MINUTES OF TRAFFIC COMMISSION MEETING
OF THE CITY OF LOS ALAMITOS

REGULAR MEETING – MARCH 9, 2016

1. CALL TO ORDER

A Regular meeting of the Traffic Commission was called to order at 7:01 p.m. on March 9, 2016, in the Council Chambers, 3191 Katella Avenue, Los Alamitos, California, Chair Patz presiding.

2. ROLL CALL

Present: Commissioners: Chair Daniel Patz
Commissioner Dave Emerson
Commissioner Javier Mejia
Commissioner Jason Seaman
Commissioner James Wilhelm

Absent: Vice Chair Gina Biri**

**Chair Patz reported that Vice Chair Biri had texted and she indicated she was stuck in traffic and would hopefully arrive at 7:15 p.m. or so. She was not able to attend the meeting due to traffic.

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 Emerson.

4. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Chair Patz opened the meeting for Oral Communications.

City of Los Alamitos Police Chief Eric Nunez introduced himself to the Commission as he has recently taken over the helm at the Department. He said he understands the good work that the Commission does and appreciates the work that is done by not only the Commission but City Staff as well.

Chair Patz welcomed Chief Nunez and reported that the ride-a-long that he took with Corporal Smith several weeks ago went very well and is proud of the Police Department that we have in Los Alamitos. He felt that the ride was very worthwhile and thanked the Chief for allowing it. Further, he encouraged his
fellow Commissioners to also go on a ride as he feels it was a valuable activity for the Traffic Commission to do.

The Commissioners warmly welcomed Chief Nunez to the City and the Department.

Dave Burgess, Rossmoor resident, said he has two issues one of which is the red light camera at Katella Ave. and Los Alamitos Blvd. This is an emotional/financial issue for everyone. On Nexdoor.com, there were over a hundred postings regarding this issue since this morning on that topic. He said he read the Code which authorizes the cameras and it indicates that the revenue generated from the red light cameras should not exceed the costs. He believes it's around $500,000 of revenue a year and $200,000 in costs and he feels that it's appropriate for the Commission to consider that.

Secondly, Mr. Burgess said the parking along Los Alamitos Blvd. on the west side from the corner of the carwash down to the Arco station, he understands that Los Alamitos has a jurisdiction for the parking restrictions there; the Rossmoor community (of which he is a director on the RCSD) has the sales tax as they own the property. He indicated he knows a lot of people who frequent that shopping center or actually avoid it because it's seriously dangerous to make a left hand turn out any of the driveways from the Arco station going north all the way to the Fish Company. He said he addressed this with the Traffic Commission about three years ago and apparently the City of Los Alamitos has deemed that safe; he said he begs to differ 100%. He said he feels that the tenants that are in that shopping center, about 80% of the people parking are either work at the carwash and/or the Fish Company. He said he's aware that the City of Los Alamitos cannot dictate what the tenants do nor can Rossmoor or the County; he just thinks from a safety standpoint, it's worth reconsidering. His only suggestion for the City of Los Alamitos is at least consider 20-25 feet of red curb on each of those five driveways which will lose 10 cars out of 50.

Josh Wilson, Chair of the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Arts Commission for the City of Los Alamitos, indicated he is at tonight’s meeting to just support the Traffic Commission.

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

5. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
   A. **Approve the Minutes for the Regular Meeting of January 13, 2016.**
      Commissioner Emerson pointed out a correction on Page 2, the last paragraph:
“Commissioner Emerson indicated he has served once as Chair already but would be willing to serve again if needed. He observed that serving on the Commission takes more time than people think…”

He said what he meant to say was, “…serving on the Commission as Chair takes more time…”

Commissioner Wilhelm pointed out a correction on Page 5, mid page:

“Continuing with the items to be added to the Log:

- Status on Item 10-A - Move Cherry/Katella crosswalk to the east side of Katella but none on west side – and, Does this need to go to the Council?”

It should read:

- Status on Item 10-A - Move Cherry/Katella crosswalk to the west side of Katella but none on the east side…..”

And at the bottom of the page, the last paragraph:

- F Items on the bottom of Log (Initiated Items) – What determines when they are actually addressed? F-2 (Pedestrian signal @ northbound Bloomfield & Katella has been on the Log for quite some time and it’s probably not serious in terms of the number of people that are impacted by that but it could be serious if somebody loses patience and makes a right turn while there’s still kids loitering on the corner. There’s a crossing guard there but they don’t know how to address the problem so the crossing guard keeps his back to the drivers in that pocket. When the Commission first brought this up, there were two suggested approaches, one of course would be to provide a right turn arrow and the other would be for the Police Department to educate or train the crossing guards if possible in how to liberate people that are trapped in that turn pocket. Is this something that will be reported or analyzed in the near future?

_Incorporate his name as he was the person who posed the question originally._

Motion/Second: Mejia/Seaman
Carried 5/0/0 (Biri absent): The Traffic Commission approved the minutes of the Regular meeting of January 13, 2016, with corrections as noted above.
6. STAFF REPORTS

A. Traffic Signal Coordination of Los Alamitos Boulevard with Seal Beach Boulevard.

This report requests the review and consideration of implementing the coordination of traffic signals on Los Alamitos Boulevard south of Katella Avenue, in conjunction with the current OCTA grant-funded signal coordination project for Seal Beach Boulevard, as an interim measure to improve traffic flow on the corridor.

Traffic Engineer Ruth Smith summarized the Staff report, referring to the information contained therein, and indicated she’s prepared to answer questions from the Traffic Commission. She indicated they discussed this at the previous meeting and Staff started looking into it and found out that we could sort of piggyback onto the Seal Beach project. They are at a point where they’re ready to actually implement things so the City can’t join them now but in looking at the kind of equipment that we have, it is recent enough that we can do some coordination. In fact we’re working on updating the clock in the controller that controls the signals so that’s it’s GPS keeps perfect time because sometimes it doesn’t work right. This will help us to coordinate with Seal Beach. In the future we’ll go ahead and request funds for doing a proper job and actually get some new equipment to upgrade all the intersections; get the actual software so the City could actually coordinate signals in a grid pattern and not just up and down one street which is basically what we have now.

Commissioner Emerson asked what a group pattern was.

Ms. Smith explained that currently it’s just up and down the street the way it’s coordinated on Katella Avenue but if we were to try to connect Katella Avenue with Los Alamitos Blvd., we can’t really coordinate the two together so actually depending on how things are, it may not actually coordinate with Katella Avenue. If we’re doing it with Seal Beach, it will be coordinated from Seal Beach up to Katella. If we get the software and bring everything up to date, at that point, we could coordinate both systems to work together and then have both directions working.

Chair Patz said it sounds as though we would be able to coordinate from Katella south in a relatively short time frame but the longer term where we need the additional software and the additional expenditure is proposed for next year’s 7-year CIP for 2016/2017 time frame.

Ms. Smith explained that right now what we’re proposing to do would be to add it to this coming fiscal year’s CIP. We would actually apply for the grant funding that we would need for the long range for the software which would be either this year or next year and, by the time that everything is
done, then it's going to be another year or two before that would actually get started.

Commissioner Emerson asked if the $25,000 or so does not include the cost of the new software to get the group signal.

Ms. Smith said that was correct. We would need to upgrade the equipment at each signal and we would need to have a computer at City Hall that would control everything. For this OCTA funding, there is a match of about 20% that the City has to make but it's a great investment because the City would get so much out of it. But right now, it's very basic; the $25,000 is just to assist the system.

Chair Patz clarified that this is just existing equipment and the five intersections – Bradbury, Rossmoor, Orangewood, Farquhar and Katella but not beyond Katella at this juncture.

Ms. Smith said this that is correct.

Commissioner Emerson asked if it would make more sense fiscally to have to submit a grant for a package for the total thing than the $27,000 which would be more than the 20% the City would have to match. Maybe we could just get the CIP to just include whatever the total project would be? What concerns him is that when he voted for the Measure M extension, they had a list of things that would happen in Los Alamitos and this was one of them.

Chair Patz asked if this will coordinate with Seal Beach's work.

Ms. Smith indicated it would and said that that is the whole point.

Commissioner Emerson asked if rather than going through $27,000, would it be better to hold off for a couple of years and then apply for the grant with the City doing the 20% and including this $27,000 as part of the package.

Ms. Smith explained that it would likely be more than the $27,000 as it would not be enough to be at the 20%. The City would actually need more, a higher match, because it's going to be more than $100,000.

Commissioner Emerson said it seems to him that if we roll this into the total grant and we put it into the CIP, then just put this in as our share toward that.

Ms. Smith said she would say that that's kind of the decision that the Traffic Commission needs to make such as when the money should be
spent, how it should be spent. This would probably be implemented within 3-6 months after the Fiscal Year (July 1st) so you’d have it by the end of the year.

Commissioner Seaman mentioned that when he was first placed on the Commission not too long ago, one of the first questions he asked was when the last time we looked at Katella Avenue coordination was and he was told, “We just did it.”, and he asked about this.

Ms. Smith explained that the deal with these signal synchronizations and the best thing is they want to do it from County line to County line but each grant is for three years. The first year is for the design and implementation and then there’s two years of just kind of keeping an eye on it and making adjustments to keep it going. Then after those three years, you can apply again and the idea is to keep it constantly working right; not have it just go out. Katella right now is not well coordinated and it’s a mess. So, it’s time for us to do this again for Katella Avenue; she wanted to do it last year but Anaheim has a lot of stuff going on. They wanted to wait so now the plan is to do it this year and when we would get that funding, then we would have the whole thing coordinated and depending on when we would go after the funds for Los Alamitos Blvd., whichever came first, the second one would then work to coordinate with the other one. So, as part of these projects, those two streets would be coordinated; that’s just part of the project.

Commissioner Seaman asked if $25,000 seems like a reasonable sum for this type of work.

Ms. Smith said yes.

Commissioner Mejia said he’s glad to see this item at least come before the Traffic Commission at this point. He said he’s very hesitant to put anything off because he feels that traffic has gotten worse and it’s only getting worst. Sometimes any changes that are made with the current timing and software won’t inhibit the City in future changes. He said he would like to see the City at least get the ball rolling on this and see if we can’t make any improvement; as any improvement made at this juncture he feels helps many thousands of people that go through that corridor. He said he would like to see us start making some changes then really work towards to being proactive and applying for whatever funding or grant we need to get to continue improving.

Commissioner Wilhelm said synchronization procedure is enormously expensive and he is wondering just how often it’s necessary because it seems to him just two or 3 years ago they coordinated Katella Avenue all the way from the County line into I-5, 17 miles, and that was immensely
expensive and now we’re talking about having to do this kind of thing over again?

Ms. Smith said when we talk about Katella Avenue, that’s kind of side tracking from the main topic here, but it wouldn’t be as expensive just because the equipment is newer; the City would get new software with it but that software would be good for the future endeavors. The software would actually cover all the signals in the City; the software normally covers 25 signals so the City would buy just one software package to cover everything.

Commissioner Wilhelm said he also recalls that there is a problem with multiple jurisdictions; you can synchronize to a point and suddenly hit an intersection where the County has discretion and they’re apt to do something you don’t want them to do.

Ms. Smith explained that’s why they try to get every agency involved; the biggest issue in the whole County is Caltrans and they’ve worked very hard to try to get Caltrans on board but you may notice that everything is fine until you hit the freeway and then it’s stop, stop, stop. Caltrans does not want to spend any money; some cities now are spending the money for Caltrans signals but they still aren’t turning them over completely to the cities; they want to maintain control which she understands but they’re really affecting how well our surface streets work.

Commissioner Emerson asked if the two signals at the 405 aren’t included in Seal Beach’s study?

Ms. Smith said she would guess not but she’s not sure and she would have to find out.

Chair Patz said he would like somebody from the Commission to make a motion to have Staff pursue the coordination of the corridor within the next 3-6 months to help better traffic flow from Katella Avenue all the way down to Seal Beach and take advantage of that.

Ms. Smith asked if the Commission could also place it on next year’s CIP as well.

Commissioner Seaman moved to place the interim traffic signal coordination of Los Alamitos Boulevard traffic signals with Seal Beach Boulevard on next year’s 7-year CIP in 2016/2017.

Chair Patz added, “and ask Staff to pursue the coordination within the next 3 to 6 months.”
Commissioner Seaman accepted the amended motion.

Motion/Second: Seaman/Mejia. Carried 4/1/0 (Emerson opposed and Biri absent): The Traffic Commission approved placing the interim traffic signal coordination of Los Alamitos Boulevard traffic signals with Seal Beach Boulevard on next year's 7-year CIP in 2016/2017 and ask Staff to pursue the coordination within the next 3 to 6 months.

7. TRAFFIC COMMISSION INITIATED BUSINESS

Commissioner Wilhelm

- South side of Katella Avenue between Cherry & Reagan
  - There are 3 curb cuts where you can make ingress or egress:
    - At Cherry, exiting is relatively safe due to signal but there is no protected left turn arrow;
    - At 3692 – There's no need to exit there because it's just a few yards from one egress to the next and if you're aware of that situation, you're going to go up and come out at about 3692 Cherry;
    - The other two locations is like a tunnel at 3851 Katella Avenue adjacent to the medical weight clinic and there's one near Reagan which is immediately to the east of the 3662 building on Katella. It's a two hour zone along the street and there's no red curbs and he would not propose that those be created but what he thinks should be done is on the backs of the buildings, that there's a warning, “Danger, Do Not Exit From This Point”, or perhaps something that would direct them a few yards to the east so that they can exit it at the point near Cherry Avenue. He said he made the mistake of trying to come out of one of those two dangerous exits and he finally just made a go for it. He said he would be amazed if there's never been a serious accident in one of those locations. He said he suspects that the people that work in those buildings know that that's not a safe maneuver.

Mr. Mendoza indicated that Traffic Engineer Ruth Smith has been working with the kidney dialysis place and the building over there for about two months with some of their customers that have had those same concerns that Commissioner Wilhelm has had so she's begun to wrap her arms around the situation and done some sight line things to help improve the area. He reported that Ms. Smith is working on a report for those people that have requested it; the owner of building and then the customers of the dialysis center have done outreach to Staff as well as the guy who owns the Cherry building as well because Cherry looks like it continues into an alley so he has concerns as well.
Ms. Smith said she has written down the addresses that Commissioner Wilhelm has just mentioned so that she can actually include them in the report that she is working on as Mr. Mendoza mentioned. She said as far as putting signs on buildings is concerned, since it’s private property, the City can’t tell them what to do.

Commissioner Mejia

One item was the intersection at Katella and Cherry; this item came before the Commission maybe a year ago with someone looking to make that ingress/egress safer; it’s a very narrow pass there and it’s at a signalized intersection. He said he has seen a car coming out and a car trying to go in and it’s only doable if first car has made space otherwise it’s a headache. He thought perhaps a entrance only or an exit only sign could be placed there.

Ms. Smith said Staff is considering all of the ideas that have been brought forth by the Commission for this area. She said she also looked at the collision records and there aren’t any collisions but that doesn’t mean there haven’t been close calls. Ms. Smith said she met with the signal consultant today at that location and there are some other issues there that nobody has mentioned so there is definitely going to be something done there.

Commissioner Mejia said maybe the City could piggyback moving that crosswalk over.

Ms. Smith asked why, because she noticed on the original signal plans, it was on the west side, it has been moved to the east side and asked if he had any idea why that was done.

Captain Rick Moore, Los Alamitos Police Department, explained that after the last meeting, he went back and addressed all the Police supervisors as well as the traffic division about that particular incident and they were all in agreement that moving that crosswalk was such a good idea because all the people wanting to go west bound on Katella can do so when it’s clear; however, the people that want to go east bound have to wait for those pedestrians.

Ms. Smith said but they can certainly look at all that together but she believes that is on the CIP for next year and doing the study right now is good timing to place it on the CIP for next year. That will no double require spending funds for that so we’re looking at what can be done, what the cost is and then we want to bring this back to the Commission when we have everything completed.

Commissioner Mejia reported that he’s had a couple of residents come to him with questions about access to Trend Offset on Humbolt. Trucks have to make a 90 degree turn to back into their truck bays. He’s been told that traffic backs up in
both directions when this happens because it's very difficult for those trucks to make those turns with the cars coming and with all the cars that are parked on the hospital side of the street. It was suggested that if we were to take out maybe two parking spaces directly across from that, the trucks would be able to a smoother turn and get into the truck bays to clear the street. He also thought painting the curbs red would be a suggestion.

Mr. Mendoza the actual street name is Catalina and not Humbolt.

Commissioner Mejia said another item that was brought forward from another resident was the crosswalk on Cherry; it's the crosswalk between the hospital and the surgery center, north of Katella. It seems to him that it would be better if the crosswalk would be a much safer place to cross if it was where the stop sign is located as it's dark and hard to see people walking in the crosswalk.

He also brought up the changes on Lexington due to a proposed development; he felt this should be agendized so that the Commission is being proactive regarding any needed improvements to Katella and Lexington.

Mr. Mendoza indicated that when a traffic study is submitted, he said he would certainly bring it to the Commission because if they study the wrong intersections, it would be nice for the Commission to know.

Commissioner Seaman reported that he spoke to a crossing guard at Los Alamitos Blvd. and Farquhar who indicated that in the morning, the audible chirp for the crosswalk doesn't work.

Commissioner Emerson reported that there are still several Do Not Block intersections (actually, Keep Clear pavement markings; no Do Not Block Intersection signs) and people think there's a stop either side of Reagan Street. He also said that the one at Cherry Avenue should be removed as it's not needed with all the other things that have been done to help alleviate congestion. The other one is at Pine Street. Perhaps Public Works could do some sand blasting to remove the markings.

One more issue is that when a person is turning right from northbound Bloomfield, turning right onto eastbound Katella, the intersection actually jogs and the people that don't want to pay for parking comes right up to the intersection and he's spoken to the crossing guards there and they said it's hazardous in terms of kids in the sight lines so perhaps this can also be looked at as well. He felt that Bloomfield definitely needs more red curb. He said he felt we should also definitely follow up on what was said about along southbound Los Alamitos Blvd. and the driveways as you're approaching those so he wasn't sure if any of this needs to be agendized.
Ms. Smith indicated she'll take it back and look at it and if it looks like something the Commission needs to look at, and then she'll bring it back to the Commission.

Chair Patz indicated he received a text from Vice Chair Biri who indicated she is stuck in traffic and will not be able to attend the meeting but she did have a few items she wanted him to bring up. They are:

- Parking meter town hall meter a week ago and the on line survey to vote meter in or out. Also she wanted to let everybody know that the Council had a moratorium for building in the City last week which was intended to stall the trucking terminal application for the back terminal of Arrowhead as they are selling. We need to remain vigilant.

Chair Patz reported that he did a ride along with the police department last week and it was very worthwhile and thanked Captain Moore for setting it up with Corporal Smith. Out of this ride a long, Corporal Smith is going to ask officers in the field to provide input for the Traffic Commission and visa versa.

At San Benito/Bloomfield, he reported that there is an "s" on the ends of both of the new street name signs. He asked how this happened in the first place.

Mr. Mendoza said that Public Works is aware of this and have ordered new signs.

Captain Rick Moore said the Commission had asked some questions when they met the last time and he wanted to respond to all of them.

1) Stop sign at Cherry & Catalina near Trend Offset Printing was very well received due to the high number of pedestrian traffic.
2) Crossing guards at Bloomfield & Katella assisting in the flow of north bound traffic but the purpose of the crossing guard is to do nothing other than to protect the children and people crossing there. Cannot task them with anything else as they are solely there for the kids.
3) If the Commission is ever questioned about the red light traffic system, he said they can just go to their services page on the police department web site as it has a lot of good information. Plus, he is always ready and willing to provide information to the Commission as well.

8. **ADJOURNMENT**

The Traffic Commission adjourned at 8:20 p.m.