

STATE OF TEXAS

COUNTIES OF POTTER AND RANDALL

ON the 16th day of April, 2014, the Amarillo Traffic Commission met at 1:30 p.m. in regular session in the in the City Council Chambers on the third floor of City Hall at 509 S.E. 7th Avenue.

Traffic Commissioners present were D. J. Stubben, Dean Downey, Charlie Graham, Barbara Richardson, Craig Gualtiere, Walt Kelley, Mark Nair, Steve Rogers, and Frank Nelson. Staff members present were Jerry Bird, Traffic Engineer, David Szmagalski, Traffic Operations Technician, Lt. Ken Albright, Amarillo Police Department, and Judy Alexander, Recording Secretary.

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

1. **Pledge:**
Commissioner Nair began the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.
2. **Approval of the February 19, 2014, Minutes:**
Commissioner Stubben made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 19, 2014, meeting. Commissioner Gualtiere seconded the motion, and motion carried unanimously.
3. **Discussion and Review of Bike and Pedestrian Safety for the City:**
Commissioner Nair asked if anyone would care to come forward to speak on the issue.

Garry Rich, 6903 Elmhurst Rd., appeared and said he is a member of the Share the Road organization. He said one of the goals of the Share the Road organization is for a greater number of citizens to use alternate transportation modes such as biking or walking to go to their homes, to work, or to commercial businesses with a greater assurance of safety.

He said they are looking for answers on the status of the Hike and Bike Plan, which the City of Amarillo adopted in 2010. He advocated for the formation of a citizen advisory committee to meet and address bike and pedestrian mobility issues. He said their organization would like to see the name of the Hike and Bike Plan changed to Active Transportation. He stated typically hiking and biking is thought of as more of a recreational activity, not a means of transportation.

Commissioner Gualtiere stated that he feels the City lacks safe routes for bicyclists and pedestrians, and he thinks citizen education is also lacking as he notices many people jaywalking all over the town. He stated he thinks there should be more marked pedestrian crosswalks. As an advisory group, he stated he thought the Traffic Commission should consider a plan to present to the City Council for their consideration to promote bike and pedestrian safety.

Mr. Bird announced that Brian Shelhamer with the Parks Department and Kelley Shaw with the Planning Department are present and will speak on the issue.

Brian Shelhamer, Plan Manager with the Amarillo Parks Department, came forward and reported Parks staff, Traffic staff, and other interested citizens have met to discuss how to implement the Hike and Bike plan more fully. He said that it is a work in progress, and they have encountered some obstacles with infrastructure such as narrow streets and sharrows. He said they would welcome citizen input from a citizen action committee.

Kelley Shaw, Director of Planning for the City of Amarillo, reported on the Comprehensive Plan, which was approved in 2010. He said there had been small group meetings as well as neighborhood meetings to get feedback from citizens in the development of the plan. He stated that a greater emphasis on multi-modal transportation was a common issue. He stated that multi-modal transportation was included in two chapters of the plan, the Land Use and Community Character and the Mobility Chapter. He said that the present development policies inhibit connectivity in the community in an attempt to screen commercial businesses from residential developments. He stated that development of new designs for thoroughfares, special bike and pedestrian corridors, upgrade of current corridors, and complete street design for future developments were some of the suggestions given to address the issue.

Commissioner Nair stated he thought the Traffic Commission should move forward to form a citizen committee to study the issue in depth. Commissioner Gualtiere made a motion to recommend the formation of a Citizen Action Committee to study bicycle and pedestrian mobility issues. Mr. Bird stated the agenda limited the issue for discussion and review only.

4. **Discussion on the Intersection of Soncy Road and Legend Ave.:**

Commissioner Nair questioned if any traffic control is being considered at Soncy and Legend. Mr. Bird stated that a traffic signal warrant analysis will be performed soon to determine if the intersection meets warrants for a signal. He reported that the Texas Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (Texas MUTCD) requires at least one of nine warrants to be met to be eligible for a traffic signal. The nine warrants are (1) Eight-Hour Vehicular Volume, (2) Four-Hour Vehicular Volume, (3) Peak Hour, (4) Pedestrian Volume, (5) School Crossing, (6) Coordinated Signal System, (7) Crash Experience, (8) Roadway Network, and (9) Intersection Near a Grade Crossing. Mr. Bird stated that if any warrant is met, the Traffic Engineering Department would report to TxDOT since Soncy is under their direction as a part of the Loop of the state highway system. Commissioner Gualtiere questioned if a turn lane or deceleration lane could be used on Soncy near the United Supermarket. Mr. Bird stated that TxDOT does not have a policy for right-turn lanes or deceleration lanes.

Patty Crosson, 7803 Harrington Circle, appeared and requested the city/state consider the installation of a signal at the intersection of Soncy and Legend. She stated she lives in the Sleepy Hollow subdivision, and the traffic volume and speeds make it difficult for drivers to turn south on Soncy from Legend. Since the United Supermarket opened, it has become even more difficult. She said she has instructed her teenage daughter to avoid the intersection as many other neighborhood residents do.

Commissioner Gualtiere questioned if the United Supermarket management had requested a signal. Mr. Bird responded that they had requested a study be made in the planning stage of the construction, but a subsequent study indicated it did not meet any of the nine warrants. He stated signal installation is not based on

projection, but the Traffic Engineering Department has plans to perform another signal analysis now that the store has been open for a while and traffic has stabilized. He said the results of the signal analysis should be available at the May meeting.

5. **Question and Answer Session on the Flashing Yellow Arrow Left Turn Installation:**

Mr. Bird reported that a citizen had requested a permissive left turn arrow on the north-south lanes of Western and Hillside. After a traffic analysis was performed, the Traffic Engineering Department staff determined that the intersection was a good candidate for a four-lens signal head with a flashing yellow to replace the five-lens head signal. He said that it is the first flashing yellow signal installation in Amarillo. He said that the installation is supported in the Texas MUTCD and that Federal Highway Administration data suggests the flashing yellow left turn to be safer than the permissive green ball to alert drivers that they can make a safe turn only when there is a traffic gap. Commissioner Gualtiere applauded the use of trying something new, and he questioned if it would be used at other intersections within the city. Mr. Bird said it would be used in the future when the advanced electronics such as traffic controllers and conflict monitors are available.

6. **Public Forum:**

Commissioner Nair asked if anyone would care to speak on any traffic engineering issue. Commissioner Graham reported that the Route 66 Bicycle Route System maps will be out in Spring 2015 and the first official trip will be in Fall 2015. He stated the Route 66 bicycle trip is popular worldwide and reservations fill quickly. He said the event should be of great benefit to the local economy.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:36 p.m.



Mark Nair