

STATE OF TEXAS

COUNTIES OF POTTER AND RANDALL

ON this 16th day of February, 2011, the Amarillo Traffic Commission convened in regular session in the City Commission Chambers in the Municipal Building.

ATTENDANCE

MEMBERS	PRESENT TODAY	NO. MEETINGS HELD SINCE APPOINTMENT	NO. MEETINGS ATTENDED SINCE APPOINTMENT
Mr. Rob Ledwig	Yes	26	22
Mr. Rudy Mediavilla	No	26	10
Mr. Kenneth Graham	Yes	14	12
Mr. Bob Balliett	Yes	11	7
Mr. Wes Reeves	Yes	11	7
Mr. Leon Church	Yes	4	4
Ms. Ellen Robertson-Green	Yes	4	4
Ms. D. J. Stubben	Yes	4	4

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Jihad El Eid	Traffic Engineer
David Szmagalski	Traffic Operations Technician
Judy Alexander	Recording Secretary
Lt. Michael Miller	Amarillo Police Department

Commissioner Ledwig established a quorum and called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. The following items of business were conducted:

ITEM 1. Invocation:

Commissioner Stubben gave the invocation.

ITEM 2. Approval of the December 15, 2010, Amarillo Traffic Commission Minutes:

Commissioner Stubben made a motion to approve the minutes of the December 15, 2010, meeting. Commissioner Balliett seconded the motion, and motion carried 7:0.

ITEM 3. Update on the Traffic Commission Sub-Committee Meeting on January 19, 2011:

Commissioner Robertson-Green gave an update on the Sub-Committee meeting on January 19, 2011. She reported that she and Commissioner Graham, the four Amarillo Independent School District Cluster Directors, Dean Downey, motorcycle advocate, Michael Rice, Director of Public Works, Lt. Michael Miller, Amarillo Police Department, and Traffic Engineering staff met to discuss the cell phone ban in school zones and the Share the Road motorcycle and bicycle signs.

She stated she was selected as Chair and Dean Downey was selected as Vice Chair of the Sub-Committee. Members discussed cell phone restrictions in school zones as authorized under HB 55, which would necessitate the installation of 322 signs on poles and 103 signs on mast arms in existing school zones. Mr. Rice informed the committee that the legislation only allows the ban in school zones with speed reductions. Members discussed possible expansion of school zones such as Bell St. near Amarillo High School and Western St./Wolflin St. near Tascosa High School. The consensus was that speeding is the primary issue in school areas. Lt. Miller stated the APD will enforce the ban upon its enactment to the best of their ability with their limited motor officers. Mr. Chatman, AISD Tascosa Cluster Director, made a motion to recommend to the Traffic Commission to go forward with the cell phone restriction beginning with the high schools and continuing until all school in the city limits are signed. The ban would be effective immediately upon installation of the signs. Mr. Loomis, AISD Caprock Cluster Director, seconded the motion, and motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Robertson-Green reported that Taylor Withrow, the former Traffic Engineer, distributed maps to Sub-Committee members indicating the 2009-2010 motorcycle accident history, the proposed locations for the 75 Share the Road bicycle signs, and the 69 Share the Road motorcycle signs. He told members that there are 100 of both signs in stock, but he recommended 75 of each be installed, reserving some for replacements or additional locations as needed. Commissioner Graham proposed additional bicycle sign locations, and Mr. Downey passed out a list of additional motorcycle sign locations for consideration. Commissioner Graham made a motion to recommend to the Traffic Commission they accept the proposed locations for the signs with consideration given to the additional locations. Mr. Downey seconded the motion, and motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Robertson-Green reported to the Traffic Commission that she appreciated the opportunity to meet with AISD personnel for their feedback on school safety, and she stated she felt positive about the Sub-Committee's recommendations and support.

Mr. El Eid, Traffic Engineer, stated that Traffic staff would evaluate school areas within the city limits for traffic speed, volume, and proximity of children before considering additional school zones. He stated that a reasonable time frame for installation of the cell phone signs in existing school zones would be during the summer months with enforcement beginning in the fall for the 2011-2012 school year.

Commissioner Church expressed his concerns about the cell phone ban. He cited the difficulty of enforcing cell phone use and texting and the fact that there are many other driver distractions. He stated he thought a law or city ordinance banning cell phones would do little to improve school safety.

Commissioner Green made a motion to recommend to the City Commission that cell phones be banned in school zones for the 2011-2012 school term. Commissioner Graham seconded the motion, and motion passed 6-1. Commissioners Ledwig, Graham, Balliett, Reeves, Robertson-Green, and Stubben voted AYE and Commissioner Church voted NO.

ITEM 4. Update on the Share the Road Sign Installation Project:

Mr. El Eid reported that approximately 50% of the Share the Road bicycle signs have been installed. After completion of the bicycle signs, he said Traffic Field staff will begin installation of the motorcycle signs, which should be completed in approximately one month.

Commissioner Graham requested consideration of an additional location for Share the Road bicycle sign at Crockett and S.W. 15th Avenue. Mr. Downey requested additional Share the Road motorcycle signs on Avondale St. between S.W. 9th Ave. and Avondale School. Mr. El Eid stated he thought it would be prudent to gauge public support and success of the original sign locations before consideration of additional locations.

Commissioner Graham expressed his appreciation to the City for the purchase and installation of the signs.

ITEM 5. Miscellaneous Discussion:

Commissioner Stubben distributed a form that was prepared in honor of Alex Brown, a Lubbock teenager who was killed in an automobile accident while texting. The form is a pledge to wear seat belts and not text while driving.

Commissioner Graham stated that the Share the Road organization along with the Texas Department of Public Safety has scheduled a program for students at Amarillo High School to promote traffic safety. Students will be encouraged to not use cell phones while driving. He stated he was hopeful that the program would be scheduled at other schools in the future.

Commissioner Graham expressed his concern about the delay and present status of the revised Hike and Bike Master Plan. He said the original plan was developed in 2003 and revised in May 2010, but the revised plan still has not been approved by the City Commission. Mr. Rice stated that it was his understanding that the City Commission had expressed a desire that the Hike and Bike Plan be a comprehensive traffic plan that included multi-modal transportation, and the revision of the plan has been assigned to the Traffic Engineering Department rather than the Parks and Recreation Department. He stated there has been discussion about hiring a consultant to review the plan and provide insight, but he said any such service must first be approved and budgeted.

Mr. EL Eid stated that he would contact members of the Sub-Committee to establish if another meeting should be scheduled.

Commissioner Graham requested future Traffic Commission agendas include the status of the Hike and Bike Plan.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:07 p.m.