

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE REPORT

July 14, 2010, 1:05 PM

City Council Chambers

Members Present: Jason Wiener (chair), Dick Haines, Lyn Hellegaard, Roy Houseman, Bob Jaffe, Marilyn Marler, Renee Mitchell, Dave Strohmaier, Pam Walzer, and Jon Wilkins

Members Absent: Ed Childers

Others Present: Phil Smith, Kevin Slovarp, Steve King, Wayne Gravatt, Marsha Hauck, Annie Alvord, Oerna C. Llewellyn, Carol E. Williams, Lorraine Stevens, E. Frances Hamilton, Helen E. Faix-Flohr, Glenn Larson, Ramona Larson, Ethel MacDonald, Ed E. Junkert, and Carole Ultrigg

I. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

- A. Approval of the minutes of [June 30, 2010](#) and [July 7, 2010](#) – Approved
- B. Announcements – Steve King discussed a new referral coming out of Public Works regarding changes to the current house moving ordinance. The Miller Creek Road roundabout project was on schedule and the roundabout was now in place. The Miller Creek sewer project was also progressing, it was half completed, and an amendment would be coming to Council shortly regarding the Twite Family Agreement.
- C. Public Comment on Non-Agenda items – Ethel McDonald of 315 W. Central spoke about missing sidewalks in her neighborhood.

II. CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

1. Authorize a crosswalk at Central and Stephens ([memo](#)) ([Presentation](#)).—Regular Agenda (Jon Wilkins)
(Referred to committee: 06/21/10) **(REMOVE FROM AGENDA)**

Motion: The committee recommends the City Council approve and authorize the installation of a crosswalk at Central and Stephens Avenues and requests the Mayor to direct City Public Works to install the crosswalk.

Motion: The committee recommends the City Council requests the Mayor to direct the City Public Works Department to create a policy for similar future requests.

Kevin Slovarp, City Engineer, discussed the importance of adhering to engineering standards when addressing an uncontrolled intersection. A new ADA ramp was installed on the southwest corner of the intersection and pedestrians and those with disabilities should cross at intersections with facilities in place; however, the intersection at Central and Stephens was unmarked, but it was still considered a crosswalk.

City Engineering looked at the MUTCD (Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices) requirements and other research done on marked versus unmarked crossings. Studies showed that marked crosswalks had no impact on pedestrian/vehicle incidents, nor did area type, location, speed, one-way or two-way traffic, condition of the markings, or the marking pattern. Research indicated that on two lane roads there were no significant differences for pedestrian incidents on marked versus unmarked crosswalk sites, nor did installing a crosswalk without other crossing facilities result in a majority of motorists stopping for pedestrians. Pedestrians over 65 years of age also had a higher rate of accidents in crosswalks compared to the rest of the crossing public.

MUTCD required that the City Engineering Division evaluate the intersection. City Engineering looked at ways to draw attention to or enhance the intersection whether it be marked or not. On a site visit with Bike/Pedestrian Coordinator, Phil Smith, Mr. Slovarp witnessed pedestrians crossing without any problem. They appeared to be residents of the Manor heading over to Walgreens. Mr. Smith and Mr. Slovarp looked at the geometrics of the intersection, site distance, traffic volume, pedestrian estimates, posted speed limit, crash history, number of travel lanes, and consulted the Master Sidewalk Plan for what was required in the area.

Wayne Gravatt, Traffic Services Coordinator, explained the results of City Engineering's evaluation. A site obstruction problem was found on the northwest corner of the intersection with parked cars and vegetation. He had no actual traffic counts for this area so he looked at the adjacent streets and found that the traffic volume through

the intersection was pretty low. He found that there was confusion on the posted speed limit so he contacted the City Police Department. City Police indicated that it was not a high volume traffic area and had a low crash history.

Mr. Gravatt added that he did not feel a crosswalk was necessary, especially because of budget constraints. Mr. Slovarp added that the Master Sidewalk Plan did not require a crosswalk at the site in question. He encouraged pedestrians to use the existing crossing at Sussex with the refuge island. He then stated that his recommendations were to remove the parking spot on northbound Stephens and the vegetation causing the site obstruction, conduct a speed study in the area, use Brightside panels at both stop approaches on Central and Stephens, and then have the police enforce pedestrian crossing in the area.

Jon Wilkins stated that the backdoor of the Missoula Manor was not ADA compliant and that residents would be inclined to use the most direct route since mobility was an issue. Residents should be allowed a safe crossing in this area and he recommended a crosswalk be installed.

Lyn Hellegaard asked how much the crosswalk would cost. Mr. Gravatt stated that it was not so much the cost of one crosswalk, but the cumulative effect of installing a crosswalk every time it was requested when funding did not cover the cost of what he was already required to maintain. Ms. Hellegaard ran a senior transportation plan and stated that isolation and hip fractures were a problem and she supported the crosswalk installation.

Jason Wiener asked why it was so important to obey the manual set forth by MUTCD. Mr. Slovarp stated that it was the rationale for how each job was performed and the duties required of the City. It was less safe for a pedestrian to rely on the fact that a crosswalk was painted without looking both ways before crossing through traffic. The study also said it was more dangerous to mark where a motorist did not expect pedestrians.

Public Comment

Ethel McDonald of 315 W. Central questioned that a marked crossing would be more dangerous. She thought it would make motorists more observant and supports the crosswalk.

Marsha Hauck, Services Coordinator for the Missoula Manor, presented a [letter from Mr. Zane R. Rebenstorff](#) and a document with [signatures](#) in favor of the crosswalk. She stated that it would be a huge problem for residents to use the back door and walk an extra half block or block to get out of the Missoula Manor to run errands. Also there was a ramp out of the back door, but it did not have the ADA automatic door. Residents must be encouraged to be independent, which was the objective. She asked if additional pedestrian signage would be installed.

Jon Wilkins explained that the pedestrian signage would be worked out later.

Carol Williams stated that sidewalk in the area needed repair, she was in favor of the crosswalk, and the speed limit on Sussex was too high and she had witnessed an accident.

Dave Strohmaier explained that he did not believe that a crosswalk would diminish safety.

Steve King stated that it was the responsibility of City Public Works to use the tools provided, such as the manual from the MUTCD, and nonstandard requests and implementation would mean nonstandard traffic control. Guidelines and standardization were necessary and it was Council's responsibility to make those changes to the requirements around senior housing, and budget for the costs associated with implementation, if Council felt it was necessary. (Mr. King submitted a [Memo](#) after the meeting stating Public Works' position regarding the crosswalk.)

Bob Jaffe made a motion to approve and authorize installation of a crosswalk at Central and Stephens Avenues; he would also like to see a sign installed at the crosswalk. Mr. Jaffe was okay with the idea of addressing each individual situation, and in relation to the budget issue, the maintenance districts might make it possible to install some of these projects that come up that directly affect quality of life.

Steve King reminded the committee that the motion was to authorize the Mayor to direct staff to install the crosswalk, Council could not direct staff.

Marilyn Marler offered a friendly amendment that Council authorize the Mayor to direct staff to install this particular crosswalk and have staff bring back proposals to incorporate and standardize such requests so Council is not installing such facilities by request, there should be a procedure.

Bob Jaffe did not want to accept the friendly amendment and make this a work plan issue and implement a policy change. He asked Mr. King to comment on the amendment. Mr. King appreciated Ms. Marler's suggested amendment. Mr. Jaffe approved the amendment.

Jon Wilkins stated that he did not want to amend the motion as stated.

Ramona Larson made a public comment. She wanted more ADA accessible ramps installed in the area in question.

Dick Haines asked Mr. King to pull a figure out of the air, Mr. King stated that the cost would be less than \$1,000 per cross walk for signing and striping. Mr. Haines added that he thought the crosswalk should be installed and Council would not be setting a precedent.

Jon Wilkins asked that the question be called before the Missoula Manor residents had to leave at 2:00 p.m. Mr. Haines called for the question. Mr. Wiener called the question to end the debate; Renee Mitchell was opposed to ending the debate. With one opposed to calling the question, Mr. Wiener asked for public comment on the motion as amended to direct the Mayor to authorize the crosswalk and to authorize the Mayor to request that City Public Works create a policy for such requests.

Motion passed unanimously, consent agenda.

III. HELD AND ONGOING AGENDA ITEMS

1. Discussion on the sizes of grease interceptors for the restaurant industry ([Grease Interceptor PowerPoint](#)) ([memo](#)).—Regular Agenda (Stacy Rye and Bob Jaffe) (Referred to committee: 04/21/08)
2. Consider restructuring the city's Sewer Loan Program along the lines of the recently approved change to the Sidewalk & Curb Loan Fund.—Regular Agenda ([Chapter 3.16 – Sidewalk & Curb Loan](#)) ([Chapter 3.18 Sewer Loan](#)) ([Ordinance 3344](#)) (Ed Childers) (Referred to committee: 06/26/06)
3. Review infrastructure conditions at the locations of serious and fatal traffic accidents: 2007-2009 ([memo](#)).—Regular Agenda (Jason Wiener) (Referred to committee: 01/25/10)
4. Resolution to restore vacated Inez Street at South 2nd Street to the public trust and public use, and vacate a public access easement that was a condition of the vacation ([memo](#)).—Regular Agenda (Carla Krause) (Referred to committee: 04/26/2010)
5. Authorize a crosswalk at Central and Stephens ([memo](#)).—Regular Agenda (Jon Wilkins) (Referred to committee: 06/21/10)

IV. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 2:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Heidi J. Bakula
Program Specialist
City Public Works Department