

**ASHLAND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
MINUTES
December 10, 2015**

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Joseph Graf called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. in the Civic Center Council Chambers, 1175 East Main Street.

Commissioners Present: Danielle Amarotico, Dominic Barth, Joe Graf, and David Young

Commissioners Absent: Corinne Viéville and Alan Bender

Council Liaison Absent: Michael Morris

Student Liaison Present: Janelle Wilson

Staff Present: Mike Faught, Scott Fleury, and Kyndra Irigoyen

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Paige Townsend, representative from RVTB is unable to attend today's meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approval of Minutes: None

ADJUSTMENTS TO THE AGENDA

Presentation by Paige Townsend, RVTB representative, will be rescheduled for January. Group will read memo prepared by Townsend and post online for public viewing.

PUBLIC FORUM

Huelz Guteheon, 2253 Hwy 99

He thought the bus people would be here. He will be back when they are back. Guteheon says he has been riding the bus for the past 10 years, puts bike on the bus. He said 20 years ago the bus used to run just in town and drove slow, the seats were soft and now they are hard, the fare was 25 cents, the bus drives fast and stops fast. The drivers are always late and tailgate, they are on a 2-hour route and rushing to each stop, and the bus stinks sometimes. He apologizes for being negative, he does love the buses though, and they are great. He told the commission he thinks they should ride the bus to see the problems. He thinks an electric shuttle inside town would be awesome.

Roy Sutton, 989 Golden Aspen Place

Sutton spoke with reference to the Jefferson Exchange interview on Tuesday about the five electric buses they have ordered for Lane County that will serve Eugene and Springfield, to be delivered in June. They are not too far away if any of us want to observe them first hand, he said. They did cover how they received some funding for them. The bus that they manufactured is the same one we looked into, it is a Chinese company but they are produced in Palm Desert, CA so they qualify for federal funding, if the money is available.

Graf asked if he knew if they are using them on their bus rapid transit route or their regular neighborhood routes. Sutton didn't recall but the mileage covered a day was 130 miles per day, the battery will last 150-180 hours with the charging station overnight, which is a big improvement from earlier models. Graf says he knows they have put in a bus rapid transit from Springfield to Eugene. Sutton says that about 50% of their fleet are hybrid buses. Mike Faught said that he can forward the presentation to the commission and is available online.

Paul Rostykus, 436 Grandview Drive

Rostykus spoke about the guardrail issue on Grandview Drive. He lives up above Grandview, it runs up from Scenic to the intersection of Sunnyview and Skycrest. There was a guardrail put in about 6 months ago, about 350ft long. He displayed pictures to the commission that he took. Grandview is relatively narrow to begin with; the placement of the

guardrail has narrowed the road even more by 2-6ft, depending on the part of it. It has also eliminated the escape path for pedestrians. So if you want to get out of the way of a car, hopefully you can jump the rail. This is a highway style guardrail, very sturdy. There are some visual issues going on; the picture showed a truck backing out of a driveway and the visual impairment from the oncoming road.

He spoke about how narrow the road is when there are both pedestrians and cars on the road. A picture was displayed showing a woman walking a dog on the side of the road in between the guardrail and a van driving up the hill, with a second car driving down the hill. The picture gave a visual of how narrow the space is. He said he was up there with two others on the road a few weeks ago in this same position when a large Kenmore dump truck was coming up the hill and another car was coming down the opposite way. He and the other person were able to jump over the guardrail and the third person straddled the guardrail. He estimated by holding his hands about a foot apart, was the space between the guardrail and the cars driving next to it. He thinks that if a person was squished between a car and the guardrail, it could result in a loss of limb, broken bones, surgery, or not surviving.

He then displayed a cross-section he created. The black line in the middle is the pavement, which is between 16½ and 20ft wide, now the guardrail is on the left hand side, between the unpaved shoulder next to the guardrail there is between 9 and 24 inches. According to the city planning documents, the city right of way is about 70-80ft wide; most of the roadway is shifted to the right hand side in this place. He is not sure why the guardrail was put here, it was not mentioned in the building plans for the project or in the planning documents for this area. He cannot find an encroachment permit that was issued for this either, which makes this guardrail a city violation of municipal code. His question is why is this guardrail remaining if it was installed by a private company on public property, why is it remaining in violation of the municipal code?

NEW BUSINESS

Code Enforcement

Graf said this is a follow up to previous discussions about sidewalk maintenance and sidewalk hazards. Faught said he has previously given instructions to the street crew for arterial collectors to issue letters for public right of way where they have performed inspections. Patches, who has since retired, use to do this work on an annual basis and was very good at it. Since he has left, this task has not been a high priority, but now it is back on track. The street crew does this unless there is a controversial issue, then a code enforcer will go out and inspect the issue. For example, if trees are growing into the sidewalk or we have traffic division triangle issues on arterials and collectors then we have the street crews inspect this.

Young asked about when we had the heavy rain and the leaves were covering the sidewalk, from the standpoint of the rental properties or a person who has a disability, how do they get the leaves off the sidewalk? Faught responded that we do not have staff to clean up leaves on the sidewalk; it is the responsibility of the property owner to clean up things like that. What he does not wait around for is a long-term issue like overgrowth.

Faught explained that it takes about three months of someone's time to go out and do these inspections for arterial and collectors each year. If there is an issue, we send them a notice and give them a timeframe to respond to the issue. Young asked if, as a commission, they could put a message in the city source that it is the responsibility of the property owner to keep the sidewalk clean, that it is in our mission to keep the sidewalks safe. Faught will bring an example of past reminders that have been issued to the commission to review.

Bridge St. parking prohibition

Fleury included the email he received from the code enforcement officer, Kevin Flynn. He has been in contact with property owners there who have requested us to discuss parking prohibition along the west curb section (120') off Bridge St., which is the west curb section of 120ft. He sent notice to all the property owners adjacent to this street section and was able to contact two property owners who are in support of the prohibition. One property owner is concerned about his two on street parking credits on the east side of the street and he wants to maintain the integrity there, however this prohibition would not affect the east side of the street, only the west. We will find out if there is interest in the east side of the street also. There is potential for about 40ft of additional frontage that could be used on the east side of the street, if there was an additional parking prohibition. It meets the streets standards for having

parking on that side of street and the volume is fairly low from the last count and is not expected to increase.

Graf asked for clarification, we are not talking about changing the section that is yellow (the east side of the street), only the area behind the driveway that goes in behind the mini mart and the corner. If we did something about this, it would change from unlimited parking to one hour parking. Fleury explained that business owners asked for this one-hour turnover because college students park here all day and sometimes leave cars there overnight, which limits the parking for their customers. He said there had been timed parking there at one time, but has since been removed.

Amarotico asked Fleury to point out on the west side exactly where the parking prohibition would be. Fleury responded that the parking prohibition would come from the driveway, 40ft up, not restricted at all, and then 40ft up from there, to right below the driveway and would be timed. There is an abandoned driveway where people park in front of now, so that entire section could potentially be timed too. That would add could be another 3-4 spaces in that area.

Graf asked if there is any data on this area of how many people go to these businesses and cannot find a spot to park and do we have any information on how short this parking lot is for all the businesses that are in there? Fleury said there is not any data for this. Graf said if we make any decision on this, it would be complaint driven, not data driven.

Faught told the commission they could recommend for the city to hire someone to collect the data on the area. The data we are taking is from the police department on all the issues they are having in this area.

Barth said his own observation of this the area is that this area is constantly full. He did notice that when the parking was no longer timed the turnover was not as frequent or not at all. This area has become very popular, where Pita Pit and Case Coffee Roasters are now. Spring, summer, and fall are the busiest times there.

Graf said there are two restaurants and businesses on the other side that take up many spaces and it is hard to park there when you go.

Young asked if anyone had spoken to SOU about this. Wilson said she does not think she can speak for everyone at SOU but said their campus director of public safety has been encouraging students to purchase SOU parking permits to park in designated spots and encourages students to be good neighbors to surrounding businesses and community. She thinks it is good to be data driven and thinks the campus would appreciate the data too. She thinks if it is negatively affecting the businesses, then changing the current parking to timed parking makes sense.

Graf asked if anyone wanted to make a suggestion to take action on this topic.

Young asked how many untimed spaces we are converting to one hour and how many additional spaces would be added to it. Fleury said there would be six spaces added per the standard guidelines; however, people will park closer together so eight to ten vehicles could probably squeeze in there.

Young/Barth m/s the Ashland Transportation Commission supports sending notices to the neighborhood for the proposed parking restriction on Bridge Street.

Barth asked who would issue citations in the area. Fleury said that the community service officer would monitor the area and issue citations as necessary, not Diamond Parking.

All in favor. Motion passes unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

Transit System Study Session

Faught suggested that we invite Paige Townsend back in January to present.

Graf asked if we could make the memo that Townsend provided in her absence for the public. Faught said that we

would post the memo on the website for all to view.

FOLLOW UP ITEMS

Grandview Shared Road

Faught said this is a very controversial issue. He explained that the plan of action he is proposing is supported by legal guidance. The guardrail meets our standards; they came in to get a copy of our standards, but did not secure a permit to put in the guardrail. Faught asked to see Paul Rostykus' cross section diagram.

We need an 18ft paved section and 3ft on each side for pedestrians. As this cross section shows, we do not have 25ft out there right now. We have a traffic engineer who reviewed this who said it does provide vehicular safety. Faught has talked to the property owner about this and the need for additional roadway; he thinks ultimately there will end up being a guardrail there. We may cut some of the bank on the other side to create a true shared road. Faught has spoken with the property owner who is willing to pay part of the cost. He would like to just move it one time, once the design is accepted. We have an engineering firm on board to provide us with three options for the final solution. We may have to cut part of the hill to fix the sight distance issues for this section. Faught wants data to drive the final decision. We are on the fast track to get these options back. From a legal standpoint, this is a safe approach to move forward with.

The next step after we get the final solution is to send a notice to adjacent property owners because we are changing the speed to 15mph. He wants the commission to have a public hearing for anyone who is impacted by this. He wants to really engage the community on this because it is a big deal. Speeds above 15mph on this road do not work and speed bumps on this road are not a good idea.

Barth asked if we are past having to wait for the Normal Ave. stuff. Faught said Normal Ave. is at its second reading. We are a couple of months out from getting the final design solutions for the shared road, around February or March. The follow-up before we put the 15mph speed signs up is to have a public process with the commission.

Barth asked when is the soonest the 15mph speed signs will go up. Faught responded that they will go up in March or April. It will be designated as a shared road after it meets the standards to be a shared road. We have several other shared roads, but will work through the signage systematically because it is a big change for people to go 15mph.

Barth is concerned about the guardrail. He said we have been talking about this off and on for six months and he said even Mike said he experienced a close call on this stretch. The longer this goes on, the more liability the city is exposed to.

Faught responded that he is working with legal direction and we need to work with that legal interpretation.

Young said his main concern is how many city resources and taxpayer resources are going into something that was really a private developer's mistake. He wonders what kind of precedence this sets; that someone illegally put in something that is dangerous. In addition, it infringes on the design options going forward. Young is concerned that we are spending a lot of time and city resources, when we could be doing other things.

Faught said that the city resources would have to be spent on the work anyway because the road needed to be converted to a shared road. He said that he was already working with Fleury on this in the first place. He said at this point it is better to work with everyone, instead of ripping the guardrail out.

Graf said as far as the shared road code approval, it's still tied up in the Normal Ave. process, the citizens who don't like it haven't stopped, he is wondering where this all sits. If the council decides to table the whole thing would this leave the whole shared road hanging? Can the council approve some parts of the plan that include these parts of the plan without necessarily approving the whole thing?

Faught responded that the issue with Normal Ave. has nothing to do with the shared road design.

Young said his understanding about shared roads is that you take conditions as given. This is new information to him tonight, that since a set of standards have been created for Normal Ave., that now you are forced to apply them retroactivity to preexisting roads to get that 25ft. Faught responded that they have said all along that they need 18ft of paved road and 3ft on each side for pedestrians. He recalls that he has consistently spoke about having 3ft on each side for pedestrians and it is the legal designation to change the speed limit to 15mph.

Graf understood that when they did the Normal Ave. traffic plan they amended the TSP to include the definition of shared roads. If the council does not approve the Normal Ave. plan it puts everything on the table, then we do not have a definition of a shared road. Faught said the definition is there and he can easily take it as a standalone to the council. He wants to end up with a shared road we are all proud of, a safe refuge for all pedestrians.

Graf asked how soon would we have options from the engineers. Faught said he does not want to give a date, although he has asked the engineers to design it quickly.

Oak Knoll and Highway 66 intersection – Site Distance

Fleury said he did not have a chance to finish it. He did lay out site stopping distance layout for the 35mph, which he will show the commission at the next meeting. He also contacted the street department to see if the evergreens were encroaching. The pictures from last time showed the evergreens dangling over the fence. The street department investigated this site hindrance.

Walker Ave. RxR Stop Signs

They did remove the miniature stop signs from the edge of the sidewalk. The crossing arms had previously been working but he was informed tonight that the arms were not working on Monday. The police were contacted who then contacted the appropriate parties and the Central Oregon and Pacific Railroad (CORP) had people out there working on the issue. The general manager of CORP came to the meeting about a month ago. He has contacted him since and he is very responsive. Faught said we need to work with them in the future so that they follow the rules.

Oak Street Crossings

Fleury said CORP should be removing the cabinet next week and putting up the arms. The cabinet will be relocated, which is why the sidewalk is missing. Keep Oregon Green and Protected (KOGAP), the city's contractor, will then pour the last two panels to create the connection so pedestrians are not walking in the rocks. Young said the stop bars are still not there for cars. Fleury said the crossing arms control the stop.

East Nevada St. Bridge Project

Faught asked to add another item to the follow-up items.

Faught said there have been some developments on the East Nevada St. bridge project. They have hired Al Densmore to help look for funding for this project. If there was previously a bridge there, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) money may be available. We had a contact today who may have a photo that proves there was a bridge there. Mr. Densmore had a great idea to work with the Greenway Board. We now have a full letter of support on the greenway extension. He is recommending that we separate the pedestrian bike facilities from the automobile bridge. There is a lot more money available for pedestrian and bike facilities than for auto.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

Action Summary

Nothing discussed.

Downtown Parking and Multi Modal Circulation Study-Draft Report

Graf said that the downtown committee is very close to approving this draft from the consultant. Now is the time to raise any issues if you have any in the development section. This is a plan of process, not so much specific recommendations. If you see something in there that you do not think we should do, it does not say do it, it says study it or evaluate it. Good news is that nothing is written in stone, the bad news is it has still to be determined. Faught said some things are written in stone. We have an 18-month plan to follow through which involves hiring staff

who are dedicated to do this work.

Graf said one of the first solutions to parking is to try to find shared lots, which are private lots that are sitting empty most of time, and to try to find a way to create a public private partnership so that those will be available for those who need long term parking downtown. Faught said the consultant identified 1200 spaces of existing private spaces, of which 900 during the peak period remain empty. The consultant is recommending that we create relationships and use that space instead of building new facilities.

Graf said there are a lot of spaces, but they are not right in front of the businesses. We may have to have something that involves improvement to sidewalks, shuttle buses, lights, and more ways to drive there and take your bike off your car and ride your bike into the downtown core. He thinks the other thing that is important here is that there will be another committee that will take over, the Parking Advisory Committee, which will be in operation to manage the parking and advise the parking downtown, which will likely have representatives from the transportation commission.

Amarotico asked if Faught could give her a real life example of how a public private partnership would work. Faught said that some businesses might be able to barter with other businesses. Faught said for the city to pick up some spots, an example is the church by Oak St., the parking lot is empty every day except Sundays, it is a great opportunity to create agreements, which may not involve money.

Amarotico said going back to the real life example, so when other cities do this in other cases, would the city pay the church a rental fee. Faught said each business would work out a deal for their own employees. It's not that we create an ordinance that you cannot have employees parking downtown, the businesses have to manage that. If we create a mechanism for our city employees to park downtown, we would work out some deal for them to pay and encourage them to park there.

Young clarified that this is just the draft plan and is only the parking component. Seeking the agreements would be the job of the staff or consultant.

Barth noted that page 16 references 'San Ashland' instead of 'Ashland' and Graf asked that Figure B be removed on page 24.

Graf said the consultant is taking suggestions, so now is the time for input. Everyone can give their suggestions to Graf or Young and they will give the input to Faught who will update the consultant.

Young asked that the edited version be given to the committee, two weeks before the next meeting, so the committee has a week to catch some edits or other suggestions.

Faught said when this is done; we will work on the multimodal piece of it. He would like to eventually have a town meeting about this to receive their input.

Graf asked if all of the plans would come through the Transportation Commission before it goes to Council. Faught said yes, it would go to Planning as well before it goes to Council. He wants the vetting to happen before it goes to council.

Open Discussion

Graf gave an update on his attendance at the Mayor's brown bag.

Young voiced his concern about the ongoing vacancy on this commission. Graf said there has been movement, it has not been fast enough, but there has been movement. There is another person who is now being interviewed for the commission.

Graf asked about any future agenda topics. He asked when they are going to be discussing the Siskiyou portal. Faught said he recommends that should be the next project after the downtown parking management plan is completed. From a staffing perspective, we need to get that done first. Faught said we want to do a pedestrian bridge

study by SOU. Fleury said when we applied for the Traffic Growth and Management (TGM) grant, the council asked that the corridor go from Walker Ave. to essentially Sherman St. We did apply for the TGM grant; unfortunately, we did not get it for the safety study.

Graf said at our next meeting we would hopefully have a presentation by Paige Townsend from RVTD. Faught said he would like to bring Paige in to the next meeting and at the following meeting have a prioritization process for the transit side like the commission has done for all the other elements of the TSP. We want to hear Paige's presentation first and gather all the data and then talk about what we think is the most important thing we should do next.

Young said he reviewed the memo that Paige gave the commission in her absence. He said he was concerned because it sounded like more of the same stuff from RVTD. Faught said that they have hired John Watt Associates to create a better marketing piece to get the word out. Young said there was a lack of understanding for the Ashland system. Graf asked, what are the problems and issues we are trying to solve, what are the strategies, who is the population we want to serve in Ashland, not RVTD's strategic plan. He said he does understand in their case if they do not get their levy then they cannot get their service up. Faught said our plan is not that far outside of their long-term plan; there are elements of their long-term plan that fall right into our transportation recommendations in the TSP.

Fleury said he was contacted by ODOT regarding a letter that was sent to officer MacLennan from a petitioners group at Bellview Elementary School regarding the intersection of Tolman Creek Rd. and Siskiyou Blvd. ODOT contacted Fleury and said they would like to move forward with a preliminary four way stop at that intersection. Counts were taken in that area and based on the operational structure it would work better as a four way stop. This is ODOTS's right of way, but they are contacting us for our support. Ideally, he would like to add this to the January agenda.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted,
Kyndra Irigoyen
Public Works Administrative Assistant*