

Parking and Traffic Committee Meeting Minutes

Date of Meeting: Thursday, September 17, 2015 at 5:15pm, in the Birch Room at City Hall
Members Present: Abitz{C}, Winters {VC}, Kellbach, Mielke, Nutting
Others Present: Lt. Graham, Tara Alfonso, Allen Wesolowski, Jennifer Friday, Maryanne Groat, Elizabeth Field, Tamara Scholze, Noreen Landowski, Sid Elford, Beth Zunker, Brian Kowalski

In accordance with Chapter 19, Wisconsin Statutes, notice of this meeting was posted and sent to the Daily Herald in the proper manner. It was noted that there was a quorum present and the meeting was called to order by Chairperson Abitz at 5:20 pm.

(1) Minutes of the Prior Meeting – 08/20/2015

Motion by Kellbach, second by Mielke, to approve the minutes from the August 20, 2015 meeting.

Motion carried 5-0.

(3) Discussion and possible action: Pedestrian crossing and traffic concerns on Pine Ridge Boulevard

Discussion:

Abitz stated that Aspirus Wausau hospital employee Noreen Landowski brought this issue to her attention because Landowski has had problems trying to safely cross Pine Ridge Boulevard. Abitz also noted that there had been a previous accident with a pedestrian injury at this crossing location. There is currently a timed flashing light at this pedestrian crossing. A suggestion was made to consider installing stop signs instead.

Wesolowski indicated that the signal light is set to flash from 5:30 AM – 9 AM, 11 AM – 1 PM, 2 PM – 5:15 PM and 10 PM – 11:55 PM. He suggested the committee consider converting the signal operation to a “push button” system so that the signal only flashes after the pedestrian pushes the button. He said that keeping the signal flashing constantly for long periods of time may cause drivers to eventually ignore the signal.

Tamarah Scholze from Aspirus Wausau hospital noted that the current timing of the flashing signal is tied to employee shift changes at Aspirus.

Noreen Landowski stated that she and others have encountered many vehicles that ignore the flashing signal when a pedestrian is in the walkway. She also feels the current signal light is too small. Her colleagues have suggested the installation of stop signs or a red/green stoplight.

Nutting said he also feels the current signal light is too small and suggests converting the signal light to a larger, more visible light in the future. He would also like police officers to patrol the area more frequently and ticket violators.

Winters asked Wesolowski for an estimate on converting the current signal light to a push-button light and he estimated it would be around \$2000. Wesolowski offered to obtain a more firm estimate by the next meeting. He does not recommend installation of stop signs in this area

Motion by Winters, second by Mielke to have Wesolowski bring cost estimates to the next meeting for installing a push button signal at this location and also to direct the police department to conduct extra patrol in this area.

Motion carried 5-0

(2) Discussion and possible action: Converting two-way alley bounded by S. 4th Avenue, W Thomas Street, S 3rd Avenue, and Bopf Street to a one-way alley. This would prohibit traffic from proceeding south.

Discussion

Abitz stated that several homeowners have garages on the alley and there is a safety concern with traffic coming from the new Krist gas station and heading south through the alley.

Resident Sid Elford said that his garage does not back to alley so that is not his main concern. His main concern is non-resident traffic utilizing the alley and causing accidents. He feels that making the alley “north-bound only” is safest for the residents of the neighborhood. He also has concerns about drivers in the alley driving over his property and damaging his lawn which he says has happened in the past.

Resident Beth Zunker presented the committee with a survey she conducted of the residents in the alleyway and their preferences given three options:

- 1) Leave it a 2-way alley
- 2) Make it a 1-way alley going north
- 3) Make it a 1-way alley going south

Beth indicated that the majority of the residents chose option #1 to leave it a 2-way alley. She also said that one person expressed a concern that the alley may be blocked by a tanker truck when the underground gas tanks are being filled.

Wesolowski pointed out that it is currently unknown if there will be a traffic concern in the alley in the future since the Krist gas station has yet to open. He suggested that the item be tabled. If residents notice an issue in the future they can return to the committee with their concerns.

After some additional discussion, the committee agreed to table the item. They also indicated that they would like to have someone contact Krist to remind them that large trucks may not use the alley. Lt. Graham volunteered to call Krist representatives.

(4) Discussion and possible action: Abandonment of parking space on Washington Street at N 5th Street (Metro Ride)

Discussion:

Lt. Graham referred to an email from Metro Ride which stated that City busses are having a difficult time trying to turn east onto Washington St from southbound N. 5th Street because of a parking space near the corner. Metro Ride would like the parking space to be eliminated and that section posted with a “No Parking Here to Corner” sign.

Motion by Winters, second by Kellbach, to abandon the parking space on Washington Street at N. 5th Street and to post a sign in that location that states “No Parking Here to Corner”.

Motion carried 5-0

(5) Discussion item: Clarify duration of closure (permanent or temporary) of N 2nd Street near McClellan Street

Discussion:

Wesolowski said that N. 2nd Street is a temporary closure due to construction and is scheduled to re-open November 1, 2015.

The committee agreed to table the issue of discussing whether to make the closure permanent until construction is complete.

(6) Discussion and possible action: Signing roadways surrounding Wausau West High School as a School Zone with reduced speed limits during school start and release times.

Discussion:

Lt. Graham received a request from Wausau West High School administration to reduce the school zone speed to 15 mph while children are present. Signs would be posted between 10th Avenue and Stevens Drive and in the vicinity of Stevens Drive to the football field area.

Nutting stated he is opposed to restricting north-bound traffic on Stevens Drive. Mielke felt the committee should follow the recommendation of Staff.

Motion by Mielke, second by Kellbach, to sign roadways surrounding Wausau West High School as School Zone with reduced speed limits during school start and release times.

Motion carried 4-1 (Nutting opposed)

(7) Discussion and possible action: “No Parking Here to Corner” sign placement on Kent Street at Lamont Street

Discussion:

Lt. Graham stated that since this issue occurs only during the school year and only before and after school he went to the homeowners responsible for creating this issue and asked if they would be willing to park in a different location during the school year and they agreed. No further action needed at this time.

(8) Discussion and possible action: Implementation of Walker Parking Analysis and Long-Term Plan

Near West Side

Map with parking stalls marked and counted to compare with the Walker study

Budget proposal for marking/signing parking stalls to create greater clarity about where people can and cannot park

Disposition of vacant building including the former Kleinheinz Dairy and Pizza Hut

Near East Side

Budget proposal to meter the two-hour parking stalls in front of businesses to discourage employee parking and increase parking turnover

Discussion:

Wesolowski presented a map to the committee detailing the number of parking spaces in the city color coded by time limits. Wesolowski indicated that the numbers were similar to those outlined in the Walker parking study.

Wesolowski also updated the committee on the disposition of the vacant buildings. The former Kleinheinz dairy building is currently for sale although Alfonso indicated that there is a sizeable housing code judgement on the property. Wesolowski noted that the Pizza Hut building is also for sale. Eastbay is currently renting the parking spaces associated with that property. Wesolowski indicated that he had been told the property is likely sold.

Winters questioned how much it would cost to paint markings for all parking stalls. Wesolowski estimated \$50,000. The members also discussed the possible options for purchasing/leasing the available vacant properties. They also discussed contacting Eastbay about contributing to the cost of striping parking spots and/or suggesting to them that there are properties available for purchase that Eastbay could use for employee parking.

Motion by Winters, second by Mielke, to implement marking all available parking stalls with funds from TIF District 8 and send it forward to the Economic Development committee.

Motion carried 5-0

Motion by Winters, second by Mielke, to send a letter and the color coded map Wesolowski presented to Eastbay outlining the steps the committee is taking, such as striping all parking spaces, to maximize the number of parking spaces in the city.

Motion carried 5-0

Alfonso offered to contact Cris Schock from Economic Development to express the committee's interest in having the city purchase the former Kleinheinz dairy property for a nominal amount plus the dismissal of the housing code case currently pending against the property.

Maryanne Groat presented to the committee a quote from the city's current parking vendor regarding pricing for parking kiosks around the city. It was determined that 34 kiosks would be needed to service on-street parking and 12 kiosks would be needed to service the parking lots at a total cost of \$408,000.

She detailed the various amenities available with these kiosks. She noted that a bidding process would be used to determine the vendor selected.

Motion by Winters, second by Nutting, to include in the 2016 budget the purchasing of parking pay station kiosks.

Motion carried 5-0

(9) Discussion and possible action: Staff recommendation regarding Walker Parking Analysis to include:

- 1. Create one City staff position that is accountable for all City parking-related matters**

- 2. Implement a single enforcement and operations time schedule of Monday through Friday, 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM in the downtown area.**

Discussion:

1. The committee discussed the possibility of making a current Public Works department employee accountable for all City parking related matters.

Motion by Winters to assign all parking related duties to the City Engineer. No second.

Motion by Kellbach, second by Mielke, to refer to the Human Resources department as to how best to fulfill the Walker study recommendation regarding the creation of one City staff position that is accountable for all City parking related matters.

Motion carried 4-1 (Winters opposed)

2. Motion by Winters, second by Mielke, to implement a single enforcement and operations time schedule of Monday through Friday, 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM in the downtown area.

Motion carried 5-0

(10) Future Agenda Items:

Parking at Bull Falls
Bring back Agenda Item #5
Increasing parking citation rates

(11) Communications:

None

(12) Adjournment:

Motion by Nutting, second by Winters, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried 5-0.