

Traffic Control Board Minutes Tuesday, April 24th, 2007

Angela Cimmino
Doug Kary ✓
Keith Lang ✓
Walt Willett ✓
Steve Zeier ✓

Capt. T.J. Vladic ✓
Sondra Baker ✓
Judge Knisely

✓ = Present

Staff Support: Terry Smith, Debi Meling, John Gibson, Lora Mattox, Travis Harris

Guests: None

Call to Order: At 12:15 in the Large Conference Room, 4th Floor of the Library

Minutes: Motion for approval of minutes of the March meeting by Sondra Baker, seconded by Keith Lang. Carried on voice vote

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

STAFF REPORTS:

Terry reported on the following issues and projects:

Grand Avenue, 8th to 12th: Construction is starting this week on the project to widen this segment of Grand Avenue to 5 lanes. The work is expected to be substantially complete by September 1st.

Downtown Deliveries: Terry distributed a copy of a recent Downtown Billings Association merchant newsletter. It included an insert addressing the issue of delivery vehicles stopping in traffic lanes in the downtown area. The article urged businesses to address the problem by:

- Encouraging the use of smaller delivery vehicles that can be parked at the curb in designated delivery zones or are easier to maneuver in alleys
- Encouraging delivery trucks to use alleys for making their deliveries
- Avoid stopping/parking in travel lanes during peak traffic periods. “Peak periods” are considered to be weekdays between 7:30 & 8:30 AM, 11:00 AM to 1:30 PM and 4:00 PM to 5:30 PM.

Aronson Avenue Extension: Travis Harris, Staff Engineer, presented an overview of the proposed Aronson Extension project. This project will connect Kimberly Heights (Aronson Avenue) with Alkali Creek Road near the Alkali Creek/Airport Road intersection. The street is proposed as a two-lane roadway with limited access, bike lanes, and an adjacent multi-purpose trail. There will be

a bridge over the BBWA Canal and over Alkali Creek. In anticipation of connecting Aronson Avenue to Alkali Creek Road and Airport Road, Marvin and Associates has been hired to evaluate the intersection of Aronson Avenue and Hilltop/Governors Blvd for traffic signal warrants. The Aronson extension project is scheduled to start in late fall 2007, after water goes out of the BBWA Canal. It will be finished during the spring & summer of 2008.

Council Actions: Terry briefly reported on the City Council transportation related actions listed on the agenda.

BOARD REPORTS:

Planning Board: Lora Mattox reported

1. *Bike to Work Week* is scheduled May 14th thru the 18th. Information can be viewed at www.bikenet.org. Met Transit will be offering free rides during this time as well. There will be a competition between a pedestrian, a bicyclist, and a car to see who can get to various shopping sites in the Downtown area quicker.
2. There have been four (4) new major subdivision submittals this month. Two in the County and two in the City.
3. The City of Laurel recently lost their City Planner. The City of Billings has contracted with Laurel to provide subdivision reviews for them until July 1st, 2007.
4. There is nothing new to report on the Lockwood Transportation Study at this time.

OLD BUSINESS:

Billings Events Ad Hoc Committee: Terry reported that he has heard nothing new on the activities of this committee. Because of budget hearings the Council is not expected to take the issue up until July.

NEW BUSINSESS:

1. Request for one-way alley, Block 50, Original Town. The owner of the Clock Tower Inn has requested the alley between North 25th and 26th Streets running between 1st and 2nd Avenues North be made a one-way northbound alley. Terry distributed a copy of the petition signed by businesses in this block, and an aerial photo of the area. Traffic volumes collected in October 2005 show about 90 cars per day using the alley, with an 85%-ile speed of 13 MPH. The counts show 82% of the traffic was traveling southbound. Terry feels that the heavier southbound traffic is related to the Wells Fargo drive-in bank on the north side of 2nd. The drive-up bank is scheduled to move to the first floor of the new parking garage expansion at 2nd & 26th. The City of Billings Solid Waste Division would prefer that the alley be one-way southbound to accommodate existing dumpster locations and pickup routes. After discussing the issue, the Board tabled it to give staff the opportunity to discuss the possibility of vacating the alley with Mr. Wahrlich of the Clock Tower Inn.

2. Residential Driveway Widths. The Home Builders Association has requested the City of Billings allow residential driveway approaches up to 48 feet wide. The current width for residential drive approaches is a minimum of 12 feet and a maximum of 24 feet. Terry distributed some sketches that the HBA had submitted to the Development Advisory Review Board (DPARB). Terry noted that the new standard width for residential streets is 34 feet, so if the request is approved, we would have residential driveways wider than residential streets. Staff is concerned about pedestrian-vehicle conflicts with wider driveways. Staff did not request any action from the Board, it was presented as a discussion item only.
3. NO THRU TRAFFIC signs. The City of Billings does not post “No Thru Traffic” signs. This type of signing cannot be effectively enforced. The Police Dept does not have the resources to assign a patrol officer at each location where signing is in place. The offending vehicle would most likely be gone before an Officer could respond. An officer would probably have to follow a vehicle completely through the neighborhood to be certain it didn’t stop somewhere, even for a moment, to pick-up or drop-off something at a house in the neighborhood.
4. Vending from a Public Street. The City has received inquires as to the legality of vendors conducting business from a public street. The City has an ordinance regulating sidewalk vending. There is no ordinance prohibiting vending from a parking lane, or as is the case with the traditional ice cream/popsicle carts, from the street itself. As long as the vehicle being used is legally licensed, the owner has a city business license, is insured, and is not blocking traffic or parked in a restricted zone, there is nothing prohibiting vending from the street.
5. Ducks on Lewis. Capt. Vladic reported they have been receiving complaints about the traffic hazard presented by the ducks in the 1300 to1500 block area along Lewis. A number of people in this area feed the ducks, which encourages them to stay around and congregates them in this area. The Police Department has discussed the issue with Fish, Wildlife & Parks and there is little that can be done to prevent people from feeding wild ducks.
6. May Meeting. Terry reminded Board members that the May meeting will be held at the City Operations Center on Midland Road and include a tour of the sign and signal shops in the Street-Traffic Division.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 1:26 PM