

MINUTES
TRAFFIC COMMISSION MEETING
NEW CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS – JANUARY 17, 2013 – 4:00 P.M.

I. Meeting called to order – Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 4:05 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers (212 SW 9th St.) by Johnny Owens, Traffic Commission Co-Chairman. The meeting notice and agenda were posted on the City Hall (212 SW 9th St.) bulletin board as required by State law.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Robert Cole, David Means, Johnny Owens, SPC Andrew Powers, Randy Somerlott and Todd Weatherly

ALSO PRESENT: Sagar Medisetty, Traffic Engineer, Officer Steve Martin, LPD and Jackie Somerlott, Traffic Commission Secretary

MEMBERS ABSENT: Barry Ezerski

II. Approval of minutes from previous meeting (November 15, 2012)

MOVED BY: Means; **SECOND BY:** Cole to accept the minutes as written.

AYE: Cole, Means, Owens, Powers, Somerlott and Weatherly; **NAY:** None

III. Consent Item(s)

None

IV. New Business

- 1) Consider a request **(13-01)** from Florinda Nale, Director of Beginnings Academy, Lawton Public Schools to install “No Parking” signs during the school bus pick-up and drop-off time frames (8:30 am – 9:00 am and 3:00 pm – 3:30 pm) on the south side of NW Woodridge Drive across from the Beginnings Academy Pre-K School;

Medisetty explained that Beginnings Academy is a pre-kindergarten school with 180 students. It is located at 501 NW Woodridge Drive and is a part of the LPS system. It has 3 school buses which park on the north side of NW Woodridge Drive fronting the school to drop off the students in the morning between 8:30 am and 9:00 am and pick up students in the afternoon between 3:00 pm and 3:30 pm. While the buses are parked on the north side, if residents were to park on the south side of NW Woodridge Drive during the school pick up and drop off times it creates traffic congestion, prohibiting the free 2-way movement of traffic. Also it would be a problem for emergency vehicles to move in and out of the area during that half hour time frame in the morning and in the afternoon. The best solution to the problem would be for the school to provide parking onsite. This is an ongoing problem with several schools in the city where there is no adequate parking. This was discussed with the school but they do not have funds at this time to construct an additional parking area for school buses. The installation of “No Parking” signs on the south side for the time frame will impact 4 residences. Letters have been sent to the residents to attend the meeting today regarding the “No Parking” signs. One resident (424 NW Woodridge Dr) called to express his strong opposition to the “No Parking” signs. He has a 1 lane driveway with 2 vehicles to park. His opinion was that the school needs to make their parking lot bigger to accommodate the buses. He was unable to attend the meeting but wanted to

express his opposition. There have been 2 accidents on Woodridge Dr in the past 5 years; one in 2012 and one in 2007. There are representatives of Beginning Academy who would like to speak.

Florinda Nale, Director of Beginnings Academy said they have 11 parking spaces and an empty field next to the school where faculty and staff park. The 3 buses provide transportation for 60 students and there are still 120 parents coming in and out of the building between 8:30 am and 9:00 am. It is a problem because the buses have to park in front of the building. You can only physically fit 3 vehicles in front of the school so when buses and residents are there, and parents are coming into and leaving the school, they are forced to go in between parked residents and the school bus(es). There were 2 accidents in the fall semester, one with a day care bus and the other with a grandparent who was dropping off a grandchild. It is also a safety issue because you sometimes can't see. In one accident, traffic became gridlocked and the driver backed up, and hit a vehicle (thankfully there was no child in her blind spot). She said they considered other scenarios for buses dropping off kids, like taking students to the other side of the school, but they are not working for one reason or another -- it is either a fire issue or they don't own the property on the west side of the building. It isn't paved either. The church parking lot next to the school has put up a chain and a lock so parents can't use the parking lot to drop off kids. The [proposed] signs would help to make traffic easier and safer. She said transportation department is going to be phased out over the years so eventually there will be a full 180 kids dropped off.

Means asked about the church parking lot prohibiting them from parking. Nale said in the past she believes parents used the parking lot to bring students in and out of the school, but they [church] decided they didn't want them to use it anymore so they put up the chain. Means asked if there was activity at the church during the week and Nale said she didn't believe so. Owens asked if anyone had spoken to the church about this.

Dina Davis, Assistant Director of Crossroads Headstart said a few years ago they had an agreement with the church that if they mowed the grass area between the two, they would allow the school to use the church parking lot. The church asked if the school could mow an additional area, but they weren't able to do it and the church said they could no longer park in the parking lot.

Means said it seems that something could be worked out since the church doesn't use the parking lot a few days of the week. He said he could see a problem if people on the 400 block of NW Woodridge Dr were using their parking lot to park extra cars (like they do on Hilltop Dr), but he said he didn't understand why they would block the school from picking up kids.

Rhonda Webber (audience) said in the past when the school was Lee Elementary that they did mow the area.

MOVED BY: Weatherly; **SECOND BY:** Somerlott to install "No Parking" signs during the school bus pick-up and drop-off time frames (8:30 am – 9:00 am and 3:00 pm – 3:30 pm) on the south side of NW Woodridge Drive across from the Beginnings Academy Pre-K School;

AYE: Cole, Means, Owens, Powers, Somerlott and Weatherly; **NAY:** None

- 2) Consider a request **(13-02)** from Stephan Ellis, Ridgecrest Neighborhood Watch to install “STOP” signs on NW Austin Drive at the intersection of NW Austin Drive and NW Williams Avenue making it a 4-way STOP controlled intersection;

Medisetty said NW Williams Ave is a local residential St; NW Austin Dr. is a local collector street for that neighborhood. Currently the intersection is a 2-way Stop intersection controlled with stop signs on eastbound and westbound Williams Ave. However on northbound and southbound Austin Dr, there are school pedestrian crossing signs serving kids going to and coming from Ridgecrest Elementary School. The complainant said the combination of the Stop signs and the Pedestrian Crossing signs sometimes causes confusion as to who has the right of way. Currently the intersection does not meet MUTCD’s warrant for the installation of 4 way Stop signs. The Pedestrian Crossing signs (which were installed in 1991) and the crosswalks are faded. There are no Advance Pedestrian Crossing signs to alert people. So the old signs are being replaced with new signs at the intersections. Also to avoid the confusion, “Cross Traffic Does Not Stop” plaques beneath existing Stop signs will be added so people know that Austin Dr always has the right of way.

Means stated Austin Dr has always been a through street. Medisetty said there were two accidents in 2011 both of which were right angle collisions. MUTCD requires 5 accidents in a calendar year, before a 4-way Stop is warranted. For that reason the request is denied for a 4-way Stop, and instead, making changes for pedestrian crossings.

MOVED BY: Cole; **SECOND BY:** Means to install “CROSS TRAFFIC DOES NOT STOP” plaques on eastbound and westbound NW Williams Ave at the intersection; and to install advance pedestrian crossing signs on NW Austin Dr approaching the intersection.

AYE: Cole, Means, Owens, Powers, Somerlott and Weatherly; **NAY:** None

V. Adjournment

4:25 p.m.

The City of Lawton encourages participation from all of its citizens. If participation at any public meeting is not possible due to a disability, please notify the City Clerk at (580) 581-3305 at least 48 hours prior to the scheduled meeting to make the necessary accommodations. The City may waive the 48 hour rule if signing interpreters for the deaf are not necessary.