

ASTORIA TRAFFIC SAFETY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Astoria City Hall
October 28, 2014

CALL TO ORDER: President Nemlowill called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

ROLL CALL:

Commissioners Present: President Zetty Nemlowill, Vice President McLaren Innes, Kent Easom, Peter Gimre, David Pearson, and Sean Fitzpatrick

Commissioners Excused: Thor Norgaard

Staff Present: City Manager Brett Estes, Planner Rosemary Johnson, City Engineer Jeff Harrington, Police Sergeant Brian Aydt and Engineer Technician Steve Ruggles. The meeting is recorded and will be transcribed by ABC Transcription Services, Inc.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

President Nemlowill asked if there any changes to the minutes of July 22, 2014. Commissioner Easom corrected Page 2, Public Comment, Line 5 as follows: "He displayed an image of a solar powered speed indicator on West Klaskanine, which begins to flash when a driver exceeds the speed limit."

Commissioner Easom moved that the Traffic Safety Advisory Committee approve the minutes of July 22, 2014 as corrected, seconded by Commissioner Fitzpatrick. Motion passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS:

ITEM 4(a): Pedestrian Safety at City Hall for Halloween

City Staff announced that on Friday, October 31, 2014, Staff would be handing out glow-in-the-dark sticks, safety literature, and safety sashes to children. Examples of each item were shown to the Commission. The Police Department would have officers on Commercial Street handing out pedestrian safety items. The sashes, donated by Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT), were made by a company in Salem, Oregon.

ITEM 4(b): Updates on Various Transportation Projects

Downtown Crosswalks: City Engineer Harrington said ODOT has installed continental crosswalks at the following locations:

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| West leg of 45 th Street | East leg of 23 rd Street |
| West leg of 18 th Street | East leg of 17 th Street |
| 15 th and Marine Drive | 15 th and Commercial |
| 10 th and Marine | 10 th and Commercial |
| 8 th and Marine | 8 th and Commercial |

These locations had to meet certain criteria in order to be approved by the State Traffic Engineer. As Astoria makes improvements in the downtown area, the City can request to have ODOT add more crosswalks.

Downtown Street Name Signs: City Council has approved a final design of the street signs for downtown, which will be installed soon. ODOT will install all of the signs on Marine and Commercial and City Staff will install signs on the City streets within the Downtown Historic District and outside of ODOT's facility.

19th Street and Irving Bridge: Demolition is complete and placement of drill piles will begin in early November.

Completed Projects: All striping in the city and the 11th Street CSO project are complete.

16th Street CSO Project: The 16th Street CSO project is currently in the design phase. Work will begin in the summer of 2015. Details of this project and the 19th Street and Irving Bridge projects are available on the City website.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS/COMMISSIONERS:

Commissioner Easom reported that the intersection of 8th and Franklin, next to McClure Park, gets very narrow when cars are parked on both sides of Franklin and the west side of 8th Street. He asked if Staff could add yellow striping to the south side of Franklin. City Engineer Harrington said he would look into it.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

George (Mick) Hague, 1 3rd Street, Astoria, gave Commissioners a copy of outdoor lighting standards used by other cities. He said it might seem strange that outdoor lighting and traffic safety go together. However, spillover light and glare can cause traffic problems. Some cities are adopting standards to provide safety for traffic and pedestrians. It seems counterintuitive that lighting decreases safety in some cases. He was sure Astoria's planners were aware of the issue and could provide more information to the Traffic Safety Committee. He noted more information can also be found on the Dark Sky website, adding it is nice to have dark skies in the city for enjoyment as well. These standards could be implemented over time and in some cases, existing uses could be grandfathered. However, the standards should apply to both traffic and pedestrian safety.

- He said about a month ago, at 11th Street on the Riverwalk near the Wet Dog Café, a resident fell while walking. The following day, he informed City Staff about the incident. Within the week, Staff replaced a plank that likely caused her fall. Cars turning on that section of the Riverwalk cause the planks to become unsafe. Staff told him the issue would be resolved in the future, but he asked the TSC to expedite the project as the planks should be fixed as quickly as possible. He walks the area every day and avoids the normal path because there are raised bolts and the planks are rough and vary in size. Wood sticking up through the planks also makes walking difficult. This is a major tourist area and it would be nice to have the area improved. Page 59 of the Riverfront Vision Plan strongly suggests the pedestrian crossing at 6th Street be improved. He understood this section of the Riverfront Vision Plan would not be discussed at that night's Planning Commission meeting, but he asked Commissioners to look at the suggestions in the Plan and discuss the possibility of installing an island. A small island would allow pedestrians to rest or avoid traffic for a second or two. He believed it would be appropriate to install street signs for all of the streets along the Riverwalk, not just some streets.

City Manager Estes said the Parks Department has been working with the Astoria Downtown Historic District Association (ADHDA), Cruise Hosts, Chamber of Commerce, and Trolley Association on a way finding project that will begin in the downtown area and will eventually be implemented all along the Riverwalk.

City Engineer Harrington said the street end structures on 11th and 6th Streets are unique because they have more vehicular traffic on them. All six of the street end bridges are funded through ODOT for replacement. Unfortunately, funds will not be made available until 2016, but the design phase will begin shortly. ODOT is trying to figure out how to accelerate the construction money so construction can start early. The construction period for in-water work is scheduled to begin November 1, 2016. Staff will continue repairs until construction starts, but the City is trying to keep costs to a minimum since the structures will be torn down and discarded when construction begins. Brand new concrete decks, like the one at the 17th Street Dock, will be installed at these intersections. Staff is discussing how to transition the sidewalks into the street end structures. Narrow structures will be widened to accommodate full sidewalks. This will be an incredible improvement. Staff has been paying a lot of attention to the 6th Street crosswalk. The Transportation System Plan (TSP) identifies a project called a roadway diet, which narrows the street. This project would have to be funded through the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and would be a high priority project. In the meantime, Staff has requested that ODOT help the City find funds for rapid flashing beacons and some pedestrian improvements at the 6th Street crosswalk.

President Nemlowill said it seemed like the road diet was a long-term project. She understood the TSP addressed many pedestrian safety issues, but the intersection of 6th Street and Marine Drive has come up a lot over the years. Everyone has seen pedestrians trying to maneuver across Marine Drive while cars fail to stop. She asked if there was anything the City could do to be proactive about getting some enhanced crossings in that area that does not rely on ODOT funding. City Engineer Harrington said Staff could look into it. The 8th Street crosswalk has just been improved and he hoped people would choose to use that crossing instead of the one at 6th Street. However, people tend to cross at a particular spot and improving other locations will not change that behavior. He said he would double check to make sure that all of the signage and the crosswalk are state of the art. If not, he would ask ODOT about the crosswalk. ODOT will only spend money on crosswalks that require

maintenance, but Staff would push for improvements. The intersection has been identified as one appropriate for rapid flashing beacons.

Drew Herzig, 628 Klaskanine Ave., Astoria, said last time he spoke to the TSC he presented photos of the solar powered digital speed indicator that the Coast Guard installed. He had asked about the possibility of placing them on 7th and 16th Streets, which are two big downhill slopes, and inquired if any updates are available. He said the Coast Guard hosted an open house on their new housing development on West Klaskanine on October 27, 2014. The Coast Guard is very concerned about the safety of their children in the area, which contains many downhill slopes where drivers tend to coast. The Coast Guard had asked about speed bumps and was told they would not be appropriate in the area because of emergency vehicles. He asked that the TSC direct Staff to contact the Coast Guard about making the new housing development safer. There will be more traffic and the new section is scheduled to be complete by December 2015. The area around Safeway, which is ODOT's property, has had several near misses and collisions. The area has many pedestrians, some in wheelchairs, and there is a lot of traffic. The intersection is oddly angled. He asked if the TSC could look into the issue. He noted the Parks Board has been taking comments from the Friends of McClure Park, who want to develop the park to make it more functional. He was concerned about the safety of children in that area as well. There is a blind spot when driving up 8th Street and he believed this issue would be brought up again in the future. Many places could use the digital speed indicators, but he preferred they be placed at 7th and 16th Streets.

City Engineer Harrington said Staff has discussed with ODOT possible funding options for the speed indicators. There are issues with the signs. He has seen teenagers run across the sign in Gearhart, trying to clock their running speed. As an engineer, he believed the signs could be a safety hazard. However, the signs do have their place. Staff has borrowed the signs from ODOT to use as an enforcement tool. Many different tools are available and he believed systematic tools worked best. There are places in town where the signs could act as a reminder to drivers going above the speed limit, such as when entering the downtown area. However, science indicates that drivers who are speeding do not pay attention to the signs.

President Nemlowill asked if City Engineer Harrington agreed that speeding is an issue on 7th and 16th and if there were other effective measures that could be implemented if speeding was a problem. City Engineer Harrington believed inattentiveness, speeding and bad driving were currently an epidemic for many reasons. Engineering tools can be put into place to help these issues. Speed bumps work, but emergency vehicles do not like them, so they are not typically installed on streets, and in certain places drivers will speed in areas with speed bumps. Sergeant Aydt said he was not a fan of speed bumps because people complain that they damage cars. Current speed bump designs have made them ineffective. He suggested looking into a mobile trailer that displayed a speed zone sign and tracked vehicles. Being mobile, the trailer could be moved if it caused problems in a particular location. The Police Department had a mobile trailer at one time, but it wore out.

President Nemlowill asked how the traffic safety concerns at the new Coast Guard housing would be addressed by the City. City Manager Estes explained that the Coast Guard housing area is Federal property; therefore, the City would not be involved. However, the Coast Guard hosted a neighborhood meeting to hear the concerns of the citizens and take them into consideration. Pedestrian safety was mentioned to the Coast Guard's engineers at the neighborhood meeting. The City and the Coast Guard have agreed to a Memorandum of Agreement that addresses the construction of infrastructure. However, the Coast Guard has the ability to move forward without City review.

President Nemlowill understood the effectiveness of the speed indicators had not been determined. She asked Staff to provide information on the signs' effectiveness and feasibility at the next TSC meeting. City Manager Estes said this would be added to the next agenda.

Yvonne Hughes, 1390 Jerome Ave., Astoria, said cameras posted on light posts and overpasses usually encourage people to slow down. The cameras are used by towns larger and smaller than Astoria. They would not need to be monitored by a person as images could be recorded. The images could not be used to issue citations, but they would create awareness in high traffic areas where children are involved, at major intersections, and on low visibility streets.

President Nemlowill asked Staff to provide information on cameras at the next TSC meeting.

Jim Cooley, 194 Commercial Street, Astoria, said he bikes to the airport from downtown every day. The city streets are great for bike safety, but the bridges are rough. He has spoken with Planner Johnson and Bill


Johnston from ODOT about this issue. He understood money was an issue and cantilevered bike paths could not be retrofitted on bridges. However, he believed street sweeping would be an easy solution. He understood the new Youngs Bay Bridge was ODOT's property, but just wanted to make the TSC aware of the issue. He said he was willing to help in any way, including being certified to drive the street sweeper. He also suggested rumble strips, flashing pedestrian lighting, and an event to raise awareness. Awareness may not instill change, but if enough people are talking about the issue, change may occur. He understood this issue may not be a high priority, but the benefit could be saving someone's life. He apologized for arriving late to the meeting.

President Nemlowill stated the TSC meeting began at 6:30 pm, but the agenda stated the meeting would start at 7:00 pm.

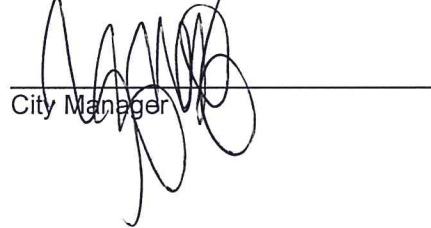
ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned to convene the Planning Commission Meeting at 7:05 pm.

ATTEST:


Secretary

APPROVED:


City Manager