



CITY OF HEMET
Traffic and Parking Commission Minutes
Wednesday, February 14, 2007
8:00 AM

City Council Chambers
450 E. Latham Avenue
Hemet, CA 92543

The meeting was called to order a 8:02 AM by Chairperson Modica.

ROLL CALL: Commissioner Michael Asher; Commissioner Anne Marc- Aurele; Commissioner Don Berry; Chairperson Gareth Modica; Commissioner David Oltman; City Council Liaison Eric McBride.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Planning Commission Liaison.

STAFF PRESENT: Mike Gow, Public Works Director/City Engineer; Patricia Castillo, Traffic Engineer; Megan Caines, Office Specialist; Richard Broos, Streets Superintendent; Joseph Nevarez, Traffic Sergeant; Dan Reinbolt, Traffic Corporal

FLAG SALUTE AND MOMENT OF SILENCE: Chairperson Modica

1. Approval of Minutes of January 10, 2006

Commissioner Berry moved to accept the minutes as presented. Commissioner Oltman seconded, and motion passed 5-0.

2. Report of Council Action on January 10, 2006 meeting:

Informational. Traffic Engineer Patricia Castillo reported on the status of the items submitted to the City Council by the Traffic Commission.

Castillo requested that discussion be moved to item 5.

5. Request for a Multi-way Stop at State St./Newport Rd.

Castillo reported that currently the intersection of State St. and Newport Rd. does not meet the technical warrants for a multi-way stop as defined by the State of California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). However, given that the McSweeney Farms development will be installing a traffic signal at that location in the near future, it would be appropriate per State standards to install a temporary stop sign. Castillo reminded the Commission that the south side of Newport Rd. is under the County's jurisdiction and a stop sign at this location would require approval from the County.

Staff recommends the installation of a temporary multi-way stop, pending County approval, until such time as the permanent traffic signal is installed.

Commission opened the floor to public comment.

*Pat Wright
30250 Amber Ln.*

Ms. Wright commented on the speed with which traffic travels along State St, and insisted that something must be done to slow down the vehicles on State St.

Commission asked the Police Department representatives for comment. Traffic Sergeant Joseph Nevarez informed the Commission that the Police Department would completely support a multi-way stop at State St. and Newport Rd.

Commissioner Berry moved to accept Staff recommendation and approve the installation of a stop sign at State St. and Newport Rd. until the traffic signal can be installed by the developer. Commissioner Oltman seconded, and motion passed 5-0.

City Council Liaison Eric McBride arrived at 8:10am.

Castillo requested that discussion be moved to item 6.

6. Request for Multi-Way Stop at Park Ave./Menlo Ave.
(Mr. Edward Fazekas, 1507 Chateau Ct.)

Castillo informed the Commission the intersection in question is rather unusual in that there is another intersection, Yale St., roughly 200 feet south along Park Ave. Castillo showed the Commission an aerial photograph of the location to illustrate the situation. The intersection of Menlo and Park does meet the warrants for a multi-way stop and, despite the unusual proximity between Menlo and Yale, there would still be room for cars to queue at the proposed stop sign with out impeding the Park and Yale intersection. Additionally, Castillo spoke with representatives of the City of San Jacinto who would not object the installation of a stop sign at that location. Staff recommends the installation of a multi-way stop at Park Ave. and Menlo Ave.

Commission opened the floor to public comment.

*Mr. Edward Fazekas,
1507 Chateau Ct.*

Mr. Fazekas informed the Commission that there were large bushes at the corner of Menlo Ave. and Park Ave. which make it difficult for motorists to enter Park Ave. traffic. Mr. Fazekas also told the Commission that people run the stop sign at Yale St., fail to use their turn signals, and will often fail to report accidents.

Commissioner Anne Marc-Aurele asked for City crews to go out and trim back the bushes that are impeding the sight distances at Menlo and Yale. Castillo replied that the request would be sent in. Additionally, Castillo informed the Commission that the addition of turn pockets at Park and Menlo would require drastic re-striping and the City does not own the entire street. The installation of a multi-way stop should alliviate the necessity of turn pockets.

Commissioner Oltman moved approve accept Staff recommendation and install the multi-way stop at Park and Menlo Avenues. Commissioner Berry seconded, and motion passed 5-0.

Castillo requested that discussion be moved to item 4.

4. Request for Directional Signs for First Southern Baptist Church

(First Southern Baptist Church)

Castillo reported that this item has come before the Commission several times. After coordinating First Southern Baptist Church, Staff recommends the installation of a directional sign on Acacia Ave., just west of San Jacinto St.

Commissioner Oltman reminded the Commission that the church petitioned both Caltrans and the County for these signs and were refused. Oltman asked staff if installing this sort of sign would deviate from City standard operating procedure. Public Works Director/City Engineer Mike Gow informed the Commission that the City has installed this type of signage prior to this request. Standard procedure is that the organization requesting the sign pay for the City for the production for the sign, and City crews will perform the installation.

Commissioner Berry moved to accept Staff recommendation and install a directional sign on Acacia Ave., just west of San Jacinto St. for First Southern Baptist Church. Commissioner Marc-Aurele seconded, and motion passed 5-0.

7. Request for Review of Access Signage at Seven Hills Entrance

Castillo reported that this item has been brought to the Commission at previous meetings. Previous sign verbiage requested included "No Outlet" or "Dead End". Unfortunately, at the Kirby St./Seven Hills Dr. entrance neither of those options are valid, as there is an outlet to Lyon Ave. from that location. Staff recommends against the installation of either of these two sign types.

Commissioner Berry asked about the feasibility of moving the existing sign off of the cluttered west side of Seven Hills Dr. to the raised median. Castillo replied that there are no objections to the installation of a sign in the center median of Seven Hills Dr.

Commissioner Berry moved to reinstall the existing "No Access to Domenigoni Parkway" sign from the west side of the Seven Hills Dr. to the center median. Commissioner Oltman seconded, and motion passed 5-0.

8. West Valley High School Traffic Issues

Castillo reported on the traffic conditions around West Valley High School. Along Sanderson Ave., south of Mustang Way, there is approximately 200-300 feet that is designated "No Parking" but is not marked or signed no parking. Castillo asked the Streets Department to post the necessary signage and notified the Police Department regarding the change.

Castillo also notified the Commission that there was a problem with the interconnect on Sanderson Ave., so the traffic signals have not been in sync. Once this problem is corrected, the traffic along Sanderson Ave. should move better.

Castillo prefaced the discussion by informing the Commission that, while she has been in contact with the Hemet Unified School District Office, she had been unable to contact the Principal of West Valley High School. Castillo presented several traffic options to improve the vehicular and pedestrian traffic flow around West Valley High School.

One option would be to install a fence in the middle of Mustang Way. However, Castillo informed the Commission, that in order to be effective the fence would have to extend from Sanderson Ave. to Rexford St. This would correct the pedestrian issue by forcing pedestrians to walk up to Sanderson Ave., instead of traveling across Mustang Way at Morgan Hill Rd., but would obstruct access to the campus parking lots and vehicular access to Morgan Hill Rd.

Another option, Castillo reported, would be to restrict access to the east parking lot to buses only, and to allow parents to drop off their students in the parking lot in front of the school administrative office. This would allow the east parking lot to be closed off, preventing vehicles from trying to cross traffic on Mustang to either enter or exit the east parking lot.

In either instance, Castillo concluded, the presence of school staff coordinating the flow of students

toward one controlled location would greatly improve traffic conditions at West Valley High School. One possible location would be at the entrance of the School's main office parking lot. With a crossing guard to stop vehicular traffic and meter the pedestrian traffic across Mustang Way, this would be a feasible solution to the problem. However, Castillo replied, without the school's support this traffic problem would persist.

Commission opened the floor to public comment.

*Robin Daily, Assistant Director of Transportation Hemet Unified School District (HUSD)
2350 W. Latham Ave., Hemet, CA 92545*

Ms. Daily informed the Commission that HUSD has been coordinating with the City to generate some possible solutions to the traffic problems at West Valley High School. Daily also stated that educating the students would probably help mitigate the pedestrian traffic problems.

*Annette Placentia
1466 Lancelot Ct.*

Ms. Placentia informed the Commission that parents are at a loss as to where is acceptable to drop off their children. Mustang Way along the school is designated "No Parking", so people are stopping along Morgan Hill Rd. and dropping off their children, who are then crossing Mustang Way at Morgan Hill Rd. Also, people are not obeying the 25mph speed limit along Mustang Way. Ms. Placentia requested the installation of speed limit signs along westbound Mustang Way and crossing guards to meter students across Mustang Way.

Commissioner Marc-Aurele asked Police representatives about the feasibility of Police Volunteers being out at West Valley High School during the morning and afternoon rushes. Traffic Corporal Dan Reinbolt informed the Commission that volunteers could easily be stationed out at the school, however the Commission should bear in mind that volunteers cannot issue citations. Reinbolt further stated that, in his opinion, a police presence is not a long term solution to the traffic problems; educating the public would be more effective in the long run.

Commission directed City staff to take these concerns and comments to HUSD staff and to facilitate a resolution. The Traffic Commission supports a change in the parking and traffic circulation at West Valley High School.

Castillo requested that discussion be moved to item 3.

3. Request Approval of Speed Limit Signs on South State St. from Domenigoni Pkwy. and 4500 LF North of Domenigoni Pkwy.

Castillo reported that currently just north of Domenigoni Pkwy. there are no speed limit signs along northbound State St. Staff recommends the installation of 50mph speed limit signs up 4500 lineal feet north of Domenigoni Pkwy.

Commissioner Oltman moved to accept Staff recommendation and approve the installation of 50mph speed limit signs along State St. just north of Domenigoni Pkwy. Commissioner Marc-Aurele seconded, and motion passed 5-0.

Commission returned to the Agenda as presented.

9. Transportation Overview

Informational. Castillo informed the Commission that this topic would reappear through out the year as an update on City transportation projects.

Castillo reported to the Commission on the five most congested signalized intersections in Hemet. They were ranked by average daily traffic volume from highest to lowest. These intersections were: Florida Ave. at Sanderson Ave.; Florida Ave. at Kirby St.; Sanderson Ave. at Stetson Ave.; Florida Ave. at Warren Rd.; and Florida Ave. at San Jacinto St.

Castillo then reported on the five most congested stop sign controlled intersections in Hemet. They were ranked by average daily traffic volume from highest to lowest. These intersections were: Devonshire Ave. at Kirby St.; Devonshire Ave. at State St.; Warren Rd. at Stetson Ave.; Devonshire Ave. at Warren Rd.; and Warren Rd. at Esplanade Ave.

Commissioner Asher was excused at 9:11am.

Council Liaison McBride asked why traffic seems so bad at the intersection of Florida Ave. and Gilmore St. Castillo replied that it could be as simple as volume over capacity: the road could be transporting more cars than it was designed to carry. However, Castillo continued, after speaking with Caltrans she was informed that the lights along Florida Ave. have not been re-timed in three (3) years.

Council Liaison McBride asked what could be done to improve traffic flow along Florida Ave. Gow replied that the ultimate solution is to create an alternate East/West route for the vehicles to travel on. Currently the City is working on adding a third travel lane to Devonshire and Acacia Avenues, and widening and signalizing Menlo Avenue, to create the alternate travel routes across the width of the City. Currently the City is undergoing environmental review for these projects, which must be completed prior to the design of the projects.

Castillo reported on the five intersections with the most collisions attributed to red light violations. All of the intersections are along Florida Ave. and, Castillo reported, the only identifiable pattern is the absence of protected left turn signals. There is an exception to this pattern, Florida Ave. at State St. which is the intersection with the highest number of collisions attributed to red light violations.

10. Action Item List

Informational. Castillo reported on the status of items previously brought before the Commission.

11. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Resident
1700 S. State St.

A resident, who declined to identify himself, spoke to the Commission regarding the noise generated by motorcycles. He inquired if there were any noise ordinances that could possibly be enforced.

The resident then informed the Commission that he had witnessed many near accidents at stop signs that were not designated "2-way" stops. He inquired if the Commission could correct these intersections by labeling the stop signs as "2-way" stops.

Also, the resident spoke regarding speeding along south State St. near Saddleback Mobile Homes. The elderly residents, he claimed, are having trouble entering and exiting along State St. as a result of the traffic. The resident inquired if accelerate/decelerate lanes could be added to State St. near Saddleback Mobile Home Park. Castillo informed the Commission that the City has already widened south State St. to its designated ultimate Right-of-Way.

Commission directed staff to review the stop controlled intersections throughout the City for any possible additions of "2-way" signage.

12. Future Agenda Items.

ADJOURNMENT: Meeting was adjourned at 9:31 am.

Next regularly scheduled meeting is scheduled for 8:00 AM, Wednesday, March 14, 2007, at 450 E. Latham Avenue, City Council Chambers.

Respectfully Submitted,

Megan Caines
Office Specialist II
Public Works, Engineering Dept.