

MINUTES OF TRAFFIC COMMISSION MEETING OF THE CITY OF LOS ALAMITOS

REGULAR MEETING – April 13, 2016

1. CALL TO ORDER

A Regular meeting of the Traffic Commission was called to order at 7:00 p.m. on April 13, 2016, in the Council Chambers, 3191 Katella Avenue, Los Alamitos, California, Chair Patz presiding.

2. ROLL CALL

Present: Commissioners:

Chair Daniel Patz
Vice Chair Gina Biri (*Arrived: 7:30 p.m.*)
Commissioner Dave Emerson
Commissioner Javier Mejia
Commissioner Jason Seaman
Commissioner James Wilhelm

***Chair Patz indicated Vice Chair Biri had texted him to say she is running a few minutes late.

Absent:

None.

Present: Staff:

Steven Mendoza, Development Services Director
Ruth Smith, Traffic Engineer
Rick Moore, Police Captain
Dawn Sallade, Department Secretary

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Wilhelm.

4. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Chair Patz opened the meeting for Oral Communications.

Dave Burgess, Rossmoor resident, said he came to his first Traffic Commission meeting last month and that's when he raised the parking issue on the west side of Los Alamitos Blvd. He said Council Member Dean Grose was nice enough to meet him at the location of Katella Ave. and Los Alamitos Blvd. to observe traffic conditions. Subsequent to that, he went to the City Council meeting and he spoke to the Mayor and he said he had visited the site and he believes it was dangerous as well. About a month ago he had gone out and counted cars and out of 15 cars, he's guessing about 10-12 are employees from Arco and The Fish Company that are parking on the street. He knows the employers cannot make their employees stop parking on the street since it is legal although not safe. He feels painting the curbs 20-25 feet on each side of the driveway from the

driveways would be the answer. He said there are accidents in the that area all the time and would hope the problem gets fixed before somebody gets seriously hurt or killed.

Chair Patz thanked him for speaking and said this item is on the agenda and the Commission will discuss the matter when the item is open.

There being no further speakers, Chair Patz closed Oral Communications.

5. STAFF REPORTS

A. **Request to Bring Proposed “No Parking” Restrictions on the West Side of Los Alamitos Boulevard between Katella Avenue and Hedwig Road to the Traffic Commission for Consideration at a Future Meeting.**

This report requests approval to bring a citizen request for “No Parking” restrictions at business driveways on the west side of Los Alamitos Boulevard between Hedwig Road and Katella Avenue, to the Traffic Commission for review and consideration.

Traffic Engineer Ruth Smith summarized the Staff report, referring to the information contained therein, gave a brief history of the prior request, and indicated she’s prepared to answer questions from the Traffic Commission.

Chair Patz opened the item up to discussion by the Commission.

Commissioner Emerson indicated Ms. Smith can evaluate it for the next meeting. He said he doesn’t know if we need to eliminate one parking space at each intersection or what. Out of the five driveways, he doesn’t feel the car wash needs the curb painted because there’s not enough room to legally park. The other four driveways, Ms. Smith will probably determine at least 15-25 feet of curb should be painted. As Mr. Burgess suggested, there’s plenty of employee parking in the back. He said he’s whole heartily for moving forward.

Commissioner Seaman said he also very much appreciates Mr. Burgess’s input on this the problem and would like to see this on the next agenda.

Commissioner Mejia said he recalls reviewing this situation before and asked what the Standard angle and setback for egresses out of the driveway.

Ms. Smith explained that it has to do with the width of the roadway and speed basically that the cars are traveling as to how much sight distance one needs. She explained they lay out sight distance triangles to see where we would cut off the parking in order to provide sufficient sight

distance. Something we have to keep in mind is that if we were to do the standard layout, it would remove all the parking because it would overlap between the driveways. Some businesses just put in 20-25 feet just to have some clearance and you can see a little bit down the street without taking it all off.

Commissioner Wilhelm said there isn't any question of what there is, is a hazard not only on the west side of Los Alamitos Blvd., but also the east side as well where there is curb side parking. The thing that leaps out from the Staff report to him is the observation that most of the parking along there is employee parking for Arco and The Fish Company. Certainly the Fish Company has plenty of area for their employees to park. He said he doesn't know what the situation is for the Arco or the car wash employees and their parking situation but if we're living with this hazard, simply to accommodate businesses who won't let their employees park on their business site, then his thought would be to make it No Parking all the way from Hedwig Road all the way up to Katella Ave. and possibly on the east side north of Farquhar Ave. Then we have the problem that OCTA brought with the buses trying to get past the car wash and encroaching on lane number two. He said he would hope that whatever further analysis that is done the question would be addressed to the business owners why are your employees parking out on the street unless there is some terribly compelling reason why they need to do that, he would make it a No Parking possibly on both sides of the boulevard and then you can go from the 35 mph speed limit up to Katella Ave., raise that to 40 mph speed limit and then you won't have complaints about speed traps and speed limits changing for no apparent reason. But there is a good reason for that right now because of the narrow passage on both sides of the street.

Chair Patz said he's personally spoken to some of his neighbors to get their input and he's heard the same issues. He said he and his wife go down to eat in those areas and they've experienced the exact same thing. They go around the back way and come out on Katella Ave. because we don't want to risk their lives coming out on Los Alamitos Blvd. So he said he would support it, too.

Commissioner Mejia inquired as to the process to go forward. Does the City have to notify the business owners of what is happening?

Development Services Director Steven Mendoza explained that that is what Staff wants to know from the Commission; what outreach would you like Staff to do in preparation for the next meeting?

Commissioner Mejia said he understands the concerns and the employees or whomever are going to park there as its premium parking for any of those businesses along that right-of-way. If we make it No

Parking, then of course it's eliminated. He said he knows the City has other parking issues going currently and so that's why he wants to see where this lines up with that process because he knows there's some stuff going on and that was included. They kind of go hand in hand. Before the City throws up blanket No Parking, is there any possibility of making some of those driveways "Enter Only", "Exit Only"? You would eliminate half the problem. He said he knows not all of the businesses have a through-way but there are other ways of exiting the properties. How do we balance having places to park versus keeping everybody safe so he doesn't want to say one way or the other without getting a true understanding. Those employees park there because it's legal to park there. He said he would like to see notifications going to those businesses, get some input possibly from the businesses, employees and or neighbors and of course safety is of premium concern even outweighing parking situations.

Ms. Smith said just to make sure she understands this, you're talking about sending out notices for the meeting that we will be bringing this back to the Commission.

Commissioner Mejia said yes.

Commissioner Emerson said he likes Commissioner Wilhelm's idea of rather than just do this piece mill, let's take that whole City block at one time and get Staff's recommendations on both sides of the street and deal with the whole issue at one time. He said he would like to see the "Two Maids" business van that is always parked on the east side of the street made to move as they are taking advantage. He said he would like to take the whole thing from Hedwig up to Katella, both sides of the street; study and get recommendations and open it up to businesses on both sides of the street for their comments.

Commissioner Mejia said he appreciates Commissioner Emerson's comments but what he's concerned that the City had the public meeting for the Los Alamitos parking issue just recently and he said seems to recall that the public was pretty strong against parking restrictions in those areas and so he'd hate to come back with this right on the heels of that after having a pretty good turnout at that meeting. That would be a concern that he would have by putting the whole piece together; he said he understands the concept but this was just voiced pretty loudly by the business owners and Los Alamitos residents.

Development Services Director Steven Mendoza said everyone on the Commission is in agreement that they want Staff to study the west side but is there at least three of the Commissioners want to study the east side as well? With a raise of hands, there was not.

Chair Patz said the parking restrictions that the Commission was talking about previously, those were in terms of timed parking restrictions. He said he feels we're mixing apples and oranges here. We're talking about creating a safe zone for cars to ingress and egress onto Los Alamitos Blvd. in an area that he has personally experienced a very difficult time getting in and out.

Mr. Mendoza pointed out that the Commission is asking Staff to study safety issues.

Chair Patz said that that was correct and at least that was his understanding of it. He said he doesn't think that's quite the same thing as putting timed parking restrictions in certain areas.

Mr. Mendoza explained that it may have the same passion level but it is two different things. To clarify, Staff will only do outreach then to the west side.

Chair Patz asked if Staff needed a motion.

Mr. Mendoza said yes.

Mr. Burgess said he appreciates the discussion of west versus east side of the Blvd. and he's all for no parking the whole way and he's also for restricted parking for whatever feet is appropriate and a time limit timing. He said it's probably not safe on the east side either but that's not why he's at this meeting.

Motion/Second: Emerson/Wilhelm

Carried 5/0/0 (Biri absent): The Traffic Commission approved the request to bring the proposed "No Parking" restrictions on Los Alamitos Boulevard between Hedwig Road and Katella Avenue to the Traffic Commission for review and consideration, and include the outreach component to businesses and residents on the west side.

6. ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

A. Verbal Presentation from Captain Moore Regarding Redflex

Captain Rick Moore gave an in depth video and verbal presentation of the red light camera system and indicated he's prepared to answer any questions the Commission may have.

Vice Chair Biri arrived to the meeting.

Following the presentation, the Commissioners indicated they were very appreciative of Captain Moore's presentation.

B. Traffic Commission Status Log

Ms. Smith went over the Status Log with the Commissioners and discussed setting priorities.

Chair Patz pointed out there are a couple of competing priorities; one would be budget and the other is simply a choice of which comes first.

Ms. Smith said the main thing for her is which one is more important as far as need is concerned and not so much the cost. She said she would do it the priority that the Commission would set. Some would take longer than others based on what would be involved before she could bring them back to the Commission. If the cost is large, then that would be going on the CIP in order to be financed.

Commissioner Emerson pointed out that he's unsure what the time frame is for the CIP but he thinks it should be going before the Council fairly soon.

Chair Patz suggested the forklift crossing on Catalina perhaps?

Ms. Smith explained that that one is already funded and going.

Commissioner Emerson indicated F3 on the log should read Farquhar and Pine and it's both the limit line and the Keep Clear. The limit line at Farquhar and Reagan is part of a 4-way stop sign so that doesn't need to be reviewed at all. As far as F12, remove the Keep Clear on Farquhar at Cherry, and again the limit line, also, he believes that is Staff's priority. But F3 which should be Farquhar and Pine, that may still be necessary so he said to just eliminate that one from the list at this point at least drop them down the list.

Vice Chair Biri said the item that was brought by Commissioner Wilhelm on January, 2014, it just seems to her that two years is too long.

Ms. Smith said she needed some clarification because it was before she was with the Commission, is this for the pedestrian countdown?

Commissioner Wilhelm explained that if you're attempting to make a right turn, northbound on Bloomfield at Katella at about the time a school is letting out, you get trapped in that pocket because when the light is green, kids are crossing the street; when it's red, there is a little sign that says, "No Turn on Red When Children are Present", and he got trapped in that once and it's an endless procession of kids.

Commissioner Emerson suggested changing that to removal of the "No Right on Red..." sign at both Bloomfield and Katella and also at Farquhar

and Los Alamitos Blvd. He also suggested perhaps adding money to the CIP so that the Traffic Engineer can study these as well as other issues throughout the City.

Ms. Smith indicated these signs technically are not legal. There is a sign that states, "No Turn on Red when Pedestrians are Present" but the other sign ("...When Children are Present") can only be used under certain circumstances.

Chair Patz said whatever the City does, needs to be consistent; some places we have it, some we don't. If they're illegal to begin with, it seems to him that we ought to remove them.

Ms. Smith said the question is then do we want to replace them with the other sign or looking at what else can be done (she would have to investigate that).

Commissioner Wilhelm said if those signs were removed, he feels it would be vital to be sure that the crossing guards all are aware that the sign is gone.

Ms. Smith said one thing she would like to do is to find out why the signs were installed in the first place because she doesn't like undoing something if she doesn't know why they were put them in the first place.

Commissioner Emerson said that Bloomfield is a bigger priority than Farquhar especially now that we have he dedicated left turn lane.

Chair Patz suggested to the other Commissioners that when they get their packet each month, when you read through it, go ahead and mark their priorities in terms of what you think is most important and then it would be easier when the Commission discusses it at the meeting.

Commissioner Mejia said all that sounds great but on the items that we have had some discussion on, it would be great if maybe there were some dollars associated with each item to let the Commission know if certain items are just out of bounds but other items can be dealt with in house.

Mr. Mendoza said what Staff can do is start delivering estimates of time and for larger CIP projects, we can probably provide the Commission with estimates of construction.

Commissioner Mejia indicated F13 has already been completed.

Ms. Smith pointed out there are a mixture of things that Staff can handle internally, and then things that need to come back to the Commission and

even to Council, she inquired if the Commission would like Staff to separate those out as well or do they like it mixed together.

Vice Chair Biri felt that would be helpful.

Chair Patz said he's curious as to why the fire hydrant curbs are being painted red now.

Mr. Mendoza explained there was an inconsistency in the City so Public Works Superintendent Tony Brandyberry made it a priority for himself to finish that project.

Chair Patz said he would like to thank Tony and his crew for their hard work .

Mr. Mendoza indicated they're all done with the exception of the ones that Golden State Water has recently put it been working on.

7. TRAFFIC COMMISSION INITIATED BUSINESS

Commissioner Mejia

- Farquhar – Crosswalks stop signs have lost some reflect ability and need some repair.

Mr. Mendoza indicated this Service Request will be forwarded to Public Works.

8. ADJOURNMENT

The Traffic Commission adjourned at 8:25 p.m.