

Public Safety & Transportation Committee Meeting Minutes, 1/3/13, City Hall Council Chambers

Present: Michael Halley, Connie Boyer, Kevin Flanagan, Julie Harvey, Darrel Bisgard, Martha Rasmussen, John Revolinski, Melanie Carlson, John Meyer

Points of discussion

After receiving a request from MUM to extend a campus road across the FF Loop Trail city administrator Flanagan began working on a Trail Crossing ordinance that will address all future instances of a private road or driveway crossing the trail. Melanie Carlson from French Reneker helped with its development and explained that 90% was pulled directly from the Iowa Department of Transportation Design Manual for Sidewalks and Bicycle Facilities. Few items, such as requiring street aprons, right-of-way details, and spacing between crossings, were created specifically for this ordinance. The focus of the ordinance is the safety of trail users who always have the right-of-way at all crossings. After committee confirming that the Trails Council and MUM have signed off on the proposed ordinance Boyer moved to take it to the full council for adoption at our next meeting. Halley seconded, motion passed.

Police Chief Harvey has received several complaints about the uncontrolled intersection at Park & Madison. At a past Public Safety Committee meeting former councilwoman Susan Silvers requested that Harvey and Bisgard compile a list of all uncontrolled intersections and they're recommendations for each, and the list was presented to the committee (currently consisting of Halley and Boyer). Upon reviewing the list Boyer asked if signs at all the listed intersections were absolutely necessary, quoting the Canadian rock group Five Man Electric Band's 1971 hit song "Signs":

"Sign, sign, everywhere a sign. Blockin' out the scenery, breakin' my mind."

Boyer asked if the committee could review the list before discussing it at the next committee meeting, to which Harvey and Bisgard, perhaps so moved by the song lyrics, consented.

Bisgard expressed some concern about safety and city liability at the 9th St railroad crossing after the city received a quiet zone review letter from BNSF regional director Ben Steinkamp. The letter stated that BNSF feels that the city and FRA should consider reviewing the crossing "to determine if current safety measures are appropriate for this location." Halley noted that the city acted immediately following the meeting to fix an issue of FALCO truck drivers crossing the tracks by entering the left lane, and that it's part of BNSF' legal policy to put any concerns about a quiet zone in writing. Still Bisgard would like to consider making the Lowe St "No Left Turn" where it meets 9th St as a way to resolve the issue. Halley can see the benefit of making that change, including the ability to add a small median on the north side of the 9th St crossing, though he would like to talk with management at FALCO before making a recommendation to committee.

Bisgard asked to discuss one item not on the agenda: Parts of the FF Loop Trail include solar-powered flashing signs to warn motorists of possible pedestrians/cyclists, with twelve in total, some within city limits and some outside. One sign in the county was recently shot by an unknown assailant and as a result has ceased functioning. Bisgard wanted to verify that the city is responsible for the maintenance and potential replacement of the signs with city limits but not those in the county, which the committee agreed with unofficially.

Recommendations/Actions

Committee will recommend that the full council adopt the Trail Crossing ordinance at the next council meeting.

Committee will review the list of uncontrolled intersections and consider the recommended addition of signage at the next committee meeting.

Halley will speak with management from FALCO regarding the Lowe/9th intersection.