



CITY OF WAUWATOSA  
7725 WEST NORTH AVENUE  
WAUWATOSA, WI 53213  
Telephone: (414) 479-8917  
Fax: (414) 479-8989

**TRAFFIC & SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**Tuesday, May 30, 2006**

PRESENT: Alds. Donegan, Grimm, Herzog, Sullivan, Treis -5

ALSO PRESENT: W. Kappel, Director of Public Works; B. Weber, Chief of Police

Ald. Sullivan as Chair called the meeting to order at 7:40 p.m.

**Loading Zone at 6913 W. North Avenue**

The matter of proposed changes to the loading zone at 6913 W. North Avenue for a new restaurant/cooking school was held from previous meetings. Mr. Kappel reported that Mr. Feker, one of the new proprietors, was contacted following the previous meeting and indicated that he would be present tonight. At that time, he confirmed that he would like loading zone hours of 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Ald. Donegan reported that he spoke with Jay Hollis, Mr. Feker's partner, who agreed to loading zone hours of 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Moved by Ald. Donegan, seconded by Ald. Sullivan to recommend approval of a loading zone at 6913 W. North Avenue with hours of 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. seven days per week –

Ald. Herzog asked about procedures for rescinding a loading zone and whether one could be removed if it caused undue hardship on other businesses and created parking problems. Mr. Kappel said that loading zones are a special privilege granted by the Common Council and can be removed or changed. In the past, loading zones have been removed based on non-payment of the annual fee or when they are no longer needed. Mr. Kesner added that, as a special privilege in the right-of-way, loading zones have no attached property rights. The city can grant or rescind them when needed. Ald. Herzog suggested doing a trial period after which the hours could be adjusted as the committee sees fit.

The Chair noted that he represents businesses on the north side of North Avenue and Ald. Donegan represents those on the south side. He conceded that there are parking challenges in this area. Although spots are available, it may not be in front of the business. He noted that there is an existing loading zone at this location. With the requested hours, it will facilitate deliveries and will not be used as a loading zone during peak restaurant hours. Ald. Donegan noted that there is no access to the back of the building for commercial deliveries.

Ald. Grimm commented on the fact that Mr. Feker was not present despite being asked to appear. The Chair mentioned possible scheduling problems and said that a decision should be made on the merits of the request. Ald. Donegan said he spent about 45 minutes with him at the site, which he may have thought was sufficient.

Vote on the motion, Ayes: 4; Noes: 1 (Grimm)

**Request by Jefferson School, 6927 Maple Terrace, for a Traffic Study**

Mr. Kappel reported on a letter from the Jefferson School PTA requesting a traffic study of 68th Street and 70th Street in the area of the school. They reported that a recent traffic accident at 68th and Maple Terrace involved serious injuries to a middle school student, and another child was hit by a vehicle last February at 70th and Maple Terrace.

Mr. Kappel noted that there is a lot of construction in this area and more traffic than normal. Staff has discussed traffic calming measures that might be taken, recognizing that some of the traffic volume will decrease over time. One idea was using a speed measuring device that is somewhat similar to the police department's speed trailer but is more portable and not as costly. It is solar powered and could be installed on a sign. Further research on cost would be needed. One of the concerns that staff discussed is the possibility of more widespread demand for such a device if its use is successful. One solution would be to delegate neighborhood associations responsible for assigning use of the device for specific periods of time. The sign would show the speed limit and would flash the speed of a vehicle as it goes by, going from yellow flashing to red flashing if the speed limit is exceeded. It would probably need to be chained to some type of fixture on the street.

The Chair noted that the request was for a traffic study, but Mr. Kappel pointed out in his memo that it doesn't make sense to do a study during this construction period when volumes are higher than normal. The Chair then debated the merits of doing a traffic study or proceeding with the staff recommendation. Mr. Kappel indicated that he can get pricing for a study; it is not something that staff can do. He will also find out more about the cost of the portable speed measuring device.

The recent accident was discussed, which the Chair felt should not be attributed to the fault of the child. The fact that the driver didn't slow down to 15 mph is also part of the problem in this area. Chief Weber said that traffic was stopped in one direction and still moving in another. There was a crossing guard still on duty a block away. None of that diminishes the fact that a child was hurt, but the department does say that this accident was preventable since the child ran into the car. He supported a pilot study of the speed monitoring device considering that it could be used in other places. The department's speed monitoring trailer is high maintenance and they get more requests than they have time to accommodate. With the school year almost over, a traffic study might not be feasible.

The Chair indicated that he would prefer spending money for a traffic calming device rather than a traffic study.

Ald. Grimm said that 68th Street is the only truck route in this area, which causes problems. Busses also use the street. With the ongoing construction, it may be better to hold this matter until there is a better picture of what is happening.

Moved by Ald. Grimm, seconded by Ald. Herzog to hold this matter to the first regular meeting in September –

Mr. Kappel indicated that he would follow up with a memo on the pricing of the devices. Ald. Herzog suggested also finding out about the type of radar used, whether the devices can be used in cold weather, and whether they can be programmed for certain times of the day.

Vote on the motion, Ayes: 5

### **Request by Roosevelt School, 2535 N. 73rd Street for Trial One-Ways on N. 73rd and N. 74th Streets**

The committee reviewed a memo from the Director of Public Works responding to a request from Roosevelt School parents for a trial of one-way streets in the area of the school. They are recommending that N. 73rd Street between Center Street and North Avenue be one-way southbound and N. 74th Street between North Avenue and Center Street be one-way northbound.

Frank Calarco, principal of Roosevelt School, noted that a number of parents are present but indicated that more would have attended had he been informed of this meeting sooner. He said that when he took over as principal last July, one thing that stood out among the notes he reviewed was the traffic problem around the school. When observing drop-offs and pick-ups each day, he has noticed many times when students were almost struck by cars. He contacted Mr. Kappel in January, and they talked about a possible 90-day trial. He also spoke to both alderpersons and canvassed the area, achieving almost 100% support for their one-way idea. In the beginning, they wanted one-ways just from Wright to Clarke, but Mr. Kappel suggested going all the way from Center to North. Mr. Calarco emphasized safety concerns and noted that buses often can't get through when cars are doubled up and forced to back up into driveways and over walkways to make room. Three cars on 74th Street have had their mirrors taken off. No children have been hit yet, but it is possible that might happen.

Mr. Kappel said that in his conversations with Mr. Calarco initially, he thought this might be a good idea. When he took it back to staff and members of the police department, however, they convinced him that it may not be such a good idea. Since one-block one-way segments tend to get a lot of violations of people going the wrong way, he asked Mr. Calarco to consider four blocks. One-ways are usually done in pairs, as exemplified by streets in downtown Milwaukee. Engineering and police staff pointed out some issues that he hadn't at first considered such as changes to traffic markings on North Avenue that would be needed.

Noting that one-ways are not recommended by the department, Mr. Kappel said that if the committee decides to approve a trial, it should start during summer so that motorists have ample time to adjust their driving habits before school starts. Parents would still have to adjust at that time. He commented that staff has a hard time believing that parents cannot solve this problem by voluntarily traveling in one direction around the school, going south on 73rd Street and north on 74th Street. That problem along with parents dropping off their children on the wrong side of the street represents 90% of the problem. Other schools have had similar problems and have worked with parents to achieve the desired results. McKinley School especially comes to mind.

Chief Weber agreed that there are problems at all schools. Educating parents and working with them can alleviate a lot of the congestion problems. He noted that a one-way on 74th Street would probably be problematic for traffic from the Lutheran Home at 74th and North.

The following individuals commented in favor of the requested one-ways: Danette Brown and Paul Brown, 7725 Livingston Avenue; Kristin Dalen, 2373 N. 72nd Street; Chris Horejs, 2541 N. 64th Street; Jean Conerkey, 2424 N. 66th Street; Christina Piel, 2425 N. 71st Street; Michelle Kellom, 2349 N. 66th Street; Sandy Anderson, 6425 W. Clarke Street; Susan Land, 2661 N. 70th Street; Laurie Lessila, 2327 N. 61st Street; Deborah Debord, 2372 N. 71st Street. They had very strong safety concerns and said that the problem has gotten progressively worse. They noted that parents have received reminders of recommended traffic patterns but felt that other traffic coming into the area and traveling at high speeds is also a factor.

The Chair said that this is a problem that the whole neighborhood has dealt with for a long period of time. They have worked diligently but haven't gotten to a satisfactory solution. Input may be needed from the Lutheran Home and others in the area. The matter probably shouldn't be voted up or down until there is more community input. Perhaps a 90-day trial would provide a good means to examine the overall impact.

Ald. Treis noted that there are only about two weeks of school remaining. He recommended holding this so that any ideas that engineering staff or the police might have can be brought back to the committee before school starts again. He encouraged everyone to drive through the area to view the situation. When dealing with one-way streets and safety, he advised consideration of people who miss the one-way sign and may or may not be speeding. He would like a solution that is safe for everyone involved. He spoke of the need for parental cooperation, citing efforts at the school in his area to solve problems that were either the same or worse.

The Chair agreed that more community input should be gathered. Part of the reason the problem was brought forward now was so that it could be resolved and a 90-day trial implemented prior to the beginning of the new school year. He advocating holding for no more than two weeks to adhere to that timeline.

Moved by Ald. Treis to hold the matter for two weeks –

Ald. Donegan asked Mr. Kappel to summarize his objections. He asked if concerns about traffic from North Avenue could be resolved by making it one-way starting at Meinecke rather than at North Avenue.

Putting aside the left turn issues and striping that would have to be changed, Mr. Kappel said that the issue of starting at Meinecke is still one of driver expectation. There is more likelihood of a driver going the wrong way in a situation like that. He noted that there is a one-way pattern at Jefferson School, but he does not know the background there. If not looking at a one-way for the length of all four blocks, he would suggest a 90-day trial of just the blocks surrounding the school. One-way streets have a tendency to speed traffic rather than slow it. When moving in two directions, traffic has to go slower because cars are approaching each other. The problem here is speeding cars and congestion, but the congestion is a 15-minute problem twice a day. Speed is there all the time, and making it one-way will increase speeds. There would also be concern about Lutheran Home traffic mistakenly going the wrong way.

Ald. Donegan asked what questions a trial would try to answer. Mr. Kappel said that it would determine if traffic would abide by the regulations. He would measure crashes and be sure there were none and would try to measure speed. He would suggest installation three weeks before school starts so that the neighborhood would be familiar with the route. The 90-day period wouldn't start until when school begins.

The motion was seconded by Ald. Donegan.

Ald. Herzog said that he represents the McKinley area where they had the same issues. They have had a lot of parent education, which seems to be working. The congestion there lasts about 15 minutes. A one-way was tried at one time but was removed after the trial period. It is not a panacea. Perhaps there are alternative places for teachers to park; parking restrictions could be increased. At McKinley there is a 10-minute zone for people who need to run into the school, but otherwise there is no parking and parents generally abide by those rules. Stop signs and speed limits don't work for calming traffic; narrow streets work. Ald. Herzog encouraged parents to look at other areas. Even if approved, he felt it may not be the solution.

Ald. Grimm spoke of a one-way in his neighborhood that is consistently violated. He expressed concern about people living on 73rd and 74th Streets who would be inconvenienced. He asked Chief Weber to enforce the law about double parking.

Chief Weber said that can be done periodically, but it usually results in complaints to both the police and the principal from parents who are ticketed when dropping off their children. He said that one-ways do increase speeds and he would be concerned about one-way streets giving people a false sense of security.

Mr. Calarco noted that Roosevelt School has more traffic from outside the district than McKinley School due to the number of students participating in certain programs.

Vote on the motion, Ayes: 5

The meeting adjourned at 8:03 p.m.

Carla A. Ledesma, City Clerk

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