

TRAFFIC CONTROL BOARD MINUTES

February 28, 2012

MEMBERS PRESENT: Brent Krueger, Trina White, Walt Willett, Sondra Baker

MEMBERS ABSENT: Capt Bedford, Todd Cormier

STAFF SUPPORT: Terry Smith, Debi Meling, Lora Mattox, John Gibson, Steve Zeier

GUESTS: None

BUSINESS MEETING

Call to order: Former Board Chair Steve Zeier called the meeting to order at 12:15 pm in the conference room of the Public Works Building, 2224 Montana Avenue.

Minutes: Walt Willett made a motion for approval of the January minutes. Motion seconded by Sondra Baker. Motion carried on voice vote.

Open Public Comment: None

Staff Reports:

Billings Pedestrian & Bicycle Accident Data

Terry reported that he has been assembling some summary data on bicycle and pedestrian accidents for Darlene Tussing and the Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC). The information was extracted from the traffic accident data the Montana Department of Transportation furnishes to the City. The State purchased a copy of the Intersection Magic software for the city. The software allows the city to query and view the traffic accident data compiled by the State. Each year in late March or early April the State sends the Billings accident data for the previous year to the City. Therefore the most current data the City can currently query with the software is from 2006. The software allows analysis of summary type data as well as crashes reported at individual intersections. Terry presented a PowerPoint presentation showing graphical summaries of Billings bicycle and pedestrian accidents from 2006 thru 2010. The summaries included information grouped by year, day of week, time of day, and drug or alcohol impairment.

I-90 Corridor Study

Terry announced the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) will host a public meeting tonight (Tuesday, February 28th) on the corridor study they are conducting covering the Interstate between Laurel and Lockwood. The meeting will be held at the Parmly Billings Library, 510 North Broadway. Information will be presented regarding options for additional travel lanes and auxiliary lanes along the interstate itself, plus changes to ramps, crossroads, and frontage road connections at some of the interchanges.

Coal Train Conference

MSU-Billings is hosting a conference on March 9 & 10, 2012 concerning the potential impacts of additional coal train traffic through Billings. There have been predictions that the increased exports of coal to Asia could result in an additional 40 trains per day traveling through Billings. Each coal train would be up to 125 cars long. The additional train traffic could result in existing railroad crossings being blocked up to a total of 8 hours per day. Erin Claunch will be on a panel concerning alternatives to the existing at grade crossings. He will present

information from the 2003-2004 study that looked at underpass, overpass, and rail line relocation options for the 27th Street crossing in downtown Billings.

Board Reports:

Planning Board:

Lora reported the Policy Coordinating Committee (PCC) has approved the list of local projects to be submitted to the Montana Department of Transportation for the current round of Community Transportation Enhancement (CTEP) funding. MDT must still approve the projects and project specific agreements have to be approved before any design or construction work begins on the projects.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. **Board Vacancies.** At last night's City Council meeting (Feb. 27) the Council approved appointment of Trina White and Eugene Wade to fill the two openings on the Traffic Control Board.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. **Election of new Chair and Vice-Chair.** Item postponed until next meeting
2. **Proposed Zoning Ordinance Changes.** Terry distributed copies of proposed changes to the Zoning Ordinance concerning clear vision requirements at driveways. He noted the proposed changes essentially return the clear vision requirements to what they were before the ordinance was amended a couple of years ago. The proposed changes eliminate the concept of providing additional sight distance along major streets. He noted that drivers entering a collector or arterial street need to be able to see farther because vehicles on those streets are approaching at higher speeds. Lora distributed copies of a figure from the existing ordinance which depicts the current clear vision zones. Lora also had some pictures depicting clear vision issues at driveways. Lora stated one of the concerns with the current ordinance is it requires people to keep fences five feet behind the sidewalk, often for their entire property frontage. Terry noted the Engineering Division is exploring alternatives to the existing language that would preserve the concept of allowing more sight distance along collector and arterial roadways. He said that something similar to the approach taken in the Central Business District was likely. In the CBD, clear vision requirements for vehicular traffic and pedestrians are established as two separate zones.
3. **Recent Traffic Studies.** Item postponed until next meeting

Items for Future Agendas:

Traffic Controls at 2nd & 3rd Avenues North on North 22nd Street. Board Member Trina White expressed concern over the transition between one-way and two-way traffic at North 22nd Street with the recent conversion of 2nd and 3rd Avenues North to two-way operation between N. 22nd and N. 13th Streets. Terry suggested this be added to the March agenda when Erin Claunch can be present. Erin managed the project that implemented the two-way traffic conversion on 2nd and 3rd.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 1:15 pm.