

# TRAFFIC CONTROL BOARD MINUTES

## February 25th, 2015

MEMBERS PRESENT: Trina White, Capt. Harper, Jerry Dunning, Gene Wade, Sondra Baker

MEMBERS ABSENT: Todd Cormier, Pierre Jomini

STAFF SUPPORT: Terry Smith, Erin Claunch, Aaron Lebsack, Lora Mattox

GUESTS: Mike Yakawich (City Council member)

### BUSINESS MEETING:

**Call to order:** Gene Wade called the meeting to order at 12:10 pm in the conference room of the Public Works Building, 2224 Montana Avenue.

**Minutes:** Motion for approval of the January minutes by Trina White, seconded by Jerry Dunning. Motion carried on a voice vote.

OPEN PUBLIC COMMENT: Councilmember Yakawich thanked Board members for serving on the Board.

### STAFF REPORTS:

**Special Events Policy:** Terry gave a presentation on the recently updated Special Events Policy. The ad hoc committee that studied the issue over the past year tried to strike a balance between encouraging events that keep the City vibrant and making sure that events in the public rights-of-way do not adversely impact the traveling public or adjacent businesses and residences. The committee tried to develop guidelines that are objective yet flexible, and that are not based on specific past events. Criteria to be weighed in reviewing special events in the public right of way include:

- Promotes the community as a whole
- Provides positive civic and economic benefit
- Weighs impacts on neighboring businesses and properties
- Weighs impact on public uses
- Considers frequency of closures
- Considers the event's financial impact
- Evaluates performance regarding previous permit conditions

There is a \$100 application fee for special events, and the processing of applications is now coordinated by the Engineering Division rather than the Downtown Billings Association. The need for alcohol or noise permits is now identified as part of the application review. The City is discouraging the use of arterials (Montana, 1<sup>st</sup> Ave N, 4<sup>th</sup> Ave N, 6<sup>th</sup> Ave N, N 27<sup>th</sup>) and trying to keep parades on the designated parade routes.

**Pedestrian Related Crash Statistics:** Terry presented a slideshow regarding pedestrian related crash data. The data was assembled using a software program called *Intersection Magic*. A number of years ago the Montana Department of Transportation bought the *Intersection Magic* program for Billings, Great Falls, & Missoula. MDT provides crash data to the City annually and the software allows easier analysis of the data. From 2009 thru 2013, there were 196 reported pedestrian related accidents in Billings. Terry highlighted data showing crash frequency by month, day of week and hour of the day. He also presented data on pedestrian age, and driver/pedestrian impairment for the pedestrian crashes over the five year period. Crash data was also summarized by the general area of town, with the Downtown area and the near westend (Division to 24<sup>th</sup> St. West) having the highest frequency of pedestrian accidents.

Gene Wade asked if more specific data showing the downtown & near westend accident locations could be provided, and asked how Billings pedestrian accidents compare to other Montana cities such as Missoula. Terry indicated that staff can prepare mapping for the downtown & near westend pedestrian crashes. Data comparing Billings to other cities would have to come from the State.

BOARD REPORTS:

**Highway 3 Corridor Study:** Lora gave an update on the Highway 3 study. Sanderson Stewart will give a presentation to the City Council on Monday, March 2nd. County Commissioners have already approved the plan and are recommending approval to PCC.

**Growth Policy:** A public meeting was held at the end of January. The Planning Department has received over a thousand comments from residents on-line and at the meeting. City Staff is working on trying to weigh the public comments and develop alternatives. Even at a relatively modest 1.5% growth rate Billings could grow to between 150,000 and 170,000 population over the next 20 years. How to accommodate that growth is the purpose of the Growth Policy. Staff will develop scenarios for where growth could occur and try to quantify the impacts and costs associated with different potential growth patterns before seeking additional public input on how and where people want to see Billings grow. It will be one to one and a half years before the Growth Policy Update is complete.

OLD BUSINESS:

- **19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup>/Monad Intersection:** Pierre suggested a striping change at the last meeting and also asked if there was queue detection to allow the signal operation to change as the area on Monad between 19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> fills with cars. Staff has reviewed the extent of the striping changes needed to eliminate the merge situation on 19<sup>th</sup>. It is extensive enough to be best implemented with an overlay or chip seal project rather than by City crews. The striping change will be incorporated in a future overlay or chip seal project. Terry has not received a response back from Street-Traffic confirming whether queue detection is or is not in place on Monad.
- **Westend Arterial Speed Limit Signing:** Staff collected updated speed data along westend arterials between the BBWA canal and Shiloh Road. The study focused on Grand Ave, Broadwater Ave, Central Ave, Monad Rd and King Ave West. The data does not support lowering the speed limit on any of the arterial segments. Additional speed limit signs were installed on King Avenue and on Grand Avenue to correct the potential confusion where eastbound and westbound posted speeds were different.

NEW BUSINESS:

- **Role & Function of the Board:** Terry provided Board members with copies of the City Code regarding Boards & Commissions in general, and the Traffic Control Board specifically. City boards and commissions are advisory only and do not have decision making authority and do not direct staff (exceptions are the Planning Board and the Zoning Commission which do have approval authority on certain issues). Terry emphasized that Staff encourages Board members to ask questions and identify things like the speed limit discrepancies discussed earlier, but that the Board does not have the power to say “the speed limit on this street shall be” or “stop signs will be installed at this intersection.”

ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS:

- Chip seal locations for 2015
- Access & traffic concerns for the new Middle Schools

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 1:10 pm.