to get the railroad to install rubberized crossings or concrete crossings, however, the railroad company says that the tracks that Reedley's has are not very deep tracks and they couldn't use

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the cement crossings because of the height of the tracks, the railroad company says they could install rubberized crossings, which are just as good. Most of the crossings are adjacent to where the Rail Trail is going to be, so staff is waiting until they find out what the design is going to be for the Rail Trail, and then the crossings will be done in conjunction with the Rail Trail. C. Brockett asked if the Park and Ride is still proposed for that corner? City Engineer Benelli stated that yes it is and staff is moving ahead with the federal funding request through ISTEA. Staff had some problems environmentally. The City is purchasing that property along with the property for the Rail Trail and there was some soil contamination that had to be cleaned up and that delayed everything. That has since been cleaned up and had a report done by geotechnical firm that stated it was cleaned up with no contamination, so the project is moving ahead. It is now in the hands of Caltrans waiting for them to approve the funding.

3. C. Brockett asked if the traffic lines in town are being restriped? City Engineer Benelli stated that the entire town is being restriped. C. Brockett stated that the pavement markers are very nice to have for reflectorized markers at night. City Engineer Benelli stated that they are very expensive, but the City is making an effort to install them when new construction is done.

4. City Engineer Benelli stated that he has received a request for a crosswalk across Reed Avenue near Palm Village to the cemetery. He asked for a letter from the person requesting this crosswalk, but has not yet received a written request. A crosswalk in this location might not be the best solution.

5. C. Penner stated he received a phone call from a resident on Parlier Avenue between Reed and Frankwood indicating that she has been at previous Traffic Safety meetings concerning the speed along Parlier Avenue. She was going to attend this evening to remind the Commission that this is still an on-going problem, however, as she was speaking to C. Penner, she stated that a patrol car was parked out in front of her house watching traffic and voiced her satisfaction with that.

6. City Engineer Benelli stated that he had a request from a City employee who stated that citations could be increased on Stevens Avenue. He claims at the three-way stop at Stevens and Cypress, vehicles roll through that stop sign constantly. City Engineer Benelli will talk to officer Rogers about placing a patrol car at this location and issue some citations for those vehicles rolling through the stop sign.

7. C. Brockett asked if there is any way that the City can have mercury vapor lights installed on Manning Avenue instead of the sodium vapor? The sodium vapor lights are not very bright and one can hardly see the road at night. City Engineer Benelli stated that those lights belong to PG&E, that they own the pole and the luminaire. C. Penner stated that if the City is paying the bill, then the lights should just be turned off because they are not doing any good. City Engineer Benelli asked which area is the worst? C. Penner stated that Del Altair and Manning is the worst area. C. Brockett stated from Frankwood Avenue down to East Avenue. City Engineer Benelli stated that safety lighting will be installed at Manning and Haney when the traffic signal is installed and this will light up that intersection quite a bit. He also stated that between Buttonwillow and 11th Street on Manning, more pedestrians have been hit and injured there than any other place in town, and he feels that the lighting is part of the problem because many of the accidents have occurred at night. There are many pedestrians there and most of the area has no sidewalk and people do not pay attention to the crosswalks. The traffic signal will help, but it won't solve the problem.

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C. Brockett added that he agreed with C. Penner to recommend to the City to just turn the lights off and save money since the sodium vapor lights are useless.

City Engineer Benelli stated that staff can call PG&E and see if they can do something to improve the lights. They would probably want to charge the City, but since they aren't putting out any light now, we might as well pay the extra.

C. Brockett stated that when Gary Truitt was the manager of PG&E, he told C. Brockett that sodium vapor lights put out just as many lumens as mercury vapor, but this doesn't seem to be true because you can't even read a newspaper with the sodium vapor.

City Engineer Benelli added that there are different wattages and maybe higher wattage lights would help the situation. At the traffic signal, it calls for 200 watt lights, so maybe staff can request that PG&E replace the lights with a higher wattage light.

C. Brockett stated that there isn't even a light pole at 11th and Myrtle Avenue and it is easy to miss Myrtle Avenue.

8. C. Brockett brought the continuous left turn lane for Manning Avenue and asked what has happened with that request?

City Engineer Benelli stated that he has read about this request in the old Traffic Safety minutes, but this was requested before he started working for the City. The Commissioners stated that they still feel this is a good idea. They still received complaints from residents east of Reed Avenue, particularly Del Altair, where they have difficulty getting into and out of their residences. City Engineer Benelli stated that he didn't know if both bike lanes would be able to stay if a continuous left turn lane was installed on Manning Avenue. C. Penner stated that one side of the bike lane could be eliminated for the left turn lane. City Engineer Benelli stated that he would look into the possibility of a continuous left turn lane on Manning Avenue from Reed Avenue to Columbia Avenue and check to see if a study was ever done.

9. Chief Johnson stated that with regard to the previously mentioned "No Parking" that was brought up for Manning and Frankwood, could red curbing be done at this location? He went on to state that there is one truck that parks at this location and the police department receives many complaints that this vehicle is parked on Manning very near the corner of Frankwood. This resident has been talked to many times and it doesn't seem to do any good because it is legal to park there, but it is a very bad location.

No parking zones is one of the areas that the Traffic Safety Commission can enforce without going to the Council. City Engineer Benelli stated that we can paint the curbs red to restrict parking at this intersection. C. Johnson asked if we could paint all four corners. City Engineer Benelli asked how far back the curbs should be painted. C. Johnson stated at least 15 to 20 feet. City Engineer Benelli added that with the turn lanes and the taper, it would be approximately 100 feet or at least to the alley on both sides of Frankwood. C. Penner asked if that would eliminate the parking in front of the residence on Manning Avenue. C. Johnson stated that it would eliminate parking in front of the residence, but there is enough room on the property to park those vehicles. C. Penner stated that maybe red curb for 10 of 12 feet would solve the problem of parking near the intersection, but still give the resident some space to park vehicles on Manning. City Engineer Benelli stated that a No Parking sign and red curb could be installed and this will help the problem of turning right from Frankwood onto Manning Avenue.

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10. C. Penner asked if there are guidelines where big trucks can park on main thoroughfares like Manning Avenue and the reason for the question is because there are a couple of trucks that park on the south side of Manning close to Sunset Avenue and when a vehicle is northbound on Sunset and trying to cross Manning Avenue, it is almost impossible to see past the trucks. City Engineer Benelli stated that as far as a tractor being at the residence, unless they are at a truck route, they cannot keep a tractor or a trailer at their residence. C. Johnson stated that was true.

8. ADJOURNMENT.

Chairman Penner adjourned the meeting at 7:45 p.m.

Jim Penner, Chairman
City of Reedley Traffic Safety Commission

ATTEST:

Kay Pierce, Secretary