

STATE OF TEXAS

COUNTIES OF POTTER AND RANDALL

ON this 15th day of March, 2012, the Amarillo Traffic Commission met at 10:15 a.m. in regular session in Room 305 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
Mr. Kenneth Graham	No	19	16
Mr. Bob Balliett	No	16	9
Mr. Leon Church	Yes	9	6
Ms. D. J. Stubben	Yes	9	9
Mr. Dean Downey	Yes	5	5
Mr. Charlie Graham	Yes	5	2
Mr. Craig Gualtiere	Yes	5	5
Mr. Tiller Watson III	No	5	3
Mr. Mark Nair	Yes	1	1

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Jerry Bird Traffic Engineer
Judy Alexander Recording Secretary
Lt. Michael Miller Amarillo Police Department

Commissioner Stubben established a quorum and called the meeting to order at 10:15 a.m. The following items of business were conducted:

ITEM 1. Invocation.

Commissioner Stubben gave the invocation.

ITEM 2. Approval of the January 18, 2012, Amarillo Traffic Commission Minutes.

Jerry Bird, Traffic Engineer, stated that the January 18, 2012, minutes, second paragraph in Item 5, Miscellaneous Discussion, needs to be corrected to read S.E. 13th and S.E. 15th” instead of S.W. 13th and S.W. 15th.

Commissioner Gualtiere made a motion to approve the minutes as corrected. Commissioner Downey seconded the motion, and motion carried 5:0.

ITEM 3. ASCE Traffic Calming Webinar and Discussion.

Commissioners watched an American Society of Civil Engineering webinar on Traffic Calming Best Practices and Recent Trends.

ITEM 4. Citywide Ban on Texting While Driving.

Jerry Bird reported that the City Commission has returned the recommendation for the texting while driving restriction back to the Traffic Commission for additional review, hearing, and final recommendation. A memo from Jarrett Atkinson, City Manager, to Michael Rice, Director of Public Works, requested the following be considered:

- Review and consideration of existing cell phone and texting laws (state and federal).
- Review and consideration of existing studies on distracted driving and its effects.
- Review and consideration of published statistical literature on effectiveness of various restrictions.
- Consideration of possible future state and/or federal actions (if known).
- Consideration of public awareness efforts (funding is available).
- Coordination with the City legal staff and law enforcement, both local and state.
- Conduct the public hearings with draft ordinance or modified draft ordinance in addition to the information above.
- Return final recommendations to the Commission based on the above efforts, including any needed modifications or changes to the topic as a whole.

Mr. Bird stated that the Traffic Commission will need to schedule additional work sessions to study the issue in depth before making a recommendation to the City Commission. At least two public hearings will to be scheduled; one tentatively will be held during the day and one will be held in the evening. Public comments will be solicited.

Michael Rice, Director of Public Works, said the City Commission recognizes the issue is a complex one, requiring more in-depth study. He stated the issue needs to be separated into texting only restrictions and general cell phone use. Cell phone use with smart phones could include using the internet or navigational mapping, as well as talking, texting, or listening to music. He asked members to research existing state and federal laws, and he asked any pertinent research they may find be sent to Jerry Bird or the Traffic Engineering Department for distribution to the other members. He said the Legal Department has provided a draft ordinance banning the use of handheld wireless devices by motorists for discussion purposes only.

Mr. Rice reported that the Amarillo Independent School District is planning an educational program about the dangers of cell phone use while driving similar to the "Let It Ring" campaign.

Item 5. Miscellaneous Discussion.

- A. Future Meetings: Mr. Bird said a work session will be scheduled in the near future. Members will be contacted to determine a convenient time for the majority.
- B. Commissioner Stubben introduced Mark Nair, who was recently appointed to the Traffic Commission.

Item 6. Public Form: Comments from interested citizens on matters pertaining to city policies, programs, or services.

Stephen Hayward, 3510 Carlton, stated that traffic calming has previously been used in Amarillo and was referenced in the 2003 Amarillo Hike and Bike Master Plan. He said that traffic calming practices help improve safety for motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians. He passed out a handout of photographs of Polk Street and 7th Avenue in the downtown area from the 1960's -1970's era that indicated that the lanes had been reduced from four lanes to three lanes, including a center turn lane.

Commissioner Charlie Graham stated he would like to see the City of Amarillo do more to promote bicycle touring and reap the economic benefits it would bring. He stated the U.S. Bike Route System plans a bicycle tour through Amarillo. The proposed route would proceed west from Amarillo Blvd. to Georgia St., south on Georgia St. to S.W. 6th Ave., and west on S.W. 6th Ave./S.W.9th Ave. to Amarillo Blvd. The route would proceed southwest/west on Amarillo Blvd. to the I-40 frontal road at Hope Rd. He indicated he would be in favor of changing the route to a safer route through the city.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:40 p.m.

Jerry Bird, Traffic Engineer