

CITY OF WAUWATOSA  
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**TRAFFIC AND SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING  
Tuesday, January 28, 2003**

PRESENT: Alds. Becker, Herzog, Krol, Matthews, McCarthy -5

ALSO

PRESENT: W. Kappel, Dir. of Public Works; Capt. J. Bozicevich, Police Dept.; Ald. Grimm

Ald. Krol in the Chair called the meeting to order at 7 p.m.

**Request for No Parking Restrictions on Harley Davidson Avenue**

Mr. Kappel reported that the Harley Davidson plant engineer has indicated that semis utilized at the plant and research center have been having difficulty maneuvering because of employee parking on the portion of Harley Davidson Avenue that parallels Capitol Drive. The company has requested no parking restrictions at that location. They are aware that they would be responsible for associated costs. Mr. Kappel recommended prohibiting parking on the north side of Harley Davidson Avenue from the Capitol Drive frontage road entrance to Harley Davidson Avenue to a point 630 feet to the west and on the south side from the Capitol Drive frontage road to a point 220 feet to the west.

Moved by Ald. McCarthy, seconded by Ald. Herzog to recommend a 90-day trial of no parking zones on the north and south sides of Harley Davidson Avenue as described. Ayes: 5

**Report on 90-Day Trial of One-Hour Parking on N. 77th Street and Mary Ellen Place**

Since the January 7 meeting on this issue, Mr. Kappel reported, he has spoken with the local alderperson and the president of the neighborhood association, both of whom favor making the trial one-hour parking restrictions permanent. In addition, he proposed that City staff, the president of the neighborhood association, and the owner of the building at 7700 W. Blue Mound Road get together to look at the overall parking situation in the neighborhood.

Keith Hughes of Land Title Service, 7700 W. Blue Mound Road, said the company is not asking for any relief whatsoever with respect to parking in front of residents' homes. He requested only that parking be allowed in that section of 77th Street that is adjacent to the company's parking lot. He pointed out that employees risk getting ticketed if they continue to park in the neighborhood.

Judy Nicholson, 7705 Mary Ellen Place, said that the same people will continue to park in the neighborhood even if the restrictions adjacent to the parking lot are lifted. In fact, the same five or six cars consistently park in front of the houses on the circle. Lifting a portion of the restrictions will not alleviate the problem. Ms.

Nicholson also raised concerns about exiting 77th Street to Blue Mound Road due to sight obstructions from cars that are parked too close to the corner. Parking should not be allowed at least a car length back from the sidewalk, she stated. Also, there are times when garbage trucks can't get through and have to back up.

Mr. Hughes noted that by law cars are not allowed to park within 15 feet of a crosswalk. They risk a ticket if parked in that area. Ms. Nicholson responded that people do park within 15 feet of the crosswalk every day.

Mr. Kappel noted that the question tonight is whether to approve the trial restrictions and proceed with further study of the overall problem. Although the possibility of closing off 77th Street, creating a cul de sac, and selling off the right-of-way was discussed at the previous meeting, he indicated that he is not yet ready to come back with any type of recommendation. He expressed some uncertainty that it would be good public policy to consider the sale of right-of-way for private parking spaces.

Ald. Grimm reported that he surveyed the neighborhood on retaining the one-hour parking restrictions. He found eight people in favor, some of whom were very satisfied; one person who was undecided, and got no reply from three residents. In checking the Land Title parking lot on Friday, January 17, he reported finding six empty spaces. Driving through the area, he found cars parked on Mary Ellen Place and found spaces on Blue Mound Road and on 77th Street. He noted that the south end of the huge parking lot on the south side of Blue Mound Road was unoccupied. He felt that a word from the owner of Land Title might stop some of the neighborhood parking incursion.

Bridget Brennan, 521 N. 77th Street, saw the situation as lose-lose for the neighborhood. She complained that drivers still walk through her property and she has only restricted parking to offer her relatives and anyone who does work at her home. She described the route being taken to cut through her yard, and Mr. Hughes indicated that he would look into the matter.

Sue Thelen, 7837 Mary Ellen Place, said that people park beyond the posted signs. There were seven cars parked today in other areas of Mary Ellen Place and 77th Street. She felt that Land Title Company has expanded beyond their parking spaces.

Mr. Hughes said that the parking situation at Land Title is obviously very tight. When the lot was restriped last summer, spaces were numbered and assigned to specific employees of Land Title and other building tenants, with the exception of six or seven visitor spaces. Employees are not allowed to park in other spaces, so there may be empty spaces when someone is away from the office. The large lot across the street that was mentioned by Ald. Grimm is private, he noted, and Land Title employees would probably not be welcome to park there. He said there are several other tenants in the Land Title building, and he indicated that Land Title's business has risen considerably in the past year or two. He felt that the employees are reputable business people who simply want to park closer rather than farther away, as do most people.

Ms. Nicholson responded that she has no objection to anyone parking in front of her house but not all day, driveway to driveway, five days per week so that none of family or friends can park there. She would rather have parking restrictions and have visitors park in her driveway or even pay their fine if ticketed. There is an abundance of parking on Blue Mound Road, she pointed out.

Mr. Kappel commented on the perception of visual obstruction at Blue Mound Road where he felt visibility is probably better than at most intersections because of the width of the street. Drivers have to use reasonable caution when entering any major street, he said.

There was further discussion of the options available to the committee including making the restrictions permanent or extending the trial for another 90 days. Mr. Kappel saw extending the trial as a viable option since it would provide time to investigate the scope of the problem, although he was unwilling to say that he could arrive at a permanent solution. If it should involve a cul de sac and deeding of the right-of-way, that could not be accomplished in 90 days but could take years. The restrictions would stay in place during an extension of the 90-day trial. Ald. Grimm concurred with extending the trial, considering the possibility of arriving at a better solution.

Moved by Ald. Matthews, seconded by Ald. McCarthy to recommend extending the 90 day trial for an additional 90 days in order to provide more time to determine if there is a different solution –

Ald. Herzog said that there is merit to looking at the possibility of a cul de sac even if the scope of the problem is only three to five cars without assigned spaces in the lot. It may benefit the City financially to sell the right-of-way and also to transfer responsibility for maintaining the median in that area, he noted

Ald. McCarthy commented that this is a public street where people have the right to park unless they are causing an obstruction.

Vote on the motion, Ayes: 5

### **Request for Crosswalk and/or Stop Signs on W. Center Street at N. 117th Street**

From the hold file was the request by Jane Fischer, 3112 N. Knoll Terrace, for a school crossing and/or stop signs on W. Center Street at N. 117th Street. Mr. Kappel noted that one of the suggestions at the December 10th meeting was moving the crossing guard from 116th Street to 117th Street. From the standpoint of how children cross and cars unload children, Mr. Kappel felt that such a move would be a mistake. The number of pedestrians crossing at 117th Street is nowhere near the number crossing at 116th Street, he noted.

Jane Fischer, 3112 N. Knoll Terrace, agreed that moving the crossing guard would not make sense, but she said that a good number of children do cross at 117th Street. She spoke with the Eisenhower PTA since the last meeting and reported on several ideas that resulted. Rather than a permanent stop sign, she suggested a folding stop sign for east and westbound traffic. Another suggestion was to paint “slow school” on the pavement about a block before the intersection to alert drivers who are rushing to the stop sign at 116th Street. As a community service project, Brownies or some other school group will march up and down the sidewalk with a message about slowing down. Ms. Fischer also spoke of an effort to get media attention to alert parents to slow down before the stop sign and to get some support for a stop sign at 117th Street. She plans to write to State Senator Tom Reynolds and State Representative Leah Vukmir about any legislation that might require stop signs at schools and to try to get something enacted to get signs at 115th Street as well as 117th Street. She is hoping that the state can force municipalities to have stop signs wherever children cross, especially if there are playgrounds there. She also spoke of buying stop signs and selling them to parents. Right now, she said, they are asking for the folding stop signs at 117th Street that the crossing guard at 116th Street could perhaps open and close as he comes and goes and for the painted sign on the street.

Noting that the north side of Center Street is in his district, Ald. Herzog said he feels that folding stop signs are dangerous and would not support them. To have a sign one day and not the next is probably the worst thing we can do for kids crossing there, he said. He noted that Elm Grove had such a sign but found it to be a problem

and removed it. He expressed interest in what it would take to do the suggested pavement marking and whether it would cause problems for plow drivers.

Mr. Kappel said that pavement markings cannot be seen in the winter. Along with school zone signage, it is noticed in the first few weeks but becomes mundane thereafter, he said. He emphasized the need to talk to the parents who are delivering their children to school—they are the problem, not the average resident or passer-by. By his own count on several occasions, the scope of the problem is approximately 12 children or less, he said. If parents are that concerned, they can use the north side of the street where there is a sidewalk that is under-utilized by parents dropping off students. That issue should be taken back to the PTA, he recommended.

Ald. Herzog said his discussions with some area residents indicate concurrence with Mr. Kappel's statements. Parents don't want to wait or are in too much of a rush when they drop their children off. There are routes they could take that would allow them to use the sidewalk, he said, such as taking 117th south to Clarke Street, going east to 116th Street, and then turning onto Center Street to use the crosswalk. Crossing guards are a potential targeted item in discussions of budgetary problems, he noted. He supported the proposed community service project to call attention to the need to slow down.

Asked by Ald. McCarthy about 20 mph school zone signage, Mr. Kappel said he will check but believes the school zone is properly marked. Ald. McCarthy then related a past effort by Underwood School parents that resulted in changing school signage from advisory to obligatory so that police can ticket drivers when an area is properly posted. He favored using the speed board trailer in warmer weather as another means of advising drivers and indicated that he would follow up on that since the south side of Center Street is in his district. Squad cars could be used also, he said, noting that it will be parents who are caught.

Moved by Ald. McCarthy, seconded by Ald. Becker to hold this matter for 30 days in order to identify where signs are located and what other solutions may be available –

Ald. Matthews indicated she would support the motion but questioned the need to hold the matter since we don't know that there is anything the City can do. In dealing with the PTA, she advised teaming up with Whitman and West since a lot of parents have students at those schools also.

Vote on the motion, Ayes: 5

The meeting adjourned at 7:48 p.m.

Carla A. Ledesma, City Clerk  
Wauwatosa, Wisconsin

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