

STATE OF TEXAS

COUNTIES OF POTTER AND RANDALL

ON this 18th day of January, 2012, the Amarillo Traffic Commission met at 1:30 p.m. in regular session in the City Commission Chambers on the third floor of City Hall at 509 S.E. 7th Avenue.

ATTENDANCE

MEMBERS	PRESENT TODAY	NO. MEETINGS HELD SINCE APPOINTMENT	NO. MEETINGS ATTENDED SINCE APPOINTMENT
<i>Mr. Kenneth Graham</i>	Yes	18	16
<i>Mr. Bob Balliett</i>	No	15	9
<i>Mr. Leon Church</i>	No	8	5
<i>Ms. D. J. Stubben</i>	Yes	8	8
<i>Mr. Dean Downey</i>	Yes	4	4
<i>Mr. Charlie Graham</i>	Yes	4	1
<i>Mr. Craig Gualtiere</i>	Yes	4	4
<i>Mr. Tiller Watson III</i>	Yes	4	3

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Taylor Withrow	Traffic Engineer
David Szmagalski	Traffic Operations Technician
Judy Alexander	Recording Secretary
Lt. Michael Miller	Amarillo Police Department

Commissioner Stubben 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 Watson gave the invocation.

ITEM 2. Approval of the November 16, 2012, Amarillo Traffic Commission Minutes.

Commissioner Gualtiere made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 16, 2011, meeting. Commissioner Downey seconded the motion, and motion carried 6:0.

ITEM 3. Citywide Ban on Texting While Driving:

Mr. Withrow reported that a telephone survey of several cities in the Dallas/Fort Worth area showed no additional cities in Texas with texting while driving bans other than those previously discussed at the last meeting.

He stated the City Commission plans to proceed with an educational campaign about not texting while driving similar to the "Let It Ring" campaign. He stated that Amarillo Independent School District is onboard, and he asked for volunteers to serve as representatives on the board. Commissioner Graham and Commissioner Stubben volunteered to serve.

Mr. Withrow stated that the City Commission needs a recommendation from the Traffic Commission about the texting ban.

Commissioner Gualtiere stated that he had given the texting ban much consideration, and he said that he feels it is in epidemic proportion with serious consequences. Even with the enforcement difficulties, he stated he felt the Traffic Commission should move forward and recommend to the City Commission that texting while driving should be banned. Commissioner Downey stated he thought an educational campaign would be more effective. Commissioner Kenneth Graham suggested a two-prong approach would be appropriate, including both education and enforcement. He stated he personally would favor a total ban of cell phone use while driving. Commissioner Charlie Graham, Commissioner Watson, and Commissioner Gualtiere agreed that they were hopeful a total ban would be considered at some point.

Commissioner Stubben asked if anyone in the audience would care to speak. Trina Fournier, 4427 S. Hayden, appeared and stated she was against the texting ban. She stated her research indicates only a small percentage of accidents are caused by cell phone use, and she stated that passing a law is not an effective means of changing human behavior in any event. She cited there are many other driver distractions including eating, drinking, and having children as passengers.

Commissioner Gualtiere made a motion to recommend to the City Commission that they consider a citywide texting ban for drivers within the city and move forward with an educational program. Commissioner Downey seconded the motion, and motion carried 6:0.

ITEM 4. Education Session: Warrants for Two-Way Stop, Four-Way Stop, Traffic Signal, and Speed Limits

Mr. Withrow gave a presentation on traffic control devices and the warrants used to justify their use based on traffic engineering principles. He stated that the general definition of traffic engineering is the safe and efficient movement of people and goods.

He outlined some of the responsibilities of the Traffic Engineering Department:

1. Planning, design, installation, operation, and maintenance of signs, signals, and pavement markings.
2. Street lights, including arterial lighting, which are placed for traffic safety purposes.

3. School Safety Program, which includes 36 School Crossing Guards at various elementary schools in the city.
4. Driveway, parking, and parade permits.
5. Traffic Counting Program which includes traffic counts at 360 links within the city.

He referred to a handout of a traffic engineering matrix with a breakdown of driver, vehicle, and roadway factors and the effect of engineering, education, and enforcement as they relate to them.

He addressed traffic control devices such as stop and yield signs, and the warrants that are considered for their installation. He stated that uniformity of the devices is consistent with the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). He gave the criteria for application of the various traffic control devices, such as peak hour vehicle counts, average daily traffic, safe approach speed, accident history per year, and street classification.

Since the MUTCD is somewhat vague on the installation of traffic control devices, he stated the City of Amarillo has followed a set of warrants adopted by the City Commission in 1994 as part of the Neighborhood Traffic Assistance Policy. He said there are 6,082 intersections in Amarillo: 259 are signalized and about 67% or 4075 are uncontrolled.

He stated that speed limits are set as defined by the Texas Department of Transportation. Speed studies are taken and the 85th percentile speed is calculated being that speed at or below which 85% of the drivers are traveling. This value is used based on the assumption that 85% of drivers will travel at a reasonable and prudent speed based on conditions. The speed limit must be set between ± 7 mph of the 85th percentile speed.

He said that the Traffic Engineering Department performs parking studies, primarily in the downtown area, to provide turnover for customers of adjacent businesses.

Before a traffic signal is installed, he said at least one of eight warrants must be met. The warrants are vehicular volumes, including eight-hour, four-hour, and peak hour volumes, pedestrian volumes, school crossing, coordinated signal system, collision experience, and roadway network, the intersection of two major routes. He stated that the timing of the signals, the green, yellow, and all-red intervals, is set using traffic engineering principles to accommodate traffic flow with maximum safety.

He referred to a handout of a "2009-2010 Vehicles Entering Intersection" in a 24-hour period of major intersections in the city. The Traffic Engineering Department undertakes traffic counts at 360 locations around the city on a two-year cycle.

ITEM 5. Miscellaneous Discussion.

Mr. Withrow said there is a possibility of having two parking studies to be placed on a future Traffic Committee agenda. He stated he typically avoids having a one item agenda, and he was uncertain about a scheduled meeting in February.

He said the island has been removed and the two-way designation on Taylor St. between S.E. 13th and S.E. 15th is in place.

He stated the speed limit reduction on Coulter St. from S.W. 45th Ave. to Hillside Rd. is in place.

He reported the four-way stop at Kingston Rd. and Granada Dr. is in place.

He stated he anticipates the City Commission will consider the revisions to the Driveway and Parking Manual soon.

Commissioner Kenneth Graham stated he felt there is a tremendous need to address pedestrian safety on Bell St. and Sandie Dr. near Amarillo High School. He also inquired about the feasibility of the purchase of permanent speed trailers to be used within the city.

ITEM 6. Public Forum.

No comments were received by the public.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:37 p.m.

Taylor N. Withrow, Traffic Engineer