

**MINUTES
TRAFFIC SAFETY COMMISSION MEETING
APRIL 22, 1999**

The agenda for the Traffic Safety Commission meeting of April 22, 1999, was duly posted in accordance with Government Code Section 54954.2.

A regular meeting of the Reedley Traffic Safety Commission was held Thursday, April 22, 1999, in the Sierra Room of the Reedley Community Center, 100 N. East Avenue, Reedley.

1. CALL TO ORDER.

Chairman Penner called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Commissioners

Present: Penner, Kennedy, Brockett, Clements and Chief Johnson.

Absent: None.

Staff

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

Others

Present: Christina Scott, Brian Scott, Susanne Johnson, Wesley Jost and Elvera Jost. (Russ Tavlan and Kim Pennington of Fresno County Fire showed up after their item was discussed.)

3. PUBLIC DISCUSSION

A. This is a request from the audience. Mr. Brian Scott addressed the Commission stating that those in attendance in the audience were at the meeting for the same request. They live in the area of Herbert and Church Avenues. Mr. Scott continued by stating that since the new housing development recently, Herbert Avenue has been opened all the way to Frankwood Avenue. Since this opening, there is a stop sign on the corner of Cyrier and Herbert, which is fine, but because the corner of Herbert and Church Avenues is right in the middle of the straight-away, Herbert Avenue goes all the way through from Reed Avenue to Frankwood Avenue, people still go zipping down Herbert Avenue at approximately 45 miles per hour, and faster. It would be more prudent to either move the stop sign from Cyrier and Herbert to the corner of Herbert and Church, or place another stop sign at Herbert and Church as well. Mr. Scott showed the Commission a diagram that he drew showing the intersection of Herbert and Church. He stated that they not only have to contend with the traffic coming off of Church Avenue onto Herbert and the straightaway of Herbert going all the way through from Frankwood to Reed, but we also have to contend with the driveway of the Palm Village. There is no stop sign at Palm Village either. Many of the residents from Palm Village don't stop and check both ways as they come out onto Herbert. The same is true

when they are coming from Church Avenue into the driveway to Palm Village. Officer Scott stated he is a police officer for the City of Reedley and parks his patrol car in front of his house, but this does not seem to deter vehicles from speeding down Herbert Avenue. He feels that a serious accident will happen at this intersection without the installation of the stop sign at Church and Herbert. With the new residences being built on Herbert, Huntsman and Carpenter, more children and families are walking around the neighborhood and the intersection of Church and Herbert is dangerous and could be the cause of a vehicle fatality.

Mrs. Johnson stated that her husband wrote a letter regarding this intersection in 1996 and sent it to the public officials and nothing was ever done about it and that was three years ago. This request was made before Herbert Avenue was punched all the way through to Frankwood. C. Penner asked if the stop sign at Cyrier and Herbert has been there very long? Mrs. Johnson stated that this stop sign was installed when Herbert Avenue was punched through to Frankwood Avenue. It was her understanding that the stop sign would be installed at Church and Herbert.

City Engineer Benelli replied that he wasn't aware of that statement. The stop sign installed at Cyrier and Herbert was installed by the developer of the subdivision. He was noted on the original subdivision map. He doesn't know why it was located there, but was probably installed to slow vehicles on Herbert. C. Brockett asked if the members in the audience were actually asking for a four way stop intersection at Church and Herbert? The audience responded by stating that a two way stop on Herbert to control the traffic going east and west. C. Brockett felt that a stop sign should be located at Church Avenue also. Mr. Scott suggested at least a three way stop for those vehicles exiting the Palm Village as well.

City Engineer Benelli stated that this request for the stop signs cannot be acted on at this meeting since it was not on the agenda, however, it can be placed on the agenda for July for the Commission to vote. He added that if Herbert is being used as a through street, it might be worthwhile to consider both intersections at the next Commission meeting.

Mrs. Johnson added that the residents were told before the new development was installed, that this would be marked as a "No Truck Route" on Herbert Avenue. They can see the potential of a short cut from Reed to Frankwood down Herbert Avenue. City Engineer Benelli stated that there are designated truck routes, one of which is Olson Avenue west of Reed, but not Herbert Avenue. Mrs. Johnson stated that Safety Kleen trucks cut through on Herbert Avenue. City Engineer Benelli stated Safety Kleen should use Olson Avenue because it is a truck route.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

C. Clements moved, C. Brockett seconded to approve the minutes of the January 14, 1999 meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

5. OLD BUSINESS

A. Request for Temporary Four-way Stops at 10th and “G”, 11th and “G”, 11th and “F”

City Engineer Benelli stated this item is an update on action that was taken at the last Traffic Safety meeting. The Traffic Safety Commission approved a temporary installation of stop signs, however, when this action went to the City Council, they denied the request for temporary conversion. Staff also received a petition with over 200 signatures requesting that temporary stop sign NOT be installed at these intersections.

6. NEW BUSINESS

A. Request for “No Parking” Restriction at 1300 “I” Street

The California Fire Protection District leases space for their fire truck at 1300 “I” Street, which is the Moonlight Packing Company building. Their landlord is requesting that the City add “No Parking” in this area. This is a temporary location for California Fire Protection; they are looking at some other locations. There isn’t a lot of parking at this location and at night the bar patrons across the street park in front of Moonlight Packing. Staff hasn’t received many complaints from having no parking there, and it would probably be changed back once the Fire Protection moves their truck.

C. Penner asked how much more frontage would be marked red? City Engineer Benelli stated that there are two driveways at this location. The corner is already painted red. The two driveways are less than one hundred feet and this is the area requested to be painted red. C. Penner stated this is where Ag Design is located. C. Kennedy asked if the red curb was so they could park their fire trucks there? City Engineer Benelli replied that the landlord stated that they have some trouble when the cars are parked there, especially tall vehicles, being able to see around them. They would like to have the cars out of the way for better vision. City Engineer Benelli repeated that this would be a temporary situation and there isn’t much parking at this location anyway. California Fire Protection has stated they would like to purchase property in Reedley which would be an improvement in fire service for Reedley. C. Clements stated that he is concerned because someone could block their doorway because it is not recognizable as a fire station.

C. Clements moved, C. Brockett seconded to approve this request for “No Parking” Restriction at 1300 “I” Street. Motion carried unanimously.

B. Request for “No Parking” Restriction on Reed Avenue Adjacent to Reedley College..

City Engineer Benelli reviewed his staff report stating that Mr. Joe Russo, who is the Associate Dean of Instruction for Reedley College, has requested that parking be restricted on the west side of Reed Avenue between the north entrance to the college and Parlier Avenue. College students often park their vehicles in this area which causes conflicts with the traffic on Reedley Avenue. The parked vehicles also interfere with the farming operation in this area. The college has plans to construct additional parking on campus in the near future which should help alleviate the need for street parking.

C. Brockett stated that he concurs with Mr. Russo and he doesn't blame the students for not wanting to pay the parking fee because the parking lot was constructed and paid for by the community service tax which means the citizens are being taxed twice.

C. Kennedy asked the status of the "Park and Ride" facility because he envisioned that being filled by college students. City Engineer Benelli stated that this area will probably have to be done by permit also. He added that staff is negotiating with the railroad to buy the property. He stated one holdup is the billboards because the railroad has a lease on the billboards and although they would like to sell the property, they want to retain the property that the billboards are located on. C. Penner asked why the billboards can be blacktopped around and paint something around the billboards or pipes in the ground? City Engineer Benelli replied that's probably what staff will end up doing. Staff has proposed to the railroad that the City will buy the property where the signs are and the signs can stay until their leases run out and then the City will get rid of the signs after the leases have expired.

C. Penner asked what would be the procedure for restricting the parking other than installing "No Parking" signs? City Engineer Benelli replied that there are no curbs to paint red, therefore "No Parking" signs would be installed and enforced by the Police Department.

C. Kennedy moved, C. Johnson seconded the motion to approve the request for the installation of "No Parking" on the west side of Reed Avenue from Parlier Avenue to the north entrance of Reedley College. Motion carried as follows:

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

C. Request for "Rumble Strips" on Frankwood Avenue.

City Engineer Benelli recommended leaving the rumble strips off, unless we have additional problems in this area. If the rumble strips are replaced, staff will receive complaints. Many have fallen off over the years and are now completely gone since the repavement project. He does not feel they were very effective. C. Penner asked was the traffic safety record is for this location? City Engineer Benelli replied that there haven't been many accidents. C. Brockett added that in years past, there were quite a few accidents before the installation of the four way stop sign intersection. City Engineer Benelli stated that staff would probably receive complaints if the rumble strip is re-installed because it's noisy to residents and very expensive to replace and maintain. Staff suggest leaving them off unless it creates a problem. A new "Stop Ahead" will be painted on the new pavement which should help vehicles notice the stop signs. C. Brockett added that the installation of a crosswalk at this intersection does help vehicles notice this intersection. Many sidewalks have been added in the surrounding new subdivisions, but sidewalks were not installed at the intersection because there wasn't enough right-of-way and staff would like to install a signal at this intersection in the future. The consensus of the Commission is to leave the rumble strips off at this time.

D. Request for Downtown Parking Study.

City Engineer Benelli reviewed the staff report stating that Mayor Joe Rhodes requested that City staff conduct a parking study in the downtown area and recommend methods to create additional parking. Staff has been collecting data on parking in the downtown area, but has not begun to analyze the data. At this time, staff is seeking direction from the Traffic Safety Commission on the extent of the study and recommendations to increase the available parking. Staff recommends that the boundary of the study be from Ninth Street to Twelfth Street and from the "H" Street right-of-way to "F" Street. The study would include an analysis of the total existing parking in the study area and the average occupancy rates of the existing parking. The study would include hourly counts on a typical weekday. There are several alternatives to increase the total volume of parking such as diagonal parking on Tenth and Eleventh Streets, acquiring additional property for off street parking lots, and altering the width or angle of the diagonal parking. The angle of the on-street parking on "G" Street was previously changed and was unpopular with the community.

C. Brockett stated that he agreed with the diagonal parking on Tenth Street and stated that it used to be that way. He would like Eleventh Street left the way it is with parallel parking. City Engineer Benelli stated that he doesn't feel there is a parking problem on Tenth Street. C. Penner added that the parking problem is on "G" Street between Tenth and Twelfth Streets. It is his feeling that many downtown business people and employees are parking on "G" Street and this shouldn't be the case. He would like the business people cooperate and promote that the owners and employees park in the parking lots behind the business and the newest lot on "F" and 11th. This would allow shoppers those spaces directly in front of the businesses on "G" Street. If customers repeatedly cannot find parking spaces, they will go to Fresno and the malls and park way out in the larger parking lots, but they don't seem to want to walk a half block in Reedley.

City Engineer Benelli stated that staff is looking for direction from the Commission such as any suggestions on additional parking or if the area of the study seems adequate. C. Brockett once again stated that he would like to see Tenth Street diagonal and leave Eleventh Street parallel. City Engineer Benelli stated that there is sufficient room on Tenth Street for diagonal parking because there is no left turn lane on Tenth Street. C. Brockett reminded the Commission that the diagonal parking cannot be changed without having an election. City Engineer Benelli stated that he feels he has enough direction to go on and he will attempt to bring the study back to the next Traffic Safety meeting. The study will show how many additional parking spaces will be made with the angle parking versus the parallel parking on both 10th and 11th Streets. There may also be other ideas to increase the parking. Eleventh Street will be left as it is because it has a left turn lane.

E. Request for Turn Lanes into Reedley High School Student Parking Lot.

City Engineer Benelli reported that a request was received from a school board member to add a right turn lane and a left turn lane at the entrance on North Avenue. A drawing of this proposal was presented to the Commission. City Engineer Benelli went on to state that he is not recommending the left turn lane primarily because so much parking would have to be eliminated. His recommendation is that the right turn lane be installed, but not the left turn lane. If the Commission feels that congestion is bad, we might want to consider prohibiting some parking on the south side of North Avenue to help make enough room for vehicles to pass a left turn vehicle that is stopped to turn left, you can get around if there's no parking. Another consideration would be

if we didn't install the right turn lane, the left turn lane could be closer to the center of the road if there's a feeling that the left turn lane is more important than the right turn lane. We could do one or the other, but not both. He feels the right turn lane would be more beneficial because vehicles are parked there now and they're not using the right lane because there are cars parked there.

C. Penner stated that if students who are westbound on North Avenue wanting to make a right turn, there's no traffic lane to cross. However, if there are students eastbound on North Avenue and want to turn in there, then they have to cross a lane of traffic and it would seem to him that it would be safer to have a left turn lane there so that they don't hold up traffic rather than having a right turn lane where they can just turn in.

C. Kennedy stated that the biggest traffic problem is in front of the parking lot where students are dropped off in the morning and this blocks off traffic. He suggested using the parking area in front of the fence for a student drop-off point so it's off the street.

C. Clements stated that this request originated from having athletic events and games to expedite getting into the parking lot. He doesn't feel that anyone would be opposed to eliminating the parking in front of the stadium because the ambulance and fire department use that area to get into the games. He would be in favor of removing the six spaces. City Engineer Benelli suggested painting that area red between the two driveways and paint in the right turn lane with signage stating "right lane must turn right" or "right turn only." He asked the Commission what they think about eliminating some of the parking on the south side of North Avenue? C. Clements responded stating he has no problem with that because it's mostly student parking and possibly go back as far as the alley so it doesn't affect the parking at the Golden Edge Barber Shop even though the barber shop has off street parking.

City Engineer Benelli stated that another solution would be to widen the street, especially at "G" Street where the front gate is located. Although it would help the flow of traffic, he wasn't sure what it would do to the pedestrians because everyone walks in front that crossing. It is school property which means the school district would have to dedicate that property if they wanted North Avenue widened in that area. If North Avenue was widened, the City could install a left turn lane. City Engineer Benelli recommended eliminating the parking spaces on North Avenue in front of the stadium back to the driveway on the north side, move forward with the right hand turn lane for better flow. There isn't sufficient room on the south side for a left hand turn lane, but if we eliminated the parking back to the alley, that would give sufficient lane width to create two lanes going eastbound so that there is clearance. It would function as two lanes when there is heavy traffic, and the rest of the time, it would be a single lane. It will be wide enough for vehicles to get around and prevent a rear end collision. C. Clements agreed with this concept, but he feels that staff should notify the residence on North Avenue on the east side of the alley of the City's intent to eliminate parking.

C. Clements moved, C. Kennedy seconded to direct staff to move forward with the right hand turn lane on the north side of North Avenue, the elimination of parking from the driveway to ten feet east of the stadium entrance gate, paint the curb red and appropriate signage. Motion carried unanimously.

7. COMMISSION COMMENTS AND REPORTS

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

City Engineer Benelli notified the Commission that the City has an opportunity to apply for a grant that is a Hazard Elimination Safety grant, or HES grant, that is on the City Council agenda. Staff is looking from some direction from the Council and the Traffic Safety Commission for possible uses of this safety grant. For projects to be eligible for the funds there has to be a specific safety problem that is addressed, and the funds must be used to correct that problem to substantially improve the condition. The project selection must be based on accident data, or the potential for accidents, and the project should implement a quick fix and should not require more than minor right-of-way or create potential environmental problems. The funding is prioritized in two categories; one is the safety index category, which is awarded based on the volume and severity of accidents occurring at an intersection or in a project area. The other category is a work type category that is awarded to project based on safety needs that cannot quantified by a safety index due to lack of sufficient accident data. This a ninety percent grant which means they give us ninety percent of the cost of project and the City pays the remaining ten percent. There are some types of projects that are one hundred percent federally funded such as signalization projects, street lights, crash cushions, pavement marking, priority control systems for emergency vehicles which is a strobe on a fire truck and gives them a green light to go through an intersection, signs are one percent funded, guard rails, concrete barriers and break away utility poles. One of the projects that the City has done before with these funds was the guard rail along Smith Ferry Park on Reed. The last grant the City was awarded was to underground the ditch along Buttonwillow Avenue near Dinuba Avenue primarily south of Dinuba Avenue. The work hasn't been done yet, but the City does have a grant for that. The grant can be up to a half million dollars, but they are competitive. We don't necessarily get a grant, it goes to the city that submits the best projects and it is awarded on the merits of the project. Of the intersections in Reedley where most accidents have occurred, Manning Avenue and Reed Avenue have had the most which was 12 accidents in the last nine months. The other intersections that have had a lot of accidents were "G" and 11th, Manning and Kings River Road, "E" and 11th Street, Frankwood and Manning, and Manning and Columbia. Staff is looking for suggestions. C. Clements suggested a left turn light at "G" and 11th. City Engineer Benelli recommended last year to install mast arms at "G" and 11th because vehicles don't realize the signal is there because the lights are on posts at the corners instead of hanging into the intersection. However, a letter received by staff from the Downtown Merchants stated that the existing signals add charm to the downtown and they didn't feel it would be beneficial to replace these signals with modern signals with mast arms even though hit may improve safety. City Engineer Benelli suggested installing a new signal with an historical motif as in Porterville. The existing lights are only eight inches and the new lights are twelve inches which would be easier to see.

C. Clements recommended using the grant for the priority control systems for emergency vehicles which would be beneficial for 11th Street and out Manning. City Engineer Benelli stated if that was approved, it would be installed at all signalized intersections in town and would be activated by a strobe that would be installed on the vehicle, which is also part of the grant.

C. Kennedy agreed that the priority control system would be first priority, and the second priority would be the traffic signal upgrade.

C. Clements would also like to see faded signs in the community replaced.

C. Johnson asked if the grant money could be used to upgrade the lighting on Manning Avenue to increase the wattage for pedestrians and vehicles. City Engineer Benelli replied that lighting is one hundred percent funded. The key to this request is showing that several accidents have occurred in the evening because the funding is based on safety. He does not feel that Reedley is very well lighted compared to surrounding cities.

B. C. Kennedy reported that a citizen that lives at the intersection of Sunset and Ponderosa on the corner asked if some signage could be installed for northbound and southbound traffic to notify traffic to slow down the traffic because the vehicles run the stop signs and even drive up onto the sidewalks. City Engineer Benelli stated staff will bring this back to the next meeting.

C. C. Kennedy asked what other stores were planned for the new mall at Manning and "I" near the new Jack in the Box restaurant? He has heard Walmart and Vons. City Engineer Benelli replied that staff has not received an application for these stores, but Vons is definitely not going in there. This area is not zoned entirely commercial and is partly in the County and would require a specific plan change and an annexation to the City as well as a conditional use permit and an environmental impact report. There is an application from Rite Aid to build on the corner next to McDonald's.

D. C. Kennedy stated that the entry into Reedley leaves much to be improved. He compared it to Parlier and Visalia and stated that it is not very attractive to people entering Reedley. City Engineer Benelli stated that there is a project planned to beautify the entrance. Staff has applied for and received a federal grant. The railroad will sell to the City 25 feet by the billboards so that the City can install curb, gutter, sidewalk and landscaping to improve this area. Jack in the Box is going to improve the median in front of their building similar to red stamped brick already installed on "I" and Manning.

E. C. Penner stated that the pavilion at Pioneer Park has a very bad roof that is full of moss and will probably have dry rot. City Engineer Benelli replied that this was brought to the Council's attention and the direction at the Council meeting was for Staff to include this repair in the 1999/2000 budget. C. Penner stated he means the pavilion at 8th Street and alley. City Engineer Benelli replied that the pavilion is he referring to is at Mueller Park. C. Johnson stated that he has had a complaint about the pavilion in Pioneer Park and Joel Glick is looking into the repairs.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Penner adjourned the meeting at 9:15 p.m.

Jim Penner, Chairman
Traffic Safety Commission

ATTEST:

Kay L. Pierce, Secretary