

ASTORIA TRAFFIC SAFETY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Astoria City Hall

January 27, 2015

CALL TO ORDER:

Vice President Innes called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

New Committee members Daryl Moore and Frank Spence introduced themselves, noting their professional backgrounds. Jan Mitchell was also appointed as a new Committee member.

ROLL CALL:

Commissioners Present: McLaren Innes, Kent Easom, Sean Fitzpatrick, David Pearson, Daryl Moore, and Frank Spence

Commissioners Excused: Jan Mitchell

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

ELECTION OF OFFICERS:

ITEM 4(a): In accordance with Sections 1.110 and 1.115 of the Astoria Development Code, the APC needs to elect officers for 2015. The 2014 officers were President Zetty Nemlowill, Vice President McLaren Innes, and Secretary Sherri Williams.

Motion by Commissioner Fitzpatrick, seconded by Vice President Innes to elect David Pearson as President. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion by Commissioner Fitzpatrick, seconded by Commissioner Easom to re-elect McLaren Innes as Vice President. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion by Commissioner Moore, seconded by Commissioner Easom to re-elect Sherri Williams as Secretary. Motion passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

President Pearson called for corrections to the minutes of the October 28, 2014 meeting. There were none.

Commissioner Easom moved that the Traffic Safety Committee approve the minutes of October 28, 2014 as presented, seconded by Vice President Innes. Motion passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS:

Engineer Harrington said his updates included information from the Public Works Department and the Police Department.

Item 6(a): Traffic Cameras Update

The Police Department has determined that red light cameras are only allowed in certain cities in Oregon and Astoria is not one of them. The cities that do use cameras are seeing positive results with enforcement. However, these cities experience mechanical issues when the yellow phase is too short. Astoria would

experience these issues in Downtown because of the way the lights need to be timed. Another issue with the cameras is that drivers will rush through the intersection on a yellow light when they know cameras are present.

Item 6(b): Speed Monitors Update

The City has received many requests to improve speed enforcement. The Engineering Department has learned that fixed speed monitors have limited effectiveness and can only be placed in key locations. Therefore, Staff recommended a portable trailer-mounted monitor, which would allow the City to respond to enforcement issues on a complaint-driven basis in specific areas. Problem areas, like 7th and 16th Streets, can be targeted on a random schedule. Most importantly, the speed monitors must be followed up with enforcement because if people learn there is no enforcement behind the signs, they become less effective.

Sergeant Aydt added the Police Department would like the City to purchase a speed monitor with a computer system that allows Staff to track speeds. The speed data collected would allow Police to respond to complaints.

Engineer Harrington said the City would have to purchase a trailer. The Public Works and Police Departments are working together on budgeting to see if funds for a trailer could be included in this year's budget. The Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) has a trailer that Astoria could borrow, but it does not include the technology that the Police Department wants. The City considered putting a borrowed sign in the Downtown area, but realized the sign and enforcement would take up too much parking space. In 2007, Staff tried to get funding for a fixed sign that was to be placed on 16th Street. However, residential opposition led Staff to eliminate the project. He provided the following additional updates:

- The Halloween Safety Giveaway – 200 glow sticks, 200 flyers about safe routes to schools, and 75 reflective sashes were given away. Staff will try to do something similar every year. As a result of this event, Safe Routes to Schools asked the City to help distribute more information. So, Staff displayed copies of a poster at the library, the pool, and on the Police Department's website and Facebook page.
- Downtown Crosswalk Improvements – ODOT's improvements are now complete and they have begun to install the new street signs on Marine and Commercial. Once ODOT has finished, the City will follow up as time permits with installation of the new streets signs outside of the ODOT corridor.
- Rapid Flashing Beacons (RFBs) – Staff is working to resolve the issues on 6th Street. The City continues to go back and forth with ODOT on several issues. However, this project is included in the Transportation System Plan (TSP). The road diet concept suggested in the TSP would accommodate RFBs. ODOT has concerns about how the current configuration of the intersection would work with the RFBs. The City has requested funding.
- Irving Avenue Bridge – Bridge work is still on schedule and the detour seems to be working as well as can be expected.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS/COMMISSIONERS:

Commissioner Fitzpatrick reported that after the last TSC meeting, a community member suggested the TSC be separated from the Planning Commission. He passed the suggestion along to Councilor Herzig. He agreed, and believed Councilor Herzig agreed, that the separation was appropriate. Traffic safety is important, but the safety issues tend to take a back seat to the Planning Commission, especially since the Commission has begun working on the Riverfront Vision Plan. He believed the TSC should be composed of people who could focus their time on traffic safety. City Manager Estes said separating the two committees was discussed at City Council's goal setting session on January 23rd. City Council would like to maintain the status quo for now, with specific pedestrian concerns being forwarded to City Council. Staff has not received any further direction on this issue.

Commissioner Spence reported that on January 22nd, his friend Melissa Yowell was killed at the intersection of Marine Drive and Port Way when a pick-up truck ran a stop light. He understood the Police Department was investigating the incident. However, he wanted the record to show that Astoria did have a traffic fatality. Astoria can implement all of the controls and signs it wants, but the human factor will always be involved.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Drew Herzig, 628 Klaskanine Avenue, Astoria, agreed that the City should have an independent Traffic Safety Advisory Committee that is proactive, rather than reactive. The Planning Commission has a huge amount of work ahead. Since the TSC has begun to meet quarterly, it has become a vestigial organ that just hears Staff


reports. Mellissa Yowell's death reminds the community that traffic safety is a life or death matter and people's lives are at stake. While it is true that signs cannot prevent accidents, the City can still minimize them. City Council decided against an independent committee, but he believed Astoria needed an independent TSC that could conduct field trip studies. Many people are concerned about an intersection by Safeway, which is one of Astoria's most dangerous intersections because the street has no street lights and there are many pedestrians from Mill Pond in the area. He did not believe the Committee would succeed just meeting quarterly. The Planning Commission needs to be able to move forward with its agenda without going through the formalities of the TSC meetings just to hear Staff reports once each quarter.

Engineer Harrington explained that when Safeway was being built, the City required a traffic signal be installed at the intersection even though the store's traffic study indicated no signal was necessary. He noted that traffic studies are part of the City's development review process. Before Safeway was located on that intersection, no traffic signal existed. Additional street lighting was not required because there is no power beyond the existing street lights. Staff has applied for Quick Fix funds from ODOT, which are difficult to get because the funds are running out. However, Staff is fighting for these funds because the electrical work for the street lights will cost about \$30,000 or \$40,000. The sidewalk will need to be removed so that conduit can be installed to continue the row of street lights. The street will be well lit once the project is complete and Staff has been spending a lot of time on the project.

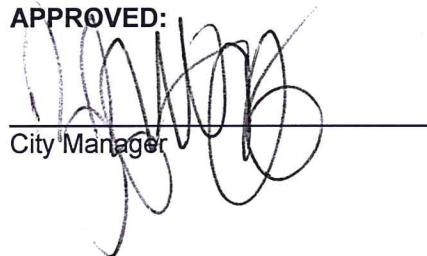
ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned to convene the Planning Commission Meeting at 6:56 pm.

ATTEST:


Secretary

APPROVED:


City Manager