

Traffic Control Board Minutes

Corrected

December 9th, 2008

Members Present: Doug Kary, Keith Lang, Walt Willett, Sondra Baker, Steve Zeier, Capt John Bedford

Members Absent: Judge Knisely

Staff Support: Terry Smith, Erin Claunch, John Gibson, Lora Mattox

Guests: None

BUISNESS MEETING

Call to Order: 12:18 pm by Chair Doug Kary

Minutes: Terry Distributed a draft set of minutes from the October meeting. Motion for approval by Walt Willet, 2nd by Doug Kary. Motion carried

STAFF REPORTS:

Erin and Terry reported on the following projects:

1. King Avenue West (32nd to Shiloh) is near completion. Landscaping work remains.
2. Aronson Avenue Extension & Governors/Aronson Signal; Aronson Avenue connection to Alkali Creek has been completed and is open to traffic. The traffic signal poles for Governors and Aronson should arrive soon and the project completed by mid January. The State's tie in to Aronson will be completed by June of 09. Doug asked what interim traffic controls were planned for intersection of Aronson & Alkali Creek Road. Erin responded that City is working with State on this, but a major concern is that an all-way stop would back traffic out into Airport Road, particularly during the evening peak. Capt. Bedford reported that the Police Department has been concentrating on speed enforcement along Aronson now that it is open.
3. Closures along Shiloh Road will continue while water and sewer work is being done ahead of the State's roadway project.
4. Signal priority update; A list of potential intersections for possible signalization was handed out to board members. Members were asked to review the list and note any questions or concerns for the next meeting.
5. Paving is complete and Rimrock Road west of **Shiloh** is open for traffic. Work on the multi-use trail portion of the project will be completed next spring. The trail will extend all the way to 54th.
6. Bids were opened for the Alkali Creek trail tunnel under Main Street. Bids were rejected because they all came in substantially higher than the budgeted funds for the project.
7. The 24th Street West signal light timing adjustments have been implemented. There have not been any significant comments received from the public since the changes were implemented. An additional report will be made next month following analysis of the before & after data collected by the consultant. Doug Kary suggested that the results should be publicized in the newspaper so people will know that the City is successful in making improvements when concerns arise. Terry commented that the City has all converted all of the traffic signals throughout town to LED lamps. This will result in a significant energy savings, and would also be a good thing to publicize.

BOARD REPORTS:

Lora Mattox reported

1. Subdivision activity is still strong in both City and County.
2. The *Public Participation Plan* developed as part of the required update to the Transportation Plan will be presented at the Planning Board meeting on December 9th, 2008.
3. Cambridge Systematics has been hired to complete the Transportation Plan Update. This update is required to bring the Transportation Plan into conformance with new requirements under SAFTEA-LU (federal transportation funding bill) so that Billings can continue to qualify for federal transportation funding on projects. Cambridge also worked for the State in bringing the statewide plan into compliance.

Council Activities

1. Lora reported the City Council has approved a consultant contract to conduct a Downtown Parking Study.

OLD BUISNESS:

1. Clear vision zones – Terry reported that he presented the changes in clear vision zone requirements at intersections and driveways to a Home Builders Association meeting. Overall the presentation was well received. He requested feedback, however at this point not received anything additional from the group or its members other than the questions asked at the meeting. The next step is to prepare a draft ordinance amendment and have it reviewed by the City Attorney.
2. The open position on the Traffic Control Board should be filled by our next meeting in January.

NEW BUISNESS:

Terry reported on the follow topics:

1. Ordinance Revisions related to Board and Commissions. An ordinance amendment is being considered by City Council. Terry reported he had not heard anything about this change until he received a phone message from former Traffic Control Board member Angela Cimmino this morning. Terry distributed a copy of the revised ordinance to Board members. One intent of the changes is to bring some uniformity to how various boards operate. There was also a desire by some Council members to eliminate some of the boards. Lora commented that elimination of boards is part of the overall review of city costs and operations—in the City budget that went into effect last July, dinners for Planning Board members were eliminated (they meet a 6 PM, twice a month). Doug asked Board members to send him their thoughts via e-mail after they have had a chance to review the material.
2. 24th Street West & Lewis Avenue school crossing. Parents of children living west of 24th Street West who attend Burlington School (about 22nd & Lewis) are concerned about the safety of their children while crossing 24th. The intersection is signalized and a crossing guard is posted at the intersection.

The east & west legs (Lewis) are offset. Parents report there have been near misses because drivers make turns thru the crosswalk without yielding to the crossing guard. City Street-Traffic crews have painted a ladder style crosswalk at the intersection to make it more visible.

The City also included a more detailed review of the intersection in the 24th Street West *Signal Timing* study that is being wrapped up.

3. 7th Street West between Central Avenue and Cline. The owner of Architectural Door & Hardware located at the southeast corner of 7th West and Central, has asked that the one-way portion of 7th Street West be permanently changed to a two-way traffic.

7th Street West between Central and Cline has been a one-way street southbound for the many years. It provides a connection to the ramp leading directly from Central to Montana Avenue. During the EPA related closure of Central Avenue it was converted to a two-way so that detoured traffic could get to 8th without going thru the residential neighborhood north of Central. ADH reports regularly seeing vehicles traveling northbound now that the detour has been eliminated and the street has been returned to one-way traffic. ADH has not been at this location very long, so they do not know if a significant problem pre-dated the EPA detour. Following initial complaints, the City field verified that proper signing was in place, and actually placed orange construction flags on some of the signs to draw drivers attention to the fact that this block is one-way southbound.

Road tube traffic counts were collected and it was determined that about 25 vehicles per day are traveling the wrong way. Terry reported that in his limited field observations he thinks that some of trucks in the area are knowingly traveling the wrong way. ADH has also requested a driveway directly onto Central, east of 7th.

Capt Bedford stated he would have an officer check this area to provide some enforcement. Steve Zeier suggested that staff work with ADH to get a driveway onto Central and continue to monitor the problem after the driveway installation. Terry will contact the business and discuss the request.

4. Posting “event ribbons” in CBD. Terry presented this as “information only” item. Last summer the Relay for Life group placed ribbons on the street light poles in the downtown area. The ribbons included a small (3’x5”) card giving event details. The Planning Department is concerned because under the sign codes it is illegal to place or attach advertisements to street lights, utility poles, and other City property. Terry recently received another request to place ribbons on the light poles downtown from a different non-profit group. For public relations reasons it is difficult to say “no” to non-profit groups. Terry has talked with the Downtown Billings Association and they agree that the practice does no harm, as long as it doesn’t get out of hand. Terry will try to work with DBA and develop some guidelines on size, frequency, removal after event etc. Once draft guidelines have been worked out with DBA, they will be circulated to the Board for comment.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 1:32 PM