



VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST TRAFFIC AND SAFETY COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, October 17, 2018 – 7:30 PM

A regular meeting of the River Forest Traffic and Safety Commission was held on Wednesday, October 17, 2018 at 7:30 P.M. The meeting was conducted in the Community Room at the River Forest Village Hall, 400 Park Ave. River Forest.

Roll Call and Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:33 PM. Present at this meeting were Chairman Rees, Commissioner Gillis, Commissioner Cleary, Commissioner Osga, Commissioner Jayaraman and Commissioner Wade.

New Business – Discussion of Safe Walking Routes to School report and exhibits.

Chairman Rees addresses the room to state that this is a special meeting to discuss the Safe Walking Routes to School plan. There are representatives from KLOA Inc. present, the consultant firm that completed the study.

Eric Russell is a principal with KLOA Inc., assisting him in this project is Andrew Bowen, Engineer with KLOA. Mr. Russell explains the purpose of the plan is to recommend safe walking routes for the six primary schools in River Forest. The plan reviewed the six schools in the Village. Three of them being the public schools Roosevelt Middle School, Lincoln Elementary and Willard Elementary. As well as the three private schools Grace Lutheran, St. Luke's Parish and St. Vincent Ferrer. The first thing they did was organize meetings with Village staff, the Police department, and with representatives of each school. They reviewed documents from the Village including the comprehensive plan, they reviewed traffic controls and crosswalk markings, they observed school traffic circulation and crossing guard operations. The last thing they did was a survey prepared which was distributed to Village residents and parents of children that are in any of these schools. They received a total of three hundred twelve surveys back, they found that most kids are walking to school more than any other means. Mr. Russell points out some of key points that came up frequently. One is pedestrian safety at the uncontrolled intersections. There is need for more traffic management from the crossing guards along Lake Street. People also asked for a safe crossing at Thatcher Avenue and Oak Street. There is a lot of concern for pedestrian crossing at Park Avenue and Greenfield Street. Residents south of the railroad had concerns on the sight line issues on Hawthorne Avenue and Central Avenue. KLOA had some recommendations to address all of these worries. They prioritized creating routes on crossings that have stop control or crossing guards. On all of the routes where students are directed to cross the street they recommend crosswalks be high-visibility ladder style. There are a lot of crossings that currently don't have a crosswalk, or just have a standard parallel line crosswalk. Any place that our routing takes a child to cross the street, they recommend a ladder style crosswalk. This will also provide a guide for a student to create a path to take to school. They also made recommendations to install stop signs at uncontrolled intersections. Changing some two-way stop signs to four-way stop signs, and changing yield signs to stop signs.

Currently there are sixteen intersections that have crossing guards in the Village. In the survey residents requested guards in nine other locations. The study has recommended two new locations for posting crossing guards. One at Lake Street and Lathrop Avenue, on the southeast corner of St. Luke's Parish School. The other at Division and Ashland, at the southeast corner of Willard Elementary School. The study also suggests three locations where crossing guards could be relocated or removed to improve student safety. At Division and Lathrop, the crossing guard would be relocated to Division Street and Ashland Avenue. At Oak Avenue and Ashland Avenue, they recommend the crossing guard be removed since there are no suggested walking routes. The third location they recommend the crossing guards be removed are the two driveways at Roosevelt Middle School. There are other measures that they propose could be implemented to avoid having crossing guards at these locations.

Commissioner Osga asks how many changes they made throughout the village?

Mr. Russell replies that the majority of the alterations are the striping of crosswalks. There are thirty-seven uncontrolled locations that they advised some form of stop control.

Kristen Sneeringer is concerned about an additional intersection at Gale Avenue and Vine Street. She lives on the southwest corner of this intersection. Since she moved in five years ago she has personally seen five accidents. This crossing is recommended for a two-way stop sign going east west. Her concern is when 1st Avenue or Thatcher Avenue get backed up people go directly down Vine Street.

Chairman Rees adds that this intersection is recommended for a two-way, stopping the traffic on Vine Street. If there is a request for a four-way that would come up at another meeting.

Maureen Huston lives at 631 Edgewood Place; she believes that the study has a glaring oversight. Oak Park and River Forest High School has forty-one developmentally disabled students which attend school at the River Forest Community Center. There is also Opportunity Knocks that currently serves twenty-one students. There could be up to two hundred kids a day traveling to and from the Community Center. On top of that, sixty or more students are independently walking or biking to and from the center. Her developmentally disabled son, driving four blocks to the Community Center was t-boned in a serious car accident at Gale Avenue and Vine Street. Since then she has paid attention and traffic on Gale Avenue rarely adhere to the speed limit. She thinks placing stop signs on the east west streets will not address the problem. It's unfortunate given the number of kids the Community Center sees every weekday that it was not part of this study.

Julie Patterson resides by Lake Street and Lathrop Avenue. She asks that they take into consideration the impending construction site on the corner of Lake Street and Lathrop Avenue. Ms. Patterson questions the amount of stop signs there will be in the Village. How long before the drivers get accustomed to them and begin to ignore them?

Steve Lefko from 719 Thatcher suggests that we don't let the map dictate common sense. He is troubled about crossing guards being removed just because it looks good on a map. He cautions that a lot of the common sense comes from the police department and the people out on the streets.

Eric Russell answers that they thought long and hard before removing any crossing guards. At all locations where they recommend removing them they suggest other measures.

Jeff Loster, Village Engineer informs what initially lead to the organization of this study. There were concerns raised earlier this year about the west side of Roosevelt Middle School. They started talking about crossing guards, then the conversations grew. It got to the point where it made sense to do a more comprehensive study of the entire Village for all the schools.

Commissioner Wade notes that a lot of the problem is most of traffic coming through the village does not live here. Therefore, they do not understand the reason behind this. As he looks at the exhibit he notices that Thomas Street and Iowa Street would be loaded with stop signs. He believes that traffic will avoid those street and drive to the already congested Division Street, Augusta Street and Chicago Avenue.

Mr. Russell recaps that most of those stop signs are already in place and they are only adding the four-way stop signs. He assures that this is something that they can take a look at and review to see if the routes can be rerouted.

Commissioner Gillis adds that when they review the study they should take a look at Gale Avenue and Vine Street and take into consideration the Community Center and review it as a school.

Jeff Loster, Village Engineer lists some of the items they want to revisit. Review the school map exhibits that shows existing signage and propose signage for each school. Attempt to relieve some of the east west corridor issues they might be creating by funneling to some of the more arterial roads. Lastly the addition of the Community Center to the complete study.

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting at 9:27 P.M. All commissioners voted in favor of the motion. Motion passed.

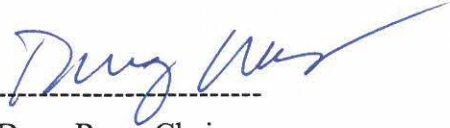
Respectfully Submitted:

Signature Line



Jeff Loster, Secretary

Signature Line



Doug Rees, Chairman
Traffic & Safety Commission

Date: 3/20/19