

CITY OF WOODSTOCK
TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
Regular Meeting
November 19, 2014
City Council Chambers

The regular meeting of the Woodstock Transportation Commission was called to order at 7:05 PM by Chairman Andrew Celentano on Wednesday, November 19, 2014 in Council Chambers at City Hall.

A roll call was taken.

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman, Andrew Celentano, Caron Wenzel, Mark Indyke,, Susan Hudson.

COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT: Jason Osborn [Jason Osborn arrived at 7:10PM and stayed until meeting was adjourned].

STAFF PRESENT: Assistant Director of Public Works, Jeff Van Landuyt

OTHERS PRESENT: Deputy City Clerk, Amy Weber

Woodstock High School Project: Lead the Way Student Roundabout Progress Report

A. Celentano announced that the agenda for the meeting will start with a PowerPoint slide presentation titled "Roundabout Design Progress Report" by Woodstock High School Students: Cole Richter, Zach Myers, Jack Fischbach, and Jon Cunningham facilitated by Steven Thompson – D200 Coordinator for Project Lead the Way.

Jack Fischbach of 1320 Infanta Court, Woodstock IL explained that they were there to give a "progress report" on their roundabout design for Project Lead the Way. He stated that they were designing a roundabout at South Madison/South Street and Lake Street.

Zach Myers of 901 Rhodes Street, Woodstock, IL, explained what a roundabout is, and that they are designed to increase traffic flow and capacity. They examined the intersection at Lake, Madison and South Streets, where traffic during peak periods backs up cars and causes confusion. They propose installing a roundabout there to increase capacity and traffic flow and decrease confusion. Zach M. also added that other alternatives, like blocking off one of the roads, making it a cul-de-sac, were not viable in this case. Zach referred to an episode of the show "Mythbusters" sent to them by Jeff Van Landuyt, stating that it proves that roundabouts are in fact faster and safer than modern intersections, in fact they are 20 percent more efficient than a 4-way stop.

Cole Richter of 2020 Red Barn Road, Woodstock, IL explained that the site of their layout is located a little northeast of where the center of the intersection resides today. He stated that with this roundabout, no structures would be altered and a minimal amount of property would be seized. Cole Richter went on to describe the dimensions of the roundabout. Signage would include early warning signs to indicate that a roundabout is ahead, directional signs that tell drivers what roads lead to where and also yield signs. Road markings needed for the roundabout would include crosswalks for pedestrians to cross safely, lane lines and yield lines at the crosswalks to prevent accidents.

Jon Cunningham of 2525 Applewood Lane, Woodstock, IL explained why it's important to calculate for storm water runoff to prevent the possibility of an increase in storm water runoff that may create stress to the storm water systems of the city. He then described the rational formula used to calculate the storm water runoff calculating the amount of water that comes out of the area in a number of acres per second. Jon stated that further calculations will be performed to complete his data.

J. Fischbach stated that since roundabouts are not prevalent in the United States, many people do not know how to use them. Fischbach suggested circulating educational pamphlets and videos to Woodstock residents. He also stated that Woodstock residents will become familiar and comfortable with roundabouts simply through practice driving through them. He noted that residents could also practice driving through the roundabout in Johnsburg, IL. Fischbach concluded the presentation and asked the Transportation Commission members if they had any questions.

Susan H. stated that she really enjoyed the MythBuster's video on roundabouts and noted that the roundabouts in the video were only compared to a 4-way stop and not signaled intersections. She advised that it would be good for the students to state in their presentation what they are comparing the roundabouts to in terms of efficiency that the roundabouts are efficient compared to stop signs. She also recommended that they add that the intersection they are referring to is an angled intersection and not just a plain 4-way and furthermore all angled intersections are inherently dangerous and in the situation of an angled intersection, a roundabout would be appropriate. Susan H. also asked the students if anyone had any information on the Johnsburg roundabout referencing safety concerns or frequency of accidents? J. Fischbach responded that they didn't have any accident frequency information, but they had spoken to Wally Dittrich, an Engineer at MCDOT who showed them a live-stream of the roundabout which showed that traffic flow was much increased and he didn't see anyone having any major issues with the roundabout.

Susan H. asked the students if they had any statistics available from Johnsburg. J. Fischbach responded that they only had observations. A. Celentano advised the students to call Johnsburg. Susan H. suggested that the students call Johnsburg and ask if they've had more accidents, fewer accidents or the same amount of accidents since installation of the roundabout. She also asked if there were solutions developed to enhance pedestrian safety such as signage that tells drivers that state law requires that they stop for pedestrians or any other possible measures that can be taken to enhance pedestrian safety as it is valuable.

J. Fischbach responded one safety measure is placing the crosswalk a car length back from the yield sign which allows cars to yield before entering the roundabout allowing pedestrians to walk behind it. He also discussed using "splitter-islands" but decided against them due to space limitations. He added that there will be markings and pedestrians will only need to worry about one direction of traffic while crossing.

Wayne Brown of 15312 Kishwaukee Valley Rd, Woodstock, IL stated that he spends part of the winter season in Stuart, FL, a town that has installed 5 or 6 roundabouts that seem to be working quite well for the residents who live there. Wayne B. suggested that Stuart, FL could be another source of information for the students. He added that the roundabouts do take a little time to get used to but they do seem to work smoothly.

M. Indyke expressed concern about pedestrian access. He stated that he would like to see more signage and requested to see the slide from the presentation again depicting spacing of pedestrian crosswalks. He also asked students to define "splitter access".

C. Wenzel advised the students to include more survey information in their presentation because that will give them proof. Wenzel also advised students to call Johnsburg, IL and look for towns in the United States that have several roundabouts and elaborate on how this would enhance movability around Woodstock.

The commission also suggested including professional studies, information from the Illinois Department of Transportation, and statistics on safety and traffic flow.

J. Osborn joined the meeting at 7:10 PM and stated that the 5- legged roundabout is a challenge to make work and he remembered talking about roundabouts 14 years ago. Osborn also stated that roundabouts are a good idea from an engineering standpoint because of the sheer statistics, avoiding "t-bone" collisions, energy efficiency for the freight operators because they don't have to stop and start up their vehicles and on the operation side of not having to light up and maintain signals. Osborn stated that it was an overall great presentation.

A. Celentano stated that it was a great presentation and is looking forward to the completed presentation. He also referred to the MythBusters roundabout video and pointed out that the intersection was not signalized, but rather it was about changing out stop signs and therefore a different environment vs. a signalized environment. He wondered if the 30-50% increase in capacity also applied to a signalized intersection.

J. Fischbach responded that the information was from the Federal Highway Administration and was compared to traditional intersections.

S. Hudson stated that there are two separate issues: What are the benefits for signals vs. what are the benefits for stop signs.

A. Celentano mentioned that he didn't notice anything in the presentation about speed limits. He also noted that some roundabouts in Wisconsin are 15 miles per hour. He stated that in Illinois, according to Illinois State Law, the speed limit must be reduced in increments of not more than 10 miles per hour and cannot go directly from 45 to 15 miles per hour and has to for example go from 45 to 35 and then from 25 to 15 miles per hour.

J. Fischbach stated that he spoke to Wally Dittrich who recommended putting early warning signs and putting the speed limit of 15 miles per hour underneath.

A. Celentano stated that there should be early roundabout warning signs and clear directional signs that would help drivers navigate through them. Celentano also thanked the students and told them that he is looking forward to their final presentation on roundabouts coming up in December.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Motion by M. Indyke, second by C. Wenzel to accept the October 15, 2014 Special Meeting minutes as presented. Ayes: M. Indyke, C. Wenzel, J. Osborn, Susan Hudson. Nays: None. Absentees: None. Abstentions: Chairman A. Celentano. Motion carried.

FLOOR DISCUSSION:

1. Freight Traffic vs. Passenger Traffic

C. Wenzel stated that she wanted to add to the agenda a discussion about freight traffic vs. passenger traffic on trains. She had recently experienced several long delays because of freight trains and also does not like that they have the right of way over passenger trains. She suggested it might be time to change that paradigm.

A. Celentano agreed, however he stated that unfortunately that's is how it currently works. He stated that at the very least public safety personnel should be given the right of way. C. Wenzel agreed and added that perhaps they should draft a policy statement to that effect. A. Celentano stated that Chicago, IL is addressing this issue by putting in overpasses and underpasses as a solution to these problems, however, this is very expensive.

J. Osborne stated that Woodstock had a lot more railroad crossings when the town was young and over time the roads changed and we lost a lot of our railroad crossings. Osborne added that a lot of the traffic problems that we see in Woodstock are related to the inability to cross the tracks at different points.

C. Wenzel suggested that the focus should be on how this issue is affecting the community, because it is negatively affecting the population since freight is just for hauling stuff. She added that she believes it to be ethically wrong and the problem should be fixed or at least acknowledged that it exists.

A. Celentano stated that he had attended the McHenry County Transportation Commission meeting this morning and learned that MC Ride is adding several towns to their network and should lower their per ride cost to below 16 dollars per person and are considering how to blend that network with fixed routes over time. He added that they are creating a task force that would extend the hours of transportation for PADS.

A. Celentano updated the commission on various other Project Lead the Way programs in McHenry County. He and Jeff Van Landuyt spoke with Woodstock District 200 Superintendent Dr. Moen about the Transportation Commission's involvement with the Project Lead the Way Students and Dr. Moen stated that the Commission is doing a very good job by having the City of Woodstock work with the school district students and giving lessons in civics. M. Indyke suggested involving Woodstock North High School. A. Celentano agreed stating that he discussed that with Dr. Moen as well. He also stated that he sent an email to Marian Central Catholic High School about doing a project with their students and is waiting for a response.

A. Celentano also introduced and welcomed new Deputy City Clerk Amy Weber who will be recording all Woodstock Transportation Commission meeting minutes.

2. Discussion & Comments Rd: IDOT Mtg. w/Businesses along Rt. 47

M. Indyke brought up the article in the *Woodstock Independent* that described the concerns residents and business owners along Rt. 47 have regarding the changes to Rt. 47 and installation of the proposed roundabouts. He added that IDOT strongly supports installing roundabouts because statistics support an increase in traffic flow and a reduction in accidents. M. Indyke expressed that the roundabout would be a lot less costly than renovating the railroad bridge. M. Indyke's concerns were about the installation of cement medians in a 4-lane highway and limited access to left hand turning movements thereby limiting access to businesses and to public safety equipment. M. Indyke stated that he is planning to meet with the Woodstock Economic Development Commission on November 20th, 2014 regarding his belief that a cement divider isn't necessary and that keeping a standard turn lane as we have currently is fine. He added that IDOT believes that a concrete barrier would be safer, however, Indyke's response to IDOT was that Woodstock could lower the speed limit and keep a center turn lane thus maintaining access to Rt. 47 businesses. M. Indyke also stated that he brought up other comments and concerns. He stated that Roscoe Stelford, City Manager, is planning to discuss these ideas with the Woodstock City Mayor. Indyke added that there were also comments and concerns at the IDOT meeting about the loss of businesses along Rt. 47.

J. Osborne commented that IDOT made a pretty bold claim in that a concrete barrier is necessary for safety. They are difficult to maintain and weeds grow in cracks over time. He suggested challenging them on safety theme. He can see them helping to avoid sideswipes and head on collisions but he would challenge them on how much safer they might be based on experience.

The commission then discussed speed limits and the impact on safety. The Commission wants the limits to promote safety and also be "user friendly". Andrew wondered how folks will get out of businesses if all traffic will be continuously moving without a break. Mark and Susan both agreed pedestrians crossing the road safely is a big concern. Susan Hansen stated there has to be a crosswalk.

TRANSMITTALS: (No discussion or action requested)

1. On the Bi-Level, Metra's Monthly Commuter Newsletter October 2014

Andrew stated he is sad the rates are going up, fears it will push people off trains into cars. The end result will be longer commutes to O'Hare and still only one person in each car. No further comments.

2. Northwest Herald Article, October 2014 – "Traffic Panned." No further comments.

OLD BUSINESS:

Discussion on Frontage Roads along IL Rt. 47 Corridor

A. Celentano stated that if there is going to be any activity on frontage roads along Route 47 it will have to be in combination with what IDOT is doing. However getting cross access in some areas may not be practical to do. M. Indyke agreed and described a recent incident where a section of Route 47 was temporarily shut down and people could not access many businesses because there was no bypass or access roads. C. Wenzel stated that

the proposed Washburn extension should be put in and paved. A. Celentano agreed and also expressed concern about possible loss of businesses along Route 47 during the three years of road construction scheduled to take place. A. Celentano suggested that further discussion on Frontage Roads along IL Rt. 47 should be postponed for now.

NEW BUSINESS:

Motion by M. Indyke, second by S. Hudson to approve List of Regular Meeting Dates for 2015. Ayes: M. Indyke, C. Wenzel, J. Osborn, Susan Hudson. Nays: None. Absentees: None. Abstentions: Chairman A. Celentano. Motion carried.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

1. Continued Review of Transportation Plan – December 2014 – Chapter 7
2. WHS Project Presentation to Commission – December 2014
3. Update of Activity Related to Rt. 47 Business owners - Monthly
4. Review of Progress Reports from Students doing Presentation – January 2015
5. Plan for Commission's Sidewalk Presentation to City Council with Al Wilson – January 2015
6. Suggestions for Student Projects – January 2015
7. Presentation on Enterprise Zone Ordinance – February 2015
8. Freight and Passenger Trains sharing track thru Woodstock – February 2015
9. Street Cars Discussion – March 2015

ADJOURN:

Motion by M. Indyke, second by J. Osborn to adjourn the regular meeting of the Woodstock Transportation Commission to the Special Meeting December 17, 2014 @ 7:00 PM. Ayes: Chairman A. Celentano, C. Wenzel, M. Indyke, J. Osborn, S. Hudson. Nays: None. Absentees: None. Abstentions: None. Motion Carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Weber – Deputy City Clerk