

STATE OF TEXAS

COUNTIES OF POTTER AND RANDALL

ON the 25th day of April, 2012, the Amarillo Traffic Commission met at 5:30 p.m. at City Hall on the third floor in the City Commission Chambers to conduct a Public Hearing on the proposal to ban texting and/or cell phone use while driving.

ATTENDANCE

<i>Members</i>	<i>Present Today</i>	<i>No. Meetings & Public Hearings Held Since Appointment</i>	<i>No. Meetings & Public Hearings Attended Since Appointment</i>	<i>No. Work Sessions Held Since Appointment</i>	<i>No. Work Sessions Attended Since Appointment</i>
<i>Kenneth Graham</i>	Yes	21	18	3	2
<i>Leon Church</i>	Yes	11	8	3	2
<i>D.J. Stubben</i>	Yes	11	11	3	3
<i>Dean Downey</i>	Yes	7	7	3	3
<i>Charlie Graham</i>	No	7	3	3	3
<i>Craig Gualtiere</i>	Yes	7	7	3	2
<i>Tiller Watson III</i>	Yes	7	5	3	3
<i>Mark Nair</i>	Yes	3	3	3	2

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Jerry Bird Traffic Engineer
David Szmagalski Traffic Operation Technician
Judy Alexander Recording Secretary
Lt. Michael Miller Amarillo Police Department

The invocation was given by Commissioner Watson, and Commissioner Downey led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Commissioner Stubben established a quorum and called the public hearing to order at 5:30 p.m. The following items of business were conducted:

1. Public Hearing on the Proposal to Ban Texting and/or Cell Phone Use while Driving.

Commissioner Stubben welcomed attendees to the public hearing on the proposal to ban texting and/or cell phone use while driving. She announced the following procedures will be used: Any person who wishes to speak must first be recognized by

the chair and come to the microphone and state his name and address. Each speaker is allowed three minutes unless the chair calls a person back to the microphone or the speaker has a new idea that has not been previously expressed. The order of the speakers shall be random, without regard to whether one is for or against the regulation. Speakers shall direct all comments and questions to the chair, not toward others in the room. Commissioner Stubben invited anyone in the audience to come forward to speak. The following persons came forward to speak:

Joseph Hayes, 708 S. Tennessee, asked the Commissioners and attendees of the hearing how many of them had ever used a cell phone while driving. He stated that studies he had seen indicated another law would not change anything, but would only affect the pocketbook of the poor.

Linda Laws, 6201 Donda, questioned if there should also be a ban on radios, children as passengers, smoking, and other driver distractions. She stated she thought cell phones could be used reasonably by drivers. She said she would support a texting ban.

Rebecca Strickler, 5312 Alvarado Rd., questioned why another law is needed and how it would differ from the current distracted driver law.

Sherri Williamson, 3412 Paramount, stated she was concerned about traffic safety, and she said she was in favor of the ban. She cited numerous instances of seeing drivers using cell phones in the bike lanes on her street.

Jimmy Johnson, 4406 Ridgecrest, stated he was against the cell phone ban, but favored a ban on texting. He said he had been in the limousine business in Amarillo for 23 years. He personally uses a hands-free device, but does not agree with a total ban. He said he thought an educational program, particularly for young drivers, would be more effective.

Cherie Sanders, 2819 S. Crockett, stated she is against the ban. Her research shows no upward trend in the number of accidents and a ban in other areas has had no effect on crash statistics. She cited numerous other driver distractions. She advocated more personal and corporate responsibility rather than government intervention. She stated that Allentown, Pennsylvania has had to defend their ban in court, which is a poor use of taxpayer dollars.

James Schenck, 4216 Summit, stated he was against the ban. His research indicates that although the number of cell phones has increased dramatically, accident rates have decreased. He also questioned how the ban would be enforced. He stated that phone calls are an important communication source for businesses, and he said there are many other driver distractions. He also cited the cell phone ban in Pennsylvania being challenged.

Jamie Stonecipher, 4302 Emil, stated he was against the ban. He was concerned a ban would open the door to other restrictive laws. He said he is an insurance adjuster, and he sees many other causes of distracted driving and accidents. He questioned if a public educational campaign would be a wise use of taxpayer money.

Rebecca Strickler suggested a public safety campaign with a positive light would be better received by the public and more effective. She said cell phones are important in her line of work as a midwife. She cautioned Commissioners not use Pennsylvania laws as a model. She said she had previously lived in Pennsylvania, and the state has

many laws, many of which are a joke. She said the economy and job market are depressed there.

Commissioner Stubben thanked members of the Traffic Commission, city staff, and attendees of the hearing for their time, diligence, and input on the project.

2. **Approval of the March 15, 2012, Amarillo Traffic Commission Minutes.**
Commissioner Stubben requested a motion to approve the March 15, 2012, Traffic Commission minutes. Commissioner Graham made a motion to approve the minutes. Commissioner Church seconded the motion, and motion carried.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:24 p.m.

Jerry Bird, Traffic Engineer