

MINUTES OF THE MISSION COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

April 12, 2017

The Mission Community Development Committee met at Mission City Hall, Wednesday, April 12, 2017 at 6:00 p.m. The following committee members were present: Pat Quinn, Tom Geraghty, Arcie Rothrock, Nick Schlossmacher, Debbie Kring, Kristin Inman, Ron Appletoft and Suzie Gibbs. Councilmember Rothrock called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Also present were City Administrator Laura Smith, City Clerk Martha Sumrall, Assistant City Administrator Brian Scott, Chief Ben Hadley, Public Works Director John Belger, and Public Information Officer Emily Randel.

Traffic Signal at Johnson Drive and Woodson

Ms. Smith stated that this discussion was tabled from the April 5th committee meeting and that the discussion tonight will focus on four issues: pedestrian safety, speeding, backing out of parking spaces, and vehicles turning onto Johnson Drive. She provided a spreadsheet that identified a variety of solutions for various issues, including their cost, pros, cons, and whether we have already initiated these changes. She also provided a handout of Council's responses to City priorities and where this issue falls within all the priorities listed.

Ms. Smith provided historical perspective on this issue, including information on the previous discussions and resolutions regarding the configuration of Johnson Drive (3 lane vs. 4 lane). Information from BikeWalk KC - "Road Diet" was provided to Council in their packet.

The Committee "walked through" the items listed in the matrix and discussed the pros and cons of each possible option/alternative, including:

- Reduced Speed Limit - Speed recently reduced to 25 mph. historical information on citations issued was provided and Chief Hadley noted that only one accident on Johnson Drive was attributed to a pedestrian (no injuries).
- Increased Traffic Enforcement - the estimated cost is based on 4 hours/week@30/hour (\$6,240). Councilmember Kring recommended more public service announcements regarding speed limits (including Driver's Education at Shawnee Mission North) and the committee discussed previous educational efforts for both pedestrians and drivers. Chief Hadley stated that most accidents on Johnson Drive are attributed to inattentive driving. Discussion continued on texting while driving and education efforts needed.
- Speed Tables - one is located at Johnson Drive and Woodson, but Olsson has stated that they do not feel this is as effective as anticipated. Temporary options are not feasible due to snow plowing. Councilmember Schlossmacher asked if other traffic calming designs were/have been considered such as raised crosswalks. Todd Friedrichson, Olsson Associates, stated that the 10 ft. lane width should provide traffic calming.
- Yellow Flashing Beacons - at various intersections along Johnson Drive and LED lights were added this year. Ms. Smith stated that cars on the inside lanes often don't see the

pedestrian, which is a concern. These are a flexible option and they can be placed at any intersection and are solar powered. Mr. Friedrichson stated that flashing beacons with LED lights have a 90% compliance rate.

- Crossing Guards - Council discussed having a crossing guard on Johnson Drive six days a week which would cost approximately \$40,000. This person could also provide parking enforcement, but Chief Hadley stated that we have had few parking complaints.
- Hawk Signal - this is a red light that requires traffic to come to a complete stop for pedestrians. The signal is extended overhead on a short mast arm, is highly visible for motorists, and requires electricity.
- Compact Car Only Parking Stalls - these have been implemented throughout the corridor to help with visibility when turning onto Johnson Drive, but "compact car" is not defined in our ordinance and hard to enforce.
- Convert End Stalls at Intersections to "No Parking" - improves visibility, but reduces the overall number of parking stalls.
- 4-Way Stop at Johnson Drive & Woodson (and possibly at Beverly and Outlook) - this may be difficult with four lanes of traffic.
- Traffic Signal at Johnson Drive & Woodson - the estimated cost is \$307,000 and it would address all areas of concern.
- Restripe Johnson Drive to Three Lanes - would allow for greater area to back out of parking stalls, provides a pedestrian "refuge" in the center of the street, it keeps traffic moving, eliminates lane changes.

Discussion by the committee continued on all these various options. Councilmember Schlossmacher stated that he feels all intersections along Johnson Drive are difficult to cross and expressed his concerns with this design issue not being caught earlier in the design/construction process. The committee discussed the number of citations issued along the corridor both before and following the project. Chief Hadley stated that currently officers are focused on patrolling neighborhoods and stated that we have only had one residential burglary this year due to greater police presence in the neighborhoods. Traffic enforcement has been patrolling Johnson Drive, and are focused on accident areas.

Ms. Randel provided information on the BikeWalk KC Report (Road Diet Guide) provided to Council. This is a metro-wide organization that focuses on bike and pedestrian advocacy. They assisted Mission with our Handle Bar Happy Hour in 2016, provided information to the Parking Task Force, and have helped with education in Mission. Since they were aware of this discussion they offered to prepare the report which focuses on designing long-term solutions to the problem rather than enforcement.

Discussion continued on the best solution to improving safety at this intersection:

- Installing a traffic signal at Johnson Drive and Woodson would help to slow traffic and assist with turns onto Johnson Drive. Woodson is the main corridor to City Hall.
- A light at Woodson only improves one intersection along Johnson Drive and all are affected by the traffic and visibility issues when turning onto Johnson Drive.

- A three lane configuration makes it easier to see oncoming traffic when trying to turn onto Johnson Drive from all intersections and reduces the number of lanes a pedestrian must cross.
- The current four lane configuration makes it difficult to back out of parking and dangerous for pedestrians crossing. Three lanes seems to be an effective solution.
- Three lanes impacts the entire length of Johnson Drive.
- When three lanes were previously considered, businesses were concerned that it would reduce traffic and impact their business.
- Studies have shown that three lanes helps businesses as people feel safer in the area.
- Three lanes makes it easier to back out as there is additional space behind the cars and the traffic lane.
- A traffic signal is needed at Johnson Drive first and three lane configuration can follow.
- Traffic signal can work with a three lane configuration.
- If a traffic signal is installed, need to consider opticon.
- Road diets are a national trend and the three lane configuration is a viable option.
- Two separate contractors would be needed for the traffic signal and restriping.
- Liability issues if a light is installed but not warranted.
- Why a signal warrant was needed at Martway and Broadmoor if we are able to put one in even if not warranted.

Mayor Schowengerdt stated that he would like the traffic signal installed as soon as possible and stated that it is for safety, not traffic issues. Mr. Belger stated that three lanes would effect the entire corridor and that based on the traffic studies that we have, a signal is not warranted at Johnson Drive and Woodson. Councilmember Appletoft stated that he would like to explore the three lane configuration before making a decision on the traffic signal. He would like to get the opinions of businesses and residents and suggested a public meeting with a presentation on this issue. Councilmember Quinn stated that he believes comparing the traffic signal and three lane configuration is “apples to oranges” and believes the signal is needed for pedestrian safety. Councilmember Schlossmacher suggested that a “Hawk Signal” be installed at the Woodson intersection. Councilmember Gibbs stated that if both the traffic signal and restriping are approved it would be approximately \$450,000. She is concerned with this cost and wants to be sure we are using funds in the best possible way. Ms. Smith stated that it would take approximately two weeks to restripe the street and it would not need to be totally closed. Councilmember Inman asked if back-in parking would be considered and stated that she would like to look at all options for Johnson Drive. Discussion continued on the pros and cons of back-in parking. Councilmember Appletoft stated that by installing a Hawk Signal at Woodson (which totally stops traffic for pedestrians) and restriping Johnson Drive to three lanes we could meet the Mayor’s objectives and spend less than the cost of a traffic signal. Councilmember Quinn agreed, but the Mayor disagreed stating that safety and not money is the issue. Councilmember Geraghty discussed his experiences with trying to cross Johnson Drive at Woodson during rush hour. Mr. Friedrichson suggested trying three lanes first and deciding on a Hawk or traffic signal at a later date. Mr. Partain stated that all intersections along Johnson Drive have the same issue and that three lanes would benefit all rather than a signal only at Woodson. Councilmember Gibbs stated that she would like to hold public hearings to share information and gather input, hopefully to gain consensus on the best solution. Councilmember

Rothrock asked for locations where a Hawk signal is being used (Main Street and Independence Avenue in KCMO). Mr. Friedrichson stated that feedback on Hawk signals has been good and there is a high rate of compliance as they function like a traffic signal. Councilmember Quinn stated that that he believes the Hawk signal would address the pedestrian safety issue and the Mayor's main concerns. Mayor Schowengerdt stated that he feels the Hawk signal would be going "half way" and feels we would be putting money before safety. Councilmember Schlossmacher stated that three people who are qualified in traffic planning recommend a three lane configuration and feels Council should listen to their recommendations. Councilmember Appletoft stated that all on Council are concerned with both pedestrian and traffic safety on Johnson Drive. Councilmember Gibbs recommended that the first step be public meetings, and Councilmember Kring reminded all that ultimately this is a Council decision. Ms. Smith asked if Council is still interested in developing some sort of public survey on this issue, and whether it should be available before or after the public hearings. The group agreed that a survey should be available after the public meetings when residents and businesses have had an opportunity to learn more about each option.

Frank Bruce, Mission resident, stated that he supports the installation of a traffic signal at Woodson as it was there previously and worked well. It would halt traffic at Woodson, and pulse traffic between Lamar, Woodson and Nall. The natural location to cross Johnson Drive when heading the to the pool is Woodson and it would be easier to turn left with a signal also.

Councilmember Gibbs recommended that this issue not move forward to Council and that public meetings be scheduled. This issue will come back to the committee in the coming months. Councilmember Quinn stated that the traffic signal at Woodson is his first choice, but believes the Hawk signal is a viable alternative for pedestrians if everyone is resistant to a traffic signal. Ms. Smith stated that a public meeting will be scheduled to provide information and gain feedback on the traffic signal option, Hawk signal, and three lane configuration. All on the committee agreed. This issue will come back to the committee in the coming months.

Meeting Close

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting of the Community Development Committee adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Martha Sumrall
City Clerk