TRAFFIC COMMISSION MINUTES
NEW CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS
September 23, 2015 – 4:00 P.M.

I. Meeting called to order – Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 4:02 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: Tom Bartlett, Carl Dentler, Barry Ezerski, Johnny Owens and Randy Somerlott
ALSO PRESENT: Sagar Medisetty, Traffic Engineer, Bart Hadley, Assistant City Manager and Cindy Porter, Traffic Commission Secretary
MEMBERS ABSENT: SGT Nicolas Jenkins

II. Approval of minutes from previous meeting (August 20, 2015) MOVED BY: Owens; **SECOND BY:** Dentler to accept the minutes as written.
AYE: Bartlett, Dentler, Ezerski, Means and Somerlott; **NAY:** None

III. Consent Item(s)

None

IV. Old Business

None

V. New Business

1) Consider a request **(15-11)** from Sagar Medisetty, Traffic Engineer, City of Lawton to remove the school zone related signs and turn off the school zone flashing lights (but leaves the sign poles and flashing signal poles in place) at the following four (4) elementary schools that have been shut down by Lawton Public Schools:

   i. Wilson Elementary School at 102 NW 17th Street;
   ii. Park Lane Elementary School at 4912 SE Avalon Avenue;
   iii. Swinney Elementary School at 1431 NW 23rd Street; and
   iv. Brockland Elementary School at 6205 NW Ferris Avenue;

Traffic Engineer Medisetty explained that Four (4) elementary schools viz. Wilson Elementary, Park Lane Elementary, Swinney Elementary and Brockland Elementary have been shut down at the end of the 2014-2015 school year due to the state budget cuts to education. Lawton Public Schools (LPS) Superintendent Mr. Tom Deighan has informed that two (2) of those four (4) schools might be reopened in the next school year as Pre-K schools, but at this time, he is not sure which ones they would be and even if that is going to happen. Since there is no need to have a 20 mph school zone, staff recommendation is to take down the signs and turn off the school zone flashing lights but leave the sign posts and flashing light poles in place, in case the LPS Board decides to reopen any of the schools in the following year.

MOVED BY: Dentler; **SECOND BY:** Bartlett to accept staff recommendation to take down the school zone related signs, turn off the school zone flashing lights but leave the sign posts and flashing light poles in place, in the case of LPS deciding to reopen any of the schools in the following school year. **AYE:** Bartlett, Dentler, Ezerski, Owens and Somerlott; **NAY:** None

2) Consider a request **(15-12)** from Sagar Medisetty, Traffic Engineer, City of Lawton to discuss the possibility of the installation of roundabouts at intersections where they are suitable;

Traffic Engineer Sagar Medisetty explained that Roundabouts are circular intersections that could be considered to replace a traditional stop-controlled intersection or a traffic light. They reduce the traffic conflicts, for example, left turns that are frequent causes of crashes at intersection. Roundabouts also reduce the severity of the accidents because of the slower speeds that drivers need to maintain to negotiate the intersection. As opposed to a traffic circle or rotary, the incoming traffic at a roundabout yield's to the traffic that is already circulating. An example design of a roundabout is presented in the attached illustration for the intersection of NW 40th St and NW Meadowbrook Dr. A modern roundabout is much different than an older traffic circle or rotary. Traffic circles have been part of the transportation system in the US since 1905 when the first one was introduced in New York City. Subsequently, many large traffic circles or rotaries were built in the United States. These rotaries often had large diameters, about 300 feet or more allowing high travel speeds. The prevailing designs of the traffic circles at the time enabled high speed merging and weaving of vehicles. The priority was given to vehicles entering the circles, facilitating high speed entries. These speeds were in excess of 30 mph. A high crash experience and congestion within the circle led to rotaries falling out of favor in America after the mid 1950's. The modern roundabout was developed in the UK in the 1960's to rectify problems associated with the traffic circles. It had the following rules:

a) Entering traffic had to yield to circulating traffic: This rule prevented traffic from locking up within the circle, by not allowing traffic to enter the circle until they were sufficient gaps within it.
b) Smaller circular intersections were proposed: This meant that because of the sharp curvature, vehicles entered at slower speeds and traveled within the circle at slower speeds.

Characteristics of a roundabout:

a) The speeds for a mini roundabout are 15-20 mph, single lane roundabout are 20-25 mph and double-lane roundabout are 25-30 mph.
b) A mini roundabout can handle about 15,000 vehicles a day; a single lane roundabout can handle up to approximately 25,000 vehicles a day and a double lane roundabout can handle 45,000 vehicles a day

Roundabouts offer the following benefits:

Safety Benefits:

a) Number of Conflict Points: In a typical intersection of two single lane roads, there are 32 vehicle-vehicle conflict points. In a single lane roundabout,

there are 8 points of conflict. So, in roundabouts, there are fewer conflict points for motorists and pedestrians. FHWA reports that studies have shown:

- 35% reduction in total crashes
- 76% reduction in injury crashes
- 89% reduction in fatal crashes

b) Reduction in the Severity of Accidents: The types of accidents that occur at roundabouts are sideswipe accidents at low speeds as opposed to high speed T-bone accidents at conventional intersections. So the accidents are less severe.
c) Slower Speeds
d) Pedestrian Safety: Because of the reduction in overall speeds in and around the intersection, roundabouts improve the pedestrian crossing opportunities and thus pedestrian safety.

Operation Benefits:

a) Reduced delay: Because drivers do not always have to stop, delays are less and vehicle queues are shorter compared to intersections with STOP signs or traffic lights. The reduction in delay is most significant during off-peak traffic periods.
b) Lower Operations & Maintenance Cost: When compared to a traffic signal, roundabouts have lower operating and maintenance costs because of the lack of need for technical hardware, signal timing equipment and need for electricity.

Environmental Benefits

a) When people are not waiting as long at intersections, there is reduced delay, there is less noise, fuel consumption and air pollution.
b) Roundabouts also provide opportunities for traffic calming i.e. slowing down the speeds in neighborhoods and opportunities for landscaping in the islands

Aesthetics

a) The central island and the splitter islands provide the opportunities to provide attractive center pieces for the community such as landscaping, monuments and art.

Roundabouts need to be looked at on a case by case basis. Roundabouts need more right-of-way as opposed to a conventional intersection to put in the circle.

Ezerski asked if there were more intersections other than the referenced one at NW 40th and NW Meadowbrook.

Medisetty replied no, the idea was to just show this one as an example.

Ezerski stated that a roundabout might solve a lot of problems at this intersection.

Owens said that people have made lots of complaints about this intersection for a long time.

Medisetty stated that the only challenge at this intersection would be that some of the driveways would be forced to go one way out of their driveway.

Bartlett stated that they would just have to make one look around the roundabout.

Owens stated that most of the homes have circular driveways.

Sager stated that two of the driveways in the southeast corner are single driveways.

Owens stated that many of the residents living at this intersection are seventy plus years of age and do not like change; however, it is definitely something to look at.

Dentler asked if this was a recommendation or discussion item.

Medisetty answered that it was an item asking for recommendation to do further study of the installation.

Bartlett asked if this was going to be a big cost study.

Medisetty answered that it was not going to be a lot of money.

MOVED BY: Owens; **SECOND BY:** Somerlott to accept staff recommendation study the installation of roundabouts at intersections where they could be warranted; **AYE:** Bartlett, Dentler, Ezerski, Owens and Somerlott; **NAY:** None

VI. Audience Participation

Owens asked for the opinion of Assistant City Manager, and former Fire Chief for the City of Lawton, Bart Hadley, concerning the use of roundabouts.

Hadley stated that the Fire trucks have a larger turn radius so as long as the intersections meet the requirements of that turn radius, there should be no problem. In fact there appear to be some advantages to a roundabout versus a “T” intersection.

VII. Adjournment

4:30 p.m.