

ASTORIA TRAFFIC SAFETY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Astoria City Hall
April 28, 2015

CALL TO ORDER:

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

ROLL CALL:

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

Staff Present: Interim Planner Mike Morgan, City Engineer Jeff Harrington, and Engineer Technician Steve Ruggles. The meeting is recorded and will be transcribed by ABC Transcription Services, Inc.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

President Pearson called for changed to the minutes of January 27, 2015. There were none.

Vice President Innes moved that the Traffic Safety Committee approve the minutes of January 27, 2015 as presented, seconded by Commissioner Fitzpatrick. Motion passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS:

Item 4(a): Update on Traffic Safety Related Items

Engineer Harrington reported that in an effort to increase safety, Staff has developed several ideas for keeping people informed and engaging with the community. These ideas should eliminate the public perception that Staff is not doing anything about traffic and pedestrian safety. Staff appreciates public input because the feedback allows the City to work on real issues instead of chasing its tail with ineffective measures. Therefore, Staff plans to publish information on the Police Department website and Facebook page. The information will include a synopsis of the current situation in Astoria and a link to the City Data website that shows traffic accident data in Astoria, which is below average in every category. He verified with a local insurance company that Astorians pay lower insurance rates because Astoria has below average traffic accident rates.

- Although Astoria has below average traffic accident rates, a lot of things can be done to improve the situation. Education is the best tool for making drivers aware that Astoria is a shared environment and pedestrians must be respected. Many aspects of the community contribute to traffic safety issues, like the low graduation rate for high school students, the lack of a driver's education program, and tourists who are not familiar with the city streets. Therefore, Staff has worked with Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) to receive funding for the following education and outreach programs in the community:
 - Safe Streets to School Program – This program focuses on students in Kindergarten through 8th grade.
 - Safety City – Staff just recently conducted this program at Astor School.
 - Halloween Safety Treats – Staff handed out awareness information for children and parents. Staff plans to work with ODOT to continue and improve this program each year.
 - ODOT Safety Posters – Each year when school starts, Staff distributes the posters throughout the community.
 - Clearinghouse of Information – Engineer Harrington has developed a resource group to connect with and get information out to community groups like Impact Oregon (formerly Mothers Against Drunk Driving), Coast Guard parents, and Sunset Empire Transit District.
 - Distribution of ODOT flyers in print and online.
- Staff continues to support ideas for stenciling, banners, logos, and other community involvement techniques. He mentioned Scott Lee's idea for "Stop, Wait, Wave," which was discussed in *The Daily Astorian*. Staff is working to make Mr. Lee's idea systematic, including having universal symbols, so the message is easily recognized by people of all ages, from all countries, and of all abilities. Staff has planned to implement this as part of a pilot project at 10th and Marine Drive. The Boy Scouts and a volunteer who

Traffic Safety Advisory Committee

April 28, 2015

Page 1 of 3

work near the intersection will assist in gathering input about how well the idea works. Staff chose this intersection because it is located near Mr. Lee's business, making it easy for him to work with the kids, and the intersection is busy. With the bar near this intersection, the signs will be reflective so they can be seen at 2:00 am.

- Police enforcement is complaint driven, so the Police Department has been working with the Coast Guard on some additional enforcement in target areas that are considered problematic. Staff has also been working with ODOT to eliminate sign clutter and continues to work on annual crosswalk improvements. Oregon State Police receives ODOT funding for speed enforcement, which comes from the Astoria Megler Bridge project.
- Staff would like to turn the Transportation System Plan (TSP) into a living document, which allows all major projects in Astoria to be funded by State Transportation Improvement Project (STIP) Funds. The most current version of the TSP can be obtained from Staff and is available on the City website. The sidewalk improvement project near the high school, which is included in the TSP, has not yet been approved by the Federal government and there is a chance the project will not be funded. However, Staff continues to advocate for project approval. Staff is working on a Transportation Growth Management (TGM) grant and STIP has approved \$400,000 for downtown signal upgrades for the 2016-2018 grant period.
- Engineer Harrington briefly reviewed recent projects. Staff has requested approval from ODOT to use LED lights for their streetlight optimization project and Astoria just received a grant for additional lights at the Safeway crosswalk.

Commissioner Mitchell asked if Staff counted traffic, noting it seemed like Astoria had a lot more year round traffic now. Engineer Harrington agreed and said ODOT conducts traffic counts in certain areas. This data was used to help develop the TSP. Commissioner Mitchell noted that visitors are not accustomed to Astoria's streets. She suggested Staff install ODOT signs that tell drivers they are entering into an area where the streets were designed 100 years ago when the driving situation was different. Staff has been working on the concept that Astoria is an auto-centric society. Roads have been built around automobiles for 100 years, but now Astoria is encouraging walking. Spreading a message of danger discourages people from walking. The best way to transition to a Transportation Options (TO) community is to get drivers to think like pedestrians.

Commissioner Easom noted the situation goes both ways. He described an incident where a pedestrian walked out in front of him as he was crossing through an intersection on a green light.

Commissioner Spence asked for details about the Coast Guard's request for speed bumps in their housing area. Engineer Harrington said the Coast Guard housing area uses many traffic calming techniques and they already have speed bumps. However, there is no safe place to install speed bumps along Alameda. The City's traffic calming policy includes criteria that must be met for an area to qualify for traffic calming methods. He explained how the narrow streets led to the perception that drivers were speeding through the area. However, data showed drivers were not speeding. Staff has agreed to help the Coast Guard by providing engineering estimates for a speed table at a particular intersection. The Coast Guard is also considering a traffic circle, which Staff does not recommend.

Vice President Innes congratulated Staff on their effort to educate the public. She agreed the information and statistics needed to be shared, but hoped sharing the information would not take up a lot of Staff's time. Engineer Harrington added that once Staff gets an idea of how people interact with the information on Facebook, Staff would contact the newspaper and ask them to publish an article on a particular event or topic. He asked Commissioners to forward their ideas to him via email.

Commissioner Spence wanted to know how Staff planned to educate drivers who do not regularly travel through non-standard intersections, like the intersections along the north-south corridor. Engineer Harrington said he wished this issue had been mentioned during development of the TSP, which took a year and a half. Staff wants all of its projects to correspond with the standards so that funding can be obtained. Therefore, Staff will meet with the TSP consultants to review the north-south corridor and the intersection of Irving and 8th Street. He noted that this corridor was the main route through town before the new Youngs Bay Bridge was built by ODOT in 1964. At the Irving and 8th intersection, Staff would like to retain the current flow of traffic while making the area safer. However, stop signs would disrupt the flow of traffic and drivers would begin cutting through the neighborhoods. Staff conducted a concept plan that involved reducing the size of the island and replaced the

yield sign with a stop sign. The consultants will review this plan and provide Staff with feedback. He noted there have not been any accidents at the intersection, but accidents would occur after installing the stop sign.

Commissioner Easom understood that there were only perceived issues at Irving and 8th. Engineer Harrington agreed, noting that Staff reviews many perceived issues.

Commissioner Mitchell described traffic issues at the intersection of 3rd and Bond. She suggested parking in front of apartment buildings be banned or requiring trucks and large vehicles to use a different route. Engineer Harrington said Staff would look into the traffic issues at this intersection. He agreed that removing parking would help the situation, but Astoria needs parking. Commissioner Mitchell added that Bond is used more now that Commercial is not accessible.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS/COMMISSIONERS: No reports.

PUBLIC COMMENT: No comments.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned to convene the Planning Commission Meeting at 7:02 pm.

ATTEST:


Secretary

APPROVED:


Engineer