

Traffic Safety Committee

November 27, 2017

Present were: Chair Rozek, Councilors Morgan Allain, Theberge and Remillard. Others present were City Manager Jim Wheeler, Police Chief Pete Morency, Assistant Chief Dan Buteau, Public Works Director Mike Perreault, Mr. George Fortier; Mr. & Mrs. Vaillancourt, Mrs. Priscilla Gemmitti, Amy Higgins 355 Willard Street, Barbara Tetreault, *Berlin Daily Sun*

Chair Rozek called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. He informed members of the public that if there are questions from the Committee, upon raising their hand, they will be called upon to comment on the issue.

Minutes

Councilor Theberge moved to accept the minutes of the previous meeting; Councilor Morgan Allain seconded and the motion carried.

First Avenue Sidewalk Plowing Request

Chair Rozek explained that this request is to extend sidewalk plowing on First Avenue an additional 70 feet to 502 First Avenue. He noted that the Public Works Department would not have a problem with extending the route. Councilor Remillard asked if we are plowing across the street and Mr. Fortier informed the group that there is no sidewalk on the other side. Councilor Remillard added that there is a blind area where there is a small hill; if there is no sidewalk, pedestrians would need to walk in the road. Mr. Fortier clarified that he wanted the sidewalk cleared so that there would be access to his residence for an ambulance. Councilor Remillard moved to approve extending the sidewalk plow route to include 502 First Avenue; Councilor Morgan Allain seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Request for Blind Person Sign at 2061 Riverside Drive.

Police Chief Morency indicated that he consulted with an attorney, HEB Engineers and he met with Mrs. Vaillancourt regarding reasonable accommodation. They looked at the average speed and measured visual distance at the location taking into consideration stopping distance needed for wood trucks. His recommendation would be to put up the signage as requested in both north and south directions. Mrs. Vaillancourt asked about the crosswalk at the college and Chief Morency stated that the light, crosswalk and signage will be removed since the college no longer finds them necessary.

Councilor Morgan Allain moved to add two "blind pedestrian" signs, north and south at 2061 Riverside Drive; Councilor Theberge seconded and the motion carried. Councilor Theberge asked the Vaillancourt's to notify the City should they move so that signs can be removed. Mrs. Vaillancourt asked about speed and whether the college is considered a school zone at 15 miles per hour. Chief Morency stated that a college does not constitute a school zone.

Councilor Rozek asked what progress has been made on a system to deal with signage directed at one address. Mr. Wheeler noted that we now have the capability to create a recurring work order to remind the department to check on the signage on a yearly basis.

High School Traffic Issue

Chair Rozek explained that there is a traffic problem at the beginning and end of the day on Willard Street as students enter and exit school. Traffic is supposed to flow in a circular motion and many don't follow the flow and back up or turn around in Mrs. Gemmitti's driveway. Mrs. Gemmitti noted that there needs to be clarification on where the "One Way" begins. Amy Higgins added that cars leaving the upper parking lot take a left onto Willard Street. Councilor Remillard suggested that moving the "no left turn" sign may prevent some u-turns. Bigger signs and painted directional arrows may also help the situation.

Chair Rozek acknowledged the need to clarify where the "one way" begins and to come up with a plan to deal with the congestion of bus parking. He suggested that PWD, PD and School put together a plan to deal with both issues for the next meeting. Chief Morency stated that the unintended action that may come is that more cars will turn around in the driveways. Mrs. Gemmetti asked if she could place cones in her driveway and she was assured that she could. Councilor Remillard moved with a second from Councilor Morgan Allain to have the PWD, PD and School review the potential of moving the bus stop and to review the threshold of "right turn only" in time for the next Traffic Safety meeting. So moved, the motion carried.

Request for Handicap Parking Sign at 159 Oak

Cindy Lapointe wrote a letter requesting a handicap parking sign at 159 Oak Street. Councilor Remillard noted that this has come to the committee before. She stated that the additional handicap parking place is not a solution to anyone's problem since use of the parking spot can't be dictated. Councilor Remillard moved to decline the request; Councilor Morgan Allain seconded and the motion carried.

Request for Autistic Child Sign on Marble Street

The request came in the form of a work order requesting a sign for an autistic child on Marble Street. Councilor Theberge commented that he viewed the street and there are only five buildings and it is not a heavy traffic area. Councilor Remillard noted that there is a lot to learn about autism and it is not likely that a sign is going to have any effect. Councilor Morgan Allain offered support saying that this is a severe disability for this family. Mr. Perreault noted that if too many signs go up, the public becomes blind to the signs. Chief Morency said that he empathizes with the situation and people who have children in need; however he feared this will open the floodgates to signs for every situation. He asked if charging a fee to cover costs has been considered. Mr. Perreault suggested asking his list serve about what other communities do with such requests. Councilor Remillard moved to forward the request to Public Works and Police Departments for review of cost and what other communities are doing and to report back to the Committee; Councilor Theberge seconded and the motion carried.

Petition for Street Lighting

Chair Rozek reported that the Council received and forwarded a petition asking for lighting on Hutchins Street from Twelfth Street to White Mountain Lumber. Mr. Wheeler suggested adding the project to the Capital Improvement Plan. Councilor Remillard moved to put the street lighting project on the City's capital improvement plan and to send a letter to Mr. Valliere; Councilor Theberge seconded and the motion carried.

Adjourn

Councilor Remillard moved with a second from Councilor Theberge to adjourn. So moved, the motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,
Susan Tremblay
Administrative Assistant

Minutes are not final until they have been approved by the Committee at a future meeting.