

# MINUTES OF TRAFFIC COMMISSION MEETING OF THE CITY OF LOS ALAMITOS

REGULAR MEETING – May 11, 2016

## 1. CALL TO ORDER

A Regular meeting of the Traffic Commission was called to order at 7:00 p.m. on May 11, 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: 7:17 p.m.*)  
Commissioner Dave Emerson  
Commissioner Javier Mejia  
Commissioner Jason Seaman  
Commissioner James Wilhelm

**Absent:**

None.

**Present:** Staff:

Steven Mendoza, Development Services Director  
Ruth Smith, Traffic Engineer  
Rick Moore, Police Captain

## 3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Seaman.

## 4. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Chair Patz opened the meeting for Oral Communications. There being no speakers, the Chair closed Oral Communications.

## 5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

### A. Approve the Minutes for the Regular Meeting of March 9, 2016.

Commissioner Wilhelm pointed out corrections on Page 8, the fifth paragraph and Page 11, the second paragraph:

*“The other two locations is like...and he would **not** propose that those be created...”*

And

- *“Parking Meter town hall **met** a week ago and the on line survey...”*

Motion/Second: Emerson/Seaman

Unanimously Carried 6/0/0: The Traffic Commission approved the minutes of the Regular meeting of March 9, 2016, with corrections as noted above.

**B. Approve the Minutes for the Regular Meeting of April 13, 2016.**

Motion/Second: Emerson/Seaman

Unanimously Carried 6/0/0: The Traffic Commission approved the minutes of the Regular meeting of April 13, 2016.

**6. STAFF REPORTS**

**A. Boards, Commissions and Committee Policy Handbook**

At its April 18, 2016, the City Council unanimously adopted Resolution 2016-11, adopting the City's Policy Handbook for Boards, Commissions, and Committees. The information is being provided to the Commissions.

City Clerk Quintanar summarized the City's Policy Handbook for Boards, Commissions, and Committees, referring to the information contained therein. She indicated that if the Commission ever has questions, to be sure to give her office a call.

In response to Chair Patz's question regarding the Harassment Policy that the Commissioner's need to fill out, Ms. Quintanar indicated that that's a new City Council policy outside of the Handbook. They adopted it at the last Council meeting for the Commissioners and the Council to attend the training (or to complete it on line). It is State mandated that this training be completed every two years.

**B. Review and Consideration of "No Parking" Restrictions on the West Side of Los Alamitos Boulevard between Katella Avenue and Hedwig Road.**

This report is a follow-up to a citizen's request for "No Parking" restrictions at business driveways on the west side of Los Alamitos Boulevard between Hedwig Road and Katella Avenue.

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. Mr. David Burgess, a resident and board member of the Rossmoor Community, had initially spoken at the March 9, 2016 Traffic Commission meeting, requesting that the Traffic Commission consider painting red curb for "No Parking" for 20 to 25 feet at each of the five business driveways on the west side of Los Alamitos Boulevard from the Arco station at Hedwig Road to "The Fish Company" (11061 Los Alamitos Boulevard, just south of Katella Avenue).

In accordance with the Traffic Commission's direction, the Traffic Engineer has conducted a follow-up study, including a field review, a review of traffic collisions and the development of sight distance triangles. A sight distance triangle was laid out for each of the five driveways indicated in blue on the adjacent photo in the Staff report.

The sight distance triangle is only one element of the analysis that should be considered. A series of traffic collisions would indicate a problem that should be addressed, whereas the absence of traffic collisions would indicate that there may not be a problem. The traffic collision data for the past 5 years was reviewed and discussed with Captain Moore. There were no reported collisions from January 2011 through March 2016 involving vehicles exiting the driveways on the west side of Los Alamitos Boulevard. This does not mean there were not any such collisions, but if so, they were minor enough not to be reported. It appears that even though the sight distance triangles indicate that parking should be removed for sight distance, drivers exiting the driveways are exercising the appropriate level of caution.

Staff's recommendation is for the Commission to review the options presented by Staff regarding proposed "No Parking" restrictions on the west side of Los Alamitos Boulevard between Hedwig Road and Katella Avenue and make a recommendation to the City Council to either install red curb at Driveways 1 through 6 or to install "No Parking Any Time" from Katella Avenue to Hedwig Road, to improve sight distance and intersection clearance.

Chair Patz said he sees another potential option and that is instead of the 40-50 feet or two car lengths on the north side of Los Alamitos Blvd., just one car length instead.

Ms. Smith said that would help sight distance a little but the biggest thing it would do is to provide driveway clearance so it would be easier to get in and out of the driveway.

Commissioner Wilhelm said if extending 40 feet to the north of the driveway would eliminate two cars and 25 feet south, a third car, that would mean effectively the elimination of eighteen vehicles. Twice this week, he said he was driving south on Los Alamitos Blvd. to do a car count. The first time he counted nineteen cars and earlier today he counted twenty cars so it sounds like it would be a virtual elimination of all the on-street parking if both options were employed. It would appear that employing both of the options would mean effectively there would be no parking from Katella Avenue down.

Ms. Smith said she didn't consider that; she said she should have drawn that up for the Commission to tell them just exactly how much parking would be left.

Chair Patz opened the item up to public comment.

Ricardo Ortiz, Captain, Retired from the Los Angeles Fire Department and resident of Los Alamitos since 1962, said he loves living in Los Alamitos but, as the Commission knows, the traffic has grown more and more. He said he's had occasion to come out of the subject driveways numerous times and he makes the sign of the cross as he exits. He shared stories of his lack of visibility exiting the driveways. Mr. Ortiz complimented Staff on their report and felt it was very well written.

Dave Burgess, Rossmoor resident, talked about the businesses in question and who parks on the street. Mr. Burgess said he supports "removal of parking".

Chair Patz read into record a letter from Ralph Vartabedian, Rossmoor Homeowners Association Traffic Committee Chairman. *(The letter is attached to the back of these minutes as per Commissioner Emerson's request of June 8, 2016.)*

Chair Patz opened the item to discussion by the Commission.

Commissioner Seaman asked if there was any input from the Police Department.

Captain Rick Moore said the Department all felt very similarly; it's difficult to make a north bound turn out of the parking lot but, just as Ms. Smith stated, one of the things he did after Mr. Burgess's initial comments was, he went back two years and wasn't able to find any record of traffic collisions occurring at the subject properties. However, he pointed out just because people have been fortunate enough to avoid a collision doesn't mean it's not dangerous. He said he can understand the point in the public safety aspect of either limiting or removing the parking in the area.

Commissioner Mejia said he's curious if any of the businesses were notified about the meeting tonight.

Mr. Mendoza responded that on Thursday, Staff mailed a flyer to every business that faced Los Alamitos Blvd. and then on Monday, Staff walked and passed out flyers by hand on the west side.

Commissioner Mejia asked if Staff tried to get in touch with any of the property owners that have the busiest driveways on Los Alamitos Blvd. He thought making some of those driveways entrance only or exit only so if the traffic is limited from coming out from all seven of the driveways or perhaps they can make it right turn only, that might help. We're trying to ease the safety concern; trying to maximize our parking so how can we do both of those things? He said he would like to see those options maybe looked at before the whole curb gets painted red which he said he's not necessarily in favor of; the reported traffic accidents in his opinion doesn't support that move yet.

Vice Chair Biri asked if there is any way that we have the option to see if the traffic was made one way with regard to either ingress or egress.

Ms. Smith said we could certainly look at that. Staff would probably want to do some driveway counts to see how much they're being used but when we talk about anything like that, Staff has no control at all over it; it's up to the property owners as it's private property and they would have to implement it.

In response to Vice Chair Biri's question, Mr. Mendoza said that for this particular case, the General Plan supports these kinds of decisions where we're eliminating barriers regarding safety. It is a priority of the City to create safe travel and it's certainly represented in many places in the mobility element of the General Plan.

Commissioner Emerson said he felt that the minimalist approach is the best approach at least initially as the City can always take away more parking. He said he supports a minimum of twenty feet to the left especially along the busier curbs. He said he doesn't think there's anything necessary on the right (south) of each exit. He reported that from his own experience, he doesn't even attempt to turn left but turning right is better. He felt that at least thirty feet as a compromise on the left of each driveway would be good.

Commissioner Wilhelm said he thinks the whole matter of employee parking not only along Los Alamitos Blvd. but probably half of the City could be solved if somehow business license agencies could prevail on businesses to physically set aside employee parking. If this were done, you could be absolutely assured that there wouldn't be any employee parking on the street because those spaces couldn't be used for any other purpose. Of course the City has no jurisdiction over Rossmoor businesses but his suggestion is if Rossmoor is concerned about employee parking being driven onto their residential streets that they have some conversations with the County of Orange and see if they can prevail on these businesses to create designated parking for their employees. He

said he's been told that in Los Alamitos, the City licensing agreements stipulate that a business must provide sufficient parking both for their employees and their customers. Here again there's no requirement that physical space is being set aside but he feels that that would completely solve the problem. He said if we were to create complete "no parking" for all the way from Katella to Hedwig, that most of those employees would end up in that big lot behind the Fish Company. Certainly if places like the car wash have anything like 80 employees, not many of them are parking on the Blvd.; they've found parking spaces probably in those big parking areas.

One other thought he had was as far as the number of accidents is concerned, in last week's Council material, it stated that the number of accidents at the various intersections along the Blvd. was a fairly substantial number but in no case did they know in what lane it occurred or the nature of the accident. He said he's seen that comment before when they address these safety issues and perhaps some research can be conducted to get the primary source of information upgraded to include a little bit more detail so that when the Commissioners look at one of these situations, they know exactly what happened and whether it's relevant to the risk issue that we're looking at.

Chair Patz said he does not even attempt to make a left turn out of that area as you are literally taking your life into your hands to do so. A right turn is dangerous enough even at the best of times so what he would support is he sees no reason to block the parking on the right hand side out of each driveway because he doesn't see that as the problem. He said he would support a three foot tip on the edge of each right hand side driveway just to give drivers a little bit of room when they are trying to come out and make a right turn. On the left side, if they were to go with the line of sight, that would mean eliminating all parking along the west side of Los Alamitos Blvd. and that he would not support. He said he would support either one car length or two car lengths but that's about the maximum that he would go. He said he's talking about probably forty feet of red curb on the north side of each driveway for improved sight and clearance. The less they can do the better but it needs to be at least one car length to give you that extra bit of sight but if the recommendation is two car lengths, he said he would support that, too.

Vice Chair Biri indicated she would support twenty feet (one car length).

Following further discussion, Commissioner Emerson made a motion to paint a red curb thirty feet north of driveways 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 (as numbered in the picture in the Staff report).

Vice Chair Biri said she would support the motion if it was twenty feet but not thirty feet.

Motion/Second: Emerson/Biri

Carried 4/2/0: The Traffic Commission approved painting a red curb twenty feet north from driveways, 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 if needed and nothing to the south.

## **7. ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT**

### **A. Traffic Commission Status Log**

Chair Patz asked what the status was on item F-8.

Ms. Smith responded that because the signs were probably put in via an ordinance or something, the City cannot just remove the signs but she said she did go out and confirm the signs were there and found an additional two signs for the other direction as well. She'll do more research to find out how they were put in and then action will be taken.

Commissioner Emerson said that both F-9 and F-10 have "Limit Lines" and "Keep Clear" on both. This is definitely not needed on F-10 and probably not needed on F-9 as well. Following discussion, it was determined that the "Limit Lines" and "Keep Clear" lines on F-9 (Farquhar & Pine) would remain but the "Limit Lines" and "Keep Clear" lines on F-10 (Farquhar & Cherry) will be removed.

Commissioner Mejia asked for an update on F-2 – Forklift crossing on Catalina as it states that the bids were in last month and wondered when this was actually going to start as it is definitely needed.

Ms. Smith said she would get an update from City Engineer Dave Hunt and would email Commissioner Mejia.

Commissioner Seaman stated that back in March he had noted that the crosswalk chirp wasn't operating correctly and he wondered if that was confirmed.

Ms. Smith said she followed up with the signal maintenance group and they did confirm that it wasn't working but they were going to replace it.

## **8. TRAFFIC COMMISSION INITIATED BUSINESS**

Ms. Smith wanted to point out that some of these requests don't need to come before the Commission as they are things that we can just handle. If any Commissioner sees something that they don't think requires Commission action, such as the broken chirp, or that the other Commissioners wouldn't necessarily

care about, you can email Staff and then they can follow up. Staff can always report the end result back to the Commission.

**9. ADJOURNMENT**

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