

TRAFFIC CONTROL BOARD MINUTES

April 24, 2012

MEMBERS PRESENT: Walt Willett, Trina White, Gene Wade

MEMBERS ABSENT: Capt Bedford, Brent Krueger, Todd Cormier, Sondra Baker

STAFF SUPPORT: Terry Smith, Lora Mattox, Debi Meling, Erin Claunch, Zach Heid

GUESTS: None:

BUSINESS MEETING

Call to order: Terry Smith called the meeting to order at 12:20 pm in the conference room of the Public Works Building, 2224 Montana Avenue.

Minutes: Motion for approval of the March minutes by Walt Willett, seconded by Trina White. Motion approved on a voice vote.

Open Public Comment: None

STAFF REPORTS: Erin Claunch spoke on major projects expected during the 2012 construction season.

- The water and sewer rehab projects will be working in the following areas:
 - Grand Avenue at Rehberg Lane
 - Between 13th and 15th Streets West and Avenues B through D
 - Montana Avenue
 - South 27th St from State Avenue to 5th Avenue South
- The Montana Department of Transportation is expected to start work on the next phase of Bench Boulevard (Lake Elmo to Hilltop) in the fall.
- 32nd Street West at Broadwater – Northbound right turn lane. (Under construction; should be finished by early June)
- Central Avenue—curb, gutter, sidewalk and street widening along north side from 29th to 32nd Streets West.
- Pavement Rehab (overlay and chipseal)
 - Gabel Road from 32nd to Hesper
 - Overland Ave and Grant Road from King Ave W to S 24th St. W
 - Daniel/15th St W from Central Ave to Monad Rd
- Library Construction will include periodic lane closures on N. 28th, N. 29th, and 6th Ave. North

Terry Smith mentioned that the City of Billings has received 2011 accident information from MDT. Staff will be looking at the Shiloh Road corridor in particular to see what impact the roundabouts have had. He hopes to see a decrease in the number and severity of the traffic accidents at major intersections.

Debi Meling asked Board members what they had heard from the public about the roundabouts and how they thought they were working. The general consensus of the Board was that the roundabouts are

good and help maintain traffic flow. The thought is that as people get used to this type of intersection control, they will like it more and be able to navigate the roundabouts with less trepidation.

Board Reports: NONE

OLD BUSINESS: NONE

NEW BUSINESS:

- Election of a new Chair and Vice Chair was postponed to the May meeting.

Miscellaneous Issues and Questions from Board Members:

1. Gene Wade commented on the street name changes as you follow along the 32nd Street West—Zimmerman Trail corridor. He also commented that in general it is easier to figure out where you are with numbered streets than with named streets. It was noted that with the alignment shift between Broadwater & Grand it would not be possible to carry the 32nd Street West designation farther north because it doesn't fit with where "32nd Street" should be as you go north from Grand.
- The need for a left turn lane and/or arrow at the intersection of Grand Ave and 19th St. W was brought up. Terry noted that the intersections of 19th & Grand and 17th & Grand were part of a proposed MDT safety project to implement protected left turn phasing (green arrows) because of the incidence of left turn accidents at these intersections. Unfortunately because of right-of-way constraints it will not be possible to implement left turn lanes as part of the safety project. Without separate left turn lanes on Grand it will be necessary to "split phase" the intersections with eastbound and westbound traffic moving at different times. This is how the intersection of 8th and Central currently operates. Terry emphasized that the project will be installing the left turn arrows as an accident reduction measure, not to improve traffic flow. Because EB and WB traffic will move separately the efficiency of the intersections will be reduced, but the turn arrows are necessary to address the left turn accidents occurring at both intersections.
- Walt Willet asked about the intersection of Rimrock Rd and Virginia Lane. He noted that sight distance was very limited because of the wall that is located on the southwest corner of the intersection. Terry noted that unfortunately the wall met city clear vision zone requirements in the Zoning Ordinance at the time it was constructed. To remove or reconfigure the wall would be a City expense since it complied with codes when it was installed. Staff continues to monitor accident records at the intersection and there are very few accidents occurring that can be tied to the limited sight distance. On that basis it is difficult to justify an expenditure to move the wall. The common request from the public is for installation of a traffic signal because of the limited sight distance. At this time a traffic signal is not warranted based on either accident experience or traffic volumes.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 1:17 pm.