



VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST TRAFFIC AND SAFETY COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, March 15, 2023 – 7:00 PM

A regular meeting of the River Forest Traffic and Safety Commission was held on Wednesday, March 15, 2023, at 7:00 P.M.

Roll Call and Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 P.M. Present at this meeting were Commissioner Rees, Commissioner Gillis, Commissioner Hoyt, Commissioner Chase, Commissioner Osga.

Chairman Rees adopted a motion to approve the minutes from September 21, 2022, Commissioner Chase seconded the motion.

All commissioners voted to approve the minutes from the September 21, 2022, Traffic and Safety Commission Meeting.

Public Comment

Chairman Rees stated this is the issue of the northeast corner particulars and is something that we, on the committee, have dealt with for several meetings. Been advised that there hasn't been adequate notice but doesn't want to dispute that as there are a variety of ways the Village gives notice of issues.

Chairman Rees stated that this commission makes non-binding recommendations to the Village Board. You also may know that there's currently a Village wide study going on. In my own opinion, I think it is unlikely that we will make any radical recommendations tonight. We do want to hear from people and eventually we may make some modest recommendations tonight even though these changes are rarely irrevocable and a work in progress. We try to do incremental change and that's why some of the barriers in that quadrant of the Village are done on a temporary basis to see how they are working out.

Chairman Rees asked if any members of the Commission have any comments before he turns it over for public comment.

Commissioner Osga stated that he has been on this Commission since 2006, done a lot of work and we have been talking about this quadrant for 10 years at least. I started about a year ago and I just want to give you guys the background so you know what happened here. Had a study done by consultants that made a recommendation of traffic calming measures. 90% of the time the Board listens to what the consultant has to say. This time they did not because the contingency that was in the room had different opinions, the Commission decided to go a step further.

Jeff Loster, Director of Public Works and Development Services, clarified that the northeast study was completed. There is a on-going Village wide study currently going on and one component of that study is a Village wide survey. Results are still coming in and will clear some of the data collection phase of what we need to look at and where. So far 865 responses have been received over the last month and have another week or so to collect data. Data will be analyzed when completed to help dictate where we continue to look as part of the Village wide study.

Patrick Berg, Resident at 1415 Clinton Avenue, talked about his ride share experience with driving down the alley which is a nightmare due to traffic.

Commissioner Gillis asks Mr. Berg how feels about the barricades at the end of Clinton. Mr. Berg responds he is not infatuated with them.

Monica & George Vukotich, 1408 Bonnie Brae Place, Mr. Vukotich indicated that traffic is a challenge and accidents happen in front of his house. He stated in the last few months accidents have reduced. Mrs. Vukotich has a business at 7765 North Avenue, between Park & Franklin. There are many accidents that happen in front of her business. The business has small parking lot which is very difficult to get in and out. She is telling her customers about the changes.

Sherri Cozzi, 1521 Bonnie Brae Place, stated that this has created more of a problem to close off Bonnie Brae and other streets. Alleys are crazy now and it is hard to park in her building parking lot.

Kent Kirk, 1335 William Street, stated as result of two streets to his east, north south being closed, created an increase traffic flow on William.

Chairman Rees acknowledged that when one street is closed adjacent streets get increase traffic.

Giuseppina Nucifora, 1415 Clinton Place, barriers have consequences and are an inconvenience. Cars are using alleys which create new problems.

Chairman Rees asks residents to focus on their comments for Greenfield and Le Moyne if to keep barriers in place, change/alter as they would be more helpful.

Stephanie Petersmarck, 1401 Clinton Place, new to Village, lives at intersection of Clinton & Greenfield. Watches a lot of traffic. Would like slowed and safer streets. Concerned about partial barricades blocking cars cutting off major streets, accidents and first responder access which is crucial. Would like barricades removed immediately.

Ines Lau, 1418 Clinton Place is against the barricades

Ken Heiferman, 7973 Chicago Avenue, agrees with being opposed to barricades. Sister has dental practice on North Avenue and patients are upset about parking.

Pete Tomhras, 1515 Jackson Avenue, barricades are unacceptable and people think they live in criminal neighborhood wants barricades removed.

Ed Kemper, 1423 Bonnie Brae Place, 500 block of Franklin has a lot of trucks, high speed and congestion. He is against barriers and drives 10 extra blocks to get to his house like other residents every day.

Dr. Constantine Politis, 1224 Ashland Avenue, long time resident. Traffic safety issues have not improved but deteriorated. Also indicated that he never received proper notice. Had a petition signed by 253 residents against the barricades.

Nick Maltese, business owner at 7325 N. North Avenue, - Barriers have negative effect on his business. Alleys are very dangerous.

Jack Lesniak, 1419 Bonnie Brae Place, - Not inviting for people to come to River Forest due to barriers if coming from east or north. If you are going West on North Avenue and make turn on Williams, causes a lot of traffic problems.

Lisa Economos, 1439 Clinton Place, - Did not receive notice. Reports that came out did not clearly indicate barrier placements. Her and her husband are in favor of having barriers removed.

Dr. Shana & Rob Novick, 7351 W. North Avenue, - Barricades have limited accessibility to her practice and barricades are corridor of danger to her patients and especially children. Mr. Novick indicated that they are bad for new potential business owners and residents. Requesting all barricades be removed immediately to ensure safety and flow of traffic.

Deana SanLucas, 1521, Unit A, Bonnie Brae Place, - Alley parallel to Bonnie Brae has 80 cars parked there causing chaos. Would like barriers removed.

Dr. Jill McMahon, 7329 W. North Avenue, - Has practice and since barriers have been in place, seeing a lot more traffic and is extremely problematic. Difficult to give her new patients directions. Would like barricades removed.

Janice Foley, 1406 N. Harlem Avenue, - Feels trapped to go anywhere north. Stated that Village President, Cathy Adduci, stated on Facebook that the Board can do whatever they want. Barriers are not solution.

Chairman Rees states that things are done in an incremental way and we generally adhere to the recommendation of the experts.

Bonnie Parker, 1435 Clinton Place, - Against barriers and asked who was responsible for notifying residents as she did not receive notifications. Indicated that Trustees did not know if they were permanent or not.

Chairman Rees states his understanding is that the barriers are temporary.

Jeff Loster, Director of Public Works and Development Services talks about the notices that the Village gives.

Catherine Byrne, 1411 Clinton Place, - Against barricades and since they have been up she see's nothing but speeding traffic.

Dan Wasiolek, 1400 Bonnie Brae Place, - His focus is safety and since police are present, noticed a significant reduction in speeding traffic. Area seems safer based on his observation and would like to keep traffic mitigation in place.

Mary & Ron Krause, 7301 Greenfield Street, - There is a lot of speeding and traffic due to sports at Fenwick. Has seen a difference in traffic reduction with mitigation measures and would like to keep barriers in place.

Marika Panton, 1137 Park Avenue, - Against barricades. Revenue hurting businesses that are on North Avenue. Alley should only be utilized by homeowners and Utility Contractors not for redirecting traffic.

Gary Williams, 7307 Greenfield Street, - Not against barriers. Seen reduction in speeding traffic. Talks about sporting events at Fenwick that he can't even get out of his driveway.

Bob Conrardy, 1415 Monroe Avenue, - Against barriers. Traffic is being pushed to other areas. Wants a right hand turn lane at east bound North Avenue at Harlem.

Keith Lertsburapa, 1526 Clinton Place, - In favor of Clinton Place barrier. Seen major reduction in traffic. If barriers come down, strongly suggest putting 4-way stop sign back up at Le Moyne and Clinton Place.

Andre Ivy, 1445 Clinton Place, - Has no issues with barriers. They have helped with the safety of the Village.

Robert Armalas, 1501 Bonnie Brae Place, - Streets should provide safety for the neighborhood. Our streets should not be known as truck route town.

Patrona (via Zoom) – On corner of North Avenue and William. Traffic is congested and has tripled. Would like barriers removed. Stop sign might be a solution.

Abby Schmelling (via Zoom), 1530 Bonnie Brae Place, - Would like barriers to come down.

Rene Hermes, 1446 Bonnie Brae, - No issues with his patients parking at his clinic. In favor of barriers. Does not want flashing stop signs in front of his house.

Greg Abcarian, 1226 William, - Against barriers. Timed cars speeding at 75 miles an hour on Berkshire. Increased traffic on Lathrop. Would like stop sign on Berkshire & William if barriers stay up.

Jeff, Director of Public Works and Department Service shared comments about the impacts of barrier survey.

Chairman Rees talks about study and turns over floor to the Commission.

Commissioner Osga thanks residents for coming out and talks about notices sent out. He did not hear that North Avenue businesses received notices which is a factor of 10%. Committee can get to work regarding solutions now that they have opinions of both sides.

Commissioner Chase acknowledges that out of 34 people that spoke tonight, 25 would like barriers removed. Cannot make decision tonight and need to wait for outcome of study. Safety of the residents and children are our concern.

Commissioner Hoyt indicates we need to help businesses and what we are willing to give up in order to receive the benefits we need. Have a lot of work to do.

Commissioner Gillis states that we are receiving all the viewpoints that we didn't get the first time. Talks about what the next steps are. Talks about the original KLOA report wanting to shut down businesses for four hours a day, which is a bad part of the report. This clearly did not work as well as we thought.

Chairman Rees interrupts and does not want back and forth going on with audience. Also talks about solutions on what they need to look at in future or wait for new analysis.

Chairman Rees suggests making a proposal to discuss about passing a motion and if they do, it is a recommendation to the Village Board to recommend modifying the restrictions on Greenfield and Le Moyne regarding barriers so people heading southbound on Harlem can turn into the neighborhood.

Commissioner Hoyt asks if we are recommending a physical barrier modification or signage.

Commissioner Gillis stated that the current barrier be modified as it doesn't allow people to turn right if heading south on Harlem and support signage too.

Commissioner Hoyt asks if it is possible to have a temporary barrier in the center of the intersection.

Jeff, Director of Public Works and Department Services, indicates that we can set up barriers to accommodate that but would have to go back to the Board, regarding the Ordinance that was originally approved, for modification approval.

Chairman Rees asks Jeff to confirm when you say an Ordinance was approved does this mean we are wrong on the Commission if we thought these are temporary that the Board actually passed an Ordinance making them permanent?

Jeff, Director of Public Works and Department Services, indicated that prior to placing the temporary barriers in place, an Ordinance had to be approved pending the traffic study.

Chairman Rees would like to recommend that we, as a Commission, take a census on this that we advise the Village Board these recommendations are temporary pending completion of the Village wide study.

Commissioner Osga talks about traffic concerns when Fenwick starts bussing in kids as to what will happen.

Chairman Rees suggests we make same changes on Greenfield & Le Moyne.

Commissioner Osga does not want to make rational decisions on anything due to upcoming data and sports seasons approaching.

Commissioner Gilles talks about people living in the Greenfield & Le Moyne quadrant.

Commissioner Chase asks Jeff how long barriers have been in place.

Jeff indicated that post cards went out December 1st for Le Moyne and Greenfield and November 16th, for Clinton and Bonnie.

Commissioner Chase asks if barriers have been up for the last 3 months. Doesn't feel 3 months is enough time to see what's happening.

Chairman Rees indicated that he is not focusing right now for the barriers on North Avenue, but talking about the restrictions at Harlem and Le Moyne and Harlem and Greenfield. Suggest a modest adjustment to maintain the barrier to elevate a piece of it to allow people that are southbound on Harlem to turn into the neighborhood with better access.

Commissioner Chase just not want to undue what has been done in only 3 months which is a minor modification. North bound traffic on Harlem will still not be able to turn left.

Chairman Rees is suggesting that we modify the existing barrier to open up at least a part of it to allow southbound traffic on Harlem to turn right into the neighborhood and that we recommend to the Village Board that this would be a temporary modification change to the existing restriction pending the Village wide study.

Commissioner Osga indicates that his biggest concern right now is the alleys.

Chairman Rees would like to make a motion to modify the barriers on Greenfield and Harlem and Le Moyne and Harlem to open barrier to allow southbound traffic on Harlem to turn right onto Le Moyne and right onto Greenfield. Will also include that east bound on Greenfield and on Le Moyne that signage be either right turn only or no left turn whatever the appropriate signage is with the elimination of the one way.

Commissioner Hoyt is in favor. Agrees to letting a lot of the residents back in.

Commissioner Chase asks if we should do one street or both streets off the bat?

Chairman Rees is suggesting both to share the traffic. Is there any further discussion on that before we vote?

Chairman Rees indicated Commissioner Gillis second it.

Chairman Rees votes yes. Commissioner Chase votes yes. Commissioner Gilles votes yes. Commissioner Hoyt votes yes. Commissioner Osga votes no.

Chairman Rees mentioned that motion passes.
Also stated that not making any decisions this evening.

Commissioner Chase agrees with Commissioner Osga not to make changes until study is completed.

Jeff, Director of Public Works and Department Services clarified that due to the Village wide study a significant amount of data has been collected for the major routes in town. Remainder of data collection has been held off pending results of the survey.

Chairman Rees asks Jeff in the scope of work if the new study encompasses having current engineers checking the work of KLOA or determine if their conclusions are sound?
Jeff replied no as this was not part of the scope of work.

A resident asks if they can check with the Willard school about how many children are walking to school every day since litigation measures have come up. Measuring cars is one way and how many parents are letting their kids walk to school.

Chairman Rees asks if any barriers should be removed at this time.

Commissioner Gillis asks who else thinks Clinton should remain closed and takes pole for people to raise their hand.

A resident indicates to take down barriers and install speed bumps to elevate traffic.

Commissioner Osga mentioned that it is a great point and coming through on the study. Nothing to be resolved tonight as recommendations need to be sent and approved by the Board.

Chairman Rees indicated to let's focus on one barrier, the Clinton barrier, and wait for study for other barriers to be removed and Commissioner Chase says that is correct.

Catherine Byrne, 1411 Clinton Place, majority people here are against barricades and the biggest issue is that the KLOA report indicates that we should not have the barricades and we are not following their recommendations.

Chairman Rees stated that it is highly unlikely tonight that the Commission is going to recommend removing the barriers and would like to make clear message to the Village Board that changes are temporary pending completion of the new study and survey.
Village should be open in reconsidering altering or removing the barriers based on the comments tonight, based on the KLOA study, based on that we are still waiting on survey results and the Village wide study.

Commissioner Hoyt agrees but is conflicted.

Commissioner Osga asks Jeff when the report is going to be done. Jeff noted survey cannot be closed until all data is received and results are still coming in. Summer maybe a the earliest.

Chairman Rees notes that we all have a goal to try and deal with these issues. Let Village know that these changes are temporary pending results of the survey and let it be known that some of the restrictions conflict with the KLOA study. We had much more participation tonight regarding the barrier impact.

Commissioner Hoyt suggests that if study ends up taking a long time, that we as a Commission, see if there is anything we would like to discuss ourselves and see if there is anything we want to do.

Chairman Rees indicates we meet every other month and if this looks like it is lingering, we want to change current status, we can make recommendation to the Village Board. They will decide whether to follow it or not.

Commissioner Osga indicates that Commissioner Hoyt made a good point earlier and that we need to make changes that benefit more of us than not. The Board needs to know what we need to do and understand the task. Suggests participants go to Trustee Board next month as they are the ones that make decisions.

Chairman Rees indicates that we installed a guide line and when we make changes, that they are supported. Also talked about possible stop signs being installed.

Jeff, Director of Public Works and Department Services, indicates that a letter was sent to Fenwick regarding parking when they have sporting events and to adhere by our parking requests for busses to be parked in their parking lot and not on Greenfield. Did not receive a response.

Chairman Rees mentioned that when season starts that we can follow up if they are not listening.

Dan Wasiolek, 1400 Bonnie Brae asks if they would be addressing the Clinton barriers and Chairman Rees indicated not tonight.

Giuseppina Nucifora, 1415 Clinton, asks for small request to count the cars in the alley to see what the traffic is and Chairman Rees indicated that was one thing to put in the survey if she answered it. There is a lot more traffic in the alleys due to the design but would be a request that we can note.

Chairman Rees indicated we do identify certain areas and do have limited police present and limited enforceability and ask police to shift their responsibilities. Thanks everybody for coming and asks for motion to adjourn.

Chairman Rees made a motion and seconded by Commissioner Chase to adjourn the meeting at 10:03 P.M. All Commissioners voted in favor of motion. Motion passed.

Respectfully Submitted:



Bill Koclanis, Secretary



Doug Rees, Chairman

Date: 5-17-23

