



CITY OF WAUWATOSA

7725 WEST NORTH AVENUE

WAUWATOSA, WI 53213

Telephone: (414) 479-8917

Fax: (414) 479-8989

TRAFFIC & SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING Tuesday, September 28, 2004

PRESENT: Alds. Becker, Herzog, Krol, Maher; McCarthy -5

EXCUSED: Ald. Maher

ALSO T. Wontorek, City Administrator; W. Kappel, Dir. of Public Works;
PRESENT: J. Cameron, Admin. Intern

Ald. Becker as Chair called the meeting to order at 7:18 p.m.

Parking Restrictions at 2544 Wauwatosa Avenue

The request by the Sisters of Divine Savior for removal of the rush-hour parking restrictions in front of their residence at 2544 Wauwatosa Avenue was discussed at the previous meeting and held so that the Sisters could appear. Mr. Kappel reported that he does not favor removal because of concerns about parked cars potentially obstructing northbound traffic. When northbound vehicles are turning left to travel westbound on Livingston Street, which forms a T-intersection here, other northbound drivers use the curb lane as a through lane. If cars were parked there, traffic would back up behind the left-turning vehicle or crashes could occur. Parking for three additional cars is available in the front of the property's three-car garage. The City Engineer observed the site between 3:30 and 4:00 p.m. two weeks ago and found exactly what has been described—drivers using the curb lane to move around a left-turning vehicle. Mr. Kappel said he observed the same thing himself this afternoon. He provided photos showing conditions at the site. Parking restrictions were recently removed in a section farther to the south where there is no intersecting street.

Sisters Rita Barman and Denise Demulling, 2544 Wauwatosa Avenue, were present. Sister Rita said the restriction was originally put in place for Vogue Cleaners to the north of their property, which is no longer in business. It is a hardship at times when guests are not able to park in front of their home, but they would not want to cause any traffic problems. They have observed times when there is no on-coming traffic to delay left turns or there is no traffic behind the turning vehicle. Sister Rita said that guests don't park in front of the garage because that would restrict anyone who needed to drive into or out of the garage. Guests have to park in the lot to the east when the parking restrictions are in force, which was an inconvenience earlier this week when luggage needed to be loaded. This area could also provide a little more space for parents who are dropping off and picking up children in the morning and afternoon.

Ald. Herzog spoke in favor of allowing parking at this location at all times rather than prohibiting it from 6 to 9 a.m. and from 3 to 6 p.m. There already is a chance for backups at other times when cars are allowed to park, he pointed out, and it is something that happens all the time on parts of North Avenue.

Ald. McCarthy asked about the times guests are generally there. Sister Rita said they are more likely to have occasional guests in the 3-6 p.m. time period and not more than one or two cars. Ald. McCarthy suggested the eliminating restrictions during just the afternoon rush hour.

Moved by Ald. Herzog, seconded by Ald. McCarthy to approve a 90-day trial eliminating the 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. parking restriction in front of 2544 Wauwatosa Avenue –

Ald. Krol concurred that this might be a good compromise. Sister Rita said that they are willing to go along with the restrictions if problems arise. The Chair felt that this will create more problems that it will solve.

Vote on the motion, Ayes: 3; Noes: 1 (Becker)

Status of Crossing Guard Program

Mr. Cameron presented a report on the status of the school crossing guard program as a follow-up to discussions in June about options for reducing program's cost. It is currently budgeted at \$253,000, which is \$144,000 higher than the closest comparable. Staff researched a variety of options including transferring the program to the school district, hiring our own part-time employees, consolidating sites, eliminating the lunch hour guard locations, and establishing a Safe Walk to School program.

Since the start of school, three additional lunchtime sites have been examined, and it was confirmed that no unescorted students are using those crossings. Students that cross during the lunchtime are junior kindergartners 4-5 years of age. There are all-day kindergarten programs also. The option of eliminating lunchtime guards was presented to school district officials, including elementary principals, who initially were not in favor. They contended that it would be difficult to *require* children to walk home with a parent or guardian and felt that the guards provide an enhanced sense of safety.

Mr. Cameron summarized current options and their cost as follows:

- Maintain the program, realizing that it provides a high level of service that is beneficial to those who use it. Not every municipality provides this level of service. Costs will rise 2% annually through the duration of the contract to a final cost of approximately \$263,000.
- Continue to work with the school district on elimination of lunchtime guards or consolidation of locations. The city has been invited to submit a position paper outlining this proposal to the district's parent advisory council in November. Staff would continue to work to assure them that the current level of safety would be maintained. Approximately \$5,000 would be saved for each location that is eliminated. The savings would be about \$70,000 if lunchtime sites are eliminated.
- Seek out other potential cost savings such as the Safe Walk to School program, which would designate specific walking routes with crossing guards along those routes. Crossing guard sites not within the routes could be eliminated. This option would require a great deal of staff time and may not save money if more guards are needed within the designated routes.

Mr. Cameron recommended continuing to push for elimination of lunchtime crossing guards and possible consolidation of the crossing at Glenview and Avon Court. Further analysis of the 90th and North Avenue crossing is needed before making any further recommendations. Removal of the lunchtime sites appears to be the most cost effective without jeopardizing student safety.

Ald. Becker asked about private school lunch hours. Mr. Cameron was uncertain if they have closed lunch hours but said they primarily have half-day kindergarten. In answer to further questions, he said that he has observed six school sites thus far and has found that parents are either dropping children off or walking with them. In the morning, older siblings often are seen, but it is overall primarily parents.

Mr. Wontorek clarified that the school district's responsibility ends and students are free to go when the bells rings, but from a practical standpoint they wouldn't release a four-year old without someone being there. It is a matter of policy vs. practice that they need to examine. He said that at some lunchtime locations it was found that the guard times don't actually coincide with the morning kindergarten release times. The fact that there haven't been any complaints about that tends to indicate that the guards aren't needed there.

Ald. McCarthy said his wife was a kindergarten teacher at McKinley for 29 years. He was confident that a child is never released without the presence of a responsible person known to the teacher.

Moved by Ald. McCarthy, seconded by Ald. Krol to direct staff to pursue elimination of lunchtime school crossing guards and possible consolidation of some locations and to report back with their findings –

Ald. Herzog said that the Budget Committee has discussed the addition of a community support officer who would spend some time at the high schools and middle schools. This is a possible use for money saved on crossing guards that could be mentioned to the parent advisory council. Obviously, nothing could be promised until the budget is finalized. Ald. Herzog also suggested asking parents who are escorting kindergarten children how they would feel about eliminating the guards.

The Chair said that there has to be a realistic view of what is really happening rather than a perception regarding safety of the children—four-year olds are not seen walking home alone.

Vote on the motion, Ayes: 4

Proposed Ordinance – No Parking Restrictions on N. 99th Street

The proposed ordinance amends Section 11.32.080 of the Code to create no parking restrictions on the west side of N. 99th Street between W. Blue Mound Road and W. Wisconsin Avenue. Mr. Kappel said that this restores restrictions that were in place prior to construction of the Heart Hospital. The change was requested by residents, and there were no complaints during the 90-day trial.

Moved by Ald. McCarthy, seconded by Ald. Krol to recommend to Council adoption of the ordinance. Ayes: 4

Proposed Ordinance – No Parking Restrictions on Watertown Plank Road

The proposed ordinance amends Section 11.32.080 of the Code to add a no parking zone on Watertown Plank Road from the driveway at 12017 to a point 30 feet west thereof. Mr. Kappel reported that the no parking zone will assure the resident of mail delivery and the ability to safely exit his driveway. Ald. McCarthy reported that he received no complaints during the 90-day trial.

Moved by Ald. McCarthy, seconded by Ald. Krol to recommend to Council adoption of the ordinance. Ayes: 4

Proposed Ordinance – Parking Restrictions on W. Hibbard Avenue

The proposed ordinance amends Section 11.32.080 of the Code to eliminate parking restrictions in front of 10637 W. Hibbard Avenue. Mr. Kappel said that removal of the parking restrictions was requested by the resident.

Moved by Ald. Herzog, seconded by Ald. McCarthy to recommend to Council adoption of the ordinance. Ayes: 4

The meeting adjourned at 7:49 p.m.

Carla A. Ledesma, City Clerk
Wauwatosa, Wisconsin

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