

Committee of the Whole
February 3, 2015

Present: Mayor Vulich, Council Members McGraw, Rowland, Determann, Wilke, O'Neill, Allesee, City Administrator, City Attorney, City Clerk, Press and interested citizens. Councilmember Gassman – absent.

1. Installation of a stop sign at the north leg of Harding Street & Main Avenue - Jason Craft

City Engineer Jason Craft advised the Council that Councilmember Gassman had inquired regarding why there was not a stop sign at the north leg of the intersection of Harding Street and Main Avenue. He stated that there is no reason why there should not be a sign. He continued in stating that this was brought to the Traffic Study Commission and they have recommended placement of a stop sign at the north leg of the intersection of Harding Street & Main Avenue, stopping south bound traffic on Harding Street.

M/S, Rowland-O'Neill moved to forward the installation of a stop sign at the north leg of Harding Street & Main Avenue to the next City Council agenda. On roll call, carried unanimously.

2. Eliminate the no parking zone in front of 1314 Caroline Avenue - Jason Craft

City Engineer Craft advised the Council that the owner of the property at 1314 Caroline Avenue has requested that the no parking zone in front of his property be eliminated. This was enforced long ago before he owned the property, likely because the neighbor across the street continued backing into parked cars. Since this is no longer an issue the property owner would like to reestablish on street parking in front of his house, as it is likely a detriment to the property value in his opinion. Engineer Craft stated that the Traffic Study Commission concurs with the property owner and recommends the elimination of the no parking zone.

Councilmember Rowland stated that there are signs like this all over town. He inquired regarding whether there is any way to remove all of the unnecessary signage. Engineer Craft stated that there is a GIS layer of all signs and he would look into addressing this.

M/S, Determann-Rowland moved to forward elimination of the no parking zone in front of 1314 Caroline Avenue to the next Council agenda. On roll call, carried unanimously.

3. Three Lane Road Conversion Policy - Jason Craft

City Engineer Craft advised the Council that there are a lot of streets in the City which do not warrant four lanes. He stated that there is research which shows that a three lane road is more functional than a four lane. He continued in stating that a three lane road consists of one lane going each way and a middle lane for left turning traffic. He further stated that this conversion would result in two twelve foot outside lanes and a thirteen to fourteen foot turn lane. He proceeded to state that if a road is wide enough a bike lane could be added.

City Engineer Craft advised the Council that a three lane conversion decreases the number of conflict points and eliminates the shadowing effect. Councilmember O'Neill stated that a vehicle is farther out in an intersection when making a turn than the diagram portrays and there is no problem seeing oncoming traffic.

Councilmember Determann inquired regarding the amount of traffic on a two lane road. City Engineer Craft stated that there is up to 10,000 vehicles per day on a two lane roadway and 20,000 to 30,000 on a four lane. He continued in stating that problems arise when there are numerous access points and traffic is backed up during peak times. He further stated that today the City would construct three lanes instead of four. The only roads in the City which warrant four lanes is 2nd Street and Lincoln Way. Engineer Craft advised the Council that the benefits of a three lane road is that there is a 21% crash frequency reduction,

it is calming and there is a speed reduction of four to five miles per hour. High end speeders are cut 60%-70%.

Councilmember O'Neill stated that mail trucks stopping at every residence and buses would back up traffic if there are two lanes of traffic plus one turning lane on 13th Avenue North. He continued in stating that vehicles turning into the school in the morning and afternoon would also back up traffic. He further stated that he has not had a chance to speak with constituents regarding the three lane proposal. He proceeded to state that there are many people this would affect and he would like their input first.

Engineer Craft stated that he has had conversations with the School District regarding 13th Avenue North. He continued in stating that a three lane conversion must wait until the school is more effective in getting traffic in and out before discussing this. He further stated everyone agrees that tax dollars are well spent when used to make the roads safer.

Councilmember Wilke stated that there are roads like this all over town. City Administrator Kinser stated that what is being discussed is a policy not certain projects. Councilmember O'Neill stated that each project should warrant public input.

City Engineer Craft stated that the benefits of a three lane conversion are: wider lanes, queuing space for turning vehicles, improved functionality for both turning vehicles and through vehicles, no loss of efficiency for through vehicles, pedestrian and bicycle accommodation and safer school crossings. Engineer Craft stated that the determining factors are: roadway function, traffic volume, left turn volume, weaving and speeding, queuing, accident types and patterns and pedestrian and bicycle activity. He continued in stating that if a road fits the determining factors a conversion should be made. He further stated that he has no reservations making the conversions on 2nd Avenue South and Springdale Drive.

Mayor Vulich stated that there is heavy residential presence on one side of 13th Avenue North. He inquired regarding how UPS trucks would handle making deliveries. Engineer Craft stated that the main problem would be the mail trucks and bus stops. He continued in stating that some problems could be eliminated by moving the mailboxes. Councilmember O'Neill stated that there should be a written policy regarding the determining factors necessary for three lane conversion including public input to identify the objections. He continued in stating that when this was first presented there was a petition signed by concerned residents; however, no one attended the public meeting. Councilmember Wilke stated that if there was support or opposition there should have been a full house.

City Engineer Craft stated that the Engineering Department will make the determination regarding a three lane conversion using the DOT criteria. He further stated that public meetings could be held for each project.

M/S, O'Neill-Determann moved to forward a Four Lane to Three Lane Conversion Policy to including public input, engineering design and a time period for the projects to the next City Council agenda. On roll call, carried unanimously.

4. Three Lane Road Conversion on 2nd Avenue South - Jason Craft

City Engineer Craft advised the Council that the lanes on 2nd Avenue South are 10 feet wide. Lanes need to be at least 11 feet wide to safely accommodate traffic. A three lane road would provide wider lanes and additional capacity to left turning vehicles. There are 43 access points from Bluff Boulevard to South 14th Street. If a dedicated left turning lane is provided all left turning vehicles would be able to queue in the center lane until an adequate gap presents itself. He stated that there are 1,950 vehicles per day with accidents at 4.1 per 1 million miles traveled. He further stated that he did not foresee any problems with a three lane conversion.

M/S, Wilke-Determann moved to forward the three lane road conversion on 2nd Avenue South to the February 24, 2015 City Council agenda contingent on approval of a Four to Three Lane Conversion Policy on February 10, 2015. On roll call, carried unanimously.

5. Three Lane Road Conversion on Springdale Drive - Jason Craft

City Engineer Craft advised the Council that Springdale Drive will be part of a resurfacing project this year. He stated that with a conversion traffic would flow smoothly in the outside through lanes without conflict or delay and speeding would be decreased. Left turning traffic would be safer in a dedicated turn lane and pedestrians currently using the outside travel lane as a walking route would be able to walk within a bicycle lane until a sidewalk is constructed. The addition of a bicycle lane in each direction would encourage bicycle ridership and would begin connectivity between 19th Avenue North and downtown.

Mayor Vulich inquired regarding the bus traffic. Engineer Craft stated that the buses could use the bicycle lane which would allow cars to pass and make it much safer to walk.

Councilmember Determann advised that Engineer Craft discuss plans with Ashford Dean Charlie Minnick to determine if there are any concerns.

M/S, Rowland-Wilke moved to forward the three lane road conversion on Springdale Drive to the February 24, 2015 City Council agenda contingent on approval of a Four to Three Lane Conversion Policy on February 10, 2015. On roll call, carried unanimously.

6. Three Lane Road Conversion on 13th Avenue North - Jason Craft

City Engineer Jason Craft advised the Council that the accident rate on 13th Avenue North is double the average. There is eight times the amount of vehicle accidents in a two block area from 2nd Street to 4th Street. There are 110 access points and a high volume of speeders. The benefits to a three lane conversion are reduction in accidents, improved functionality for both through vehicles and turning vehicles and no loss of efficiency during peak times. He stated that he would recommend moving forward with a three lane conversion from 2nd Street to 4th Street which would necessitate modification of the signals.

M/S, O'Neill-Allesee moved to forward the three lane road conversion on 13th Avenue North from 2nd Street to 4th street to the February 24, 2015 City Council agenda contingent on approval of a Four to Three Lane Conversion Policy on February 10, 2015. On roll call, carried unanimously.

7. New Liquor License for Mezcal 2 Mexican Bar & Grill – Pat Van Loo

City Clerk Pat Van Loo advised the Council that Mezcal 2 Mexican Bar & Grill has met all state and local requirements. The establishment would open up where Cinco de Mayo is currently located. She stated that she is requesting that this item be moved forward to allow the new establishment to open its doors as soon as possible.

M/S, Determann-Rowland moved to forward the new liquor license for Mezcal 2 Mexican Bar & Grill to the next Council agenda. On roll call, carried unanimously.

8. Mayor & Council Member updates

Mayor Vulich advised that Clinton County Day at the Capital is Thursday, February 5.

Councilmember O'Neill thanked the Street Department for their hard work in removing the snow.

M/S, Determann-Wilke moved to adjourn. All in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,

Pat Van Loo
City Clerk