



VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST TRAFFIC AND SAFETY COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, July 17, 2024

A regular meeting of the River Forest Traffic and Safety Commission was held on Wednesday, July 17, 2024, at 7:30 pm.

ROLL CALL AND CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order. Present at this meeting were Commissioner Gillis, Commissioner Chase, Commissioner Osga, Commissioner Hoyt & Chairman Rees.

Chairman Rees indicates we don't have any minutes to review or approve this time, but we do have a request from a resident, Sean Herring, on the 900 block of Monroe Avenue about a stop sign at the intersection of Iowa and Monroe which would convert that into a multi four-way stop.

Before we do that, I see that are a couple people in the audience. Do you wish to comment on anything? I don't know if you signed up to speak. Looks like you have.

Someone in the audience is speaking but cannot hear them.

Chairman Rees asks if they are both here for that reason? Is one of you Julie and one of you Anne Marie? Would one of you take the microphone so we can hear you as we do record the call. That item is not on the agenda for tonight. If you want to address something, reach out to the Village to have it put on the agenda, but we will be glad to hear from you tonight to see if we can take any action or put it on the agenda for the following meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Julie Sciaraffa - I live at 1540 Franklin. I am here with my sister who is also a neighbor who lives at 1544. Some other neighbors were not able to make it. The reason we are bringing this to your attention is that we have a stop sign at the corner of North and Franklin. No left or right turn coming southbound on to Franklin. It's not enforced but people are making turns coming down the street at a very rapid speed. Two weeks ago, I didn't see it happen, I just heard the screech, and a little boy almost got hit by a car. I sent an email to Officer Drake, and she suggested I come to this meeting and get as many people to come. So, I sent out a group email and here we are.

Chairman Rees asks are you looking for enforcement?

Julie Sciaraffa requests if there can be some initiative to get something started to enforce that or put a barricade of some sort, camera, whatever it would take to stop it. There have been some patrol officers, which we are grateful for, they have spent time the last couple of weeks patrolling

the area. When officers are there, not too many people turn. Unfortunately, cars have come down and the officers do not do anything about it. But several times when they did. We are looking to keep everyone safe.

Chairman Rees asks Julie that currently for eastbound traffic on North Avenue, there is a sign that says no right turn onto Franklin – Is that what you are saying?

Julie Sciaraffa indicates that is correct and westbound there is no right turn. Sorry, no left or right. You basically not allowed to access the street at all.

Chairman Rees asks you are asking either, if I understand you correctly, maybe a barricade or at least added enforcement? I just want to be clear about what you are suggesting.

Julie Sciaraffa indicates I know that another neighbor emailed today how Forest has that little triangular barricade where you can get off the street, but you can't get on to the street. If that is something that we can initiate to get that process going. I don't know if you need petitions, signatures, whatever that may be.

Chairman Rees asks Anne Marie if she is here for the same issue? Ok. I can speak and see if anybody else wants to address the issue. 1, if it is a matter of enforcement, you did the right thing by calling the Village and encouraging the police to enforce. That is something we can also encourage them to do tonight. From my experience on this Commission, that's probably the best outcome.

If you wanted to do something more extreme, like partial blockage of that street, that intersection, I will tell you that we went through that for several months in the northeast quadrant there were some efforts to impose some barricades like that at Bonnie Brae and Clinton, there was a lot of back and forth and ultimately there were some barricades installed but they were removed as being unwarranted and causing a lot of concern and a lot of opposition. So, you are right, if there was a proposal to do something else, number 1, we do ask residents to collect a petition so we can gauge to see what the level of interest is in the area. At least on the block that is affected or the nearby blocks. The reason for that is the last time we went through this; it was almost 50/50 but there was very strong opposition and support. Both sides felt vehemently that they were right.

The next step we take, which we may talk about this with the next request, is that the Village has commissioned a Study where we have a Matrix and Scoring Criteria to try and see if various actions, Traffic Calming devices are warranted. We have a point-based schedule, and we look at accidents, speed, volume, use of the intersection and there are multiple factors and those go into a Scoring Matrix. One thing we could do if there is support for some kind of proposal, we would look at the Matrix and try to determine if the traffic data around Franklin justifies that request.

I don't know if this Matrix is available on the website. The gentlemen from the Village are saying it is available. So, you will be able to go to the Village website and look at the Matrix. The Matrix just tells you how the points are laid out. You wouldn't necessarily know the data. For example, crash history is one thing. You wouldn't have the crash history data or vehicle speed. That's why the petition would be good. If there is strong support for the notion, then it might justify the Village doing some additional study to collect the data. That would determine if

the request is warranted. I think we can help support your request for more enforcement of that rule for no right turn. 1, I would advise if you were interested in something more, you should get a petition, so we have a clear understanding of what the request is and see if there is support in the neighborhood. 2, we would want to collect data to see if it hits the Matrix. For example, a barrier, is a high- level of Traffic Calming device. You would need multiple points to be able to adjust that. Meaning it would have to be some level of crash history, volume and speed to able to justify some kind of calming device like a barricade for example.

Julie Sciaraffa indicates that she realizes that it is extreme. The other part of it is that it doesn't happen when they are there. But when they are not there, we see it happen. It only takes one time for somebody to get hurt. During summer it hasn't been as heavy but, in the winter, and all the other months, they want to get off North Avenue they go down Franklin. Otherwise, take the signs down if it is not going to be enforced.

Chairman Rees indicates good point. Let me find out if any members of the Commission have any questions or comments.

Commissioners talk about signs, Ordinance and bump outs.

Chairman Rees suggests that one proposal could be on the petition that you were interested on having a bump out like to bump out on Forest and assess if there is interest on your block to do that. We will look and see whether that is warranted.

Commission Gillis indicates that he does not know how long it has been with that no right turn in and no left turn out. I don't remember the history, but it has been there for about 30 years.

Julie Sciaraffa thanks everybody and is very grateful for all the Village does.

Chairman Rees indicates we generally meet every other month. We will encourage the Village to pay attention to enforcement of that Ordinance. If you and your neighbors want something more considered, we suggest that you identify what that is and start with a petition. We are looking for a 75% buy in. Just want to make it clear, being that you have overwhelming support from the neighbor, that is the first and important step. We are also trying to apply standards to see if the data supports the request.

Commissioner Osga asks Julie Sciaraffa if she has the Village contact if you have any questions – Matt, is that you?

Matt advised Julie Sciaraffa to reach out to Jack.

Chairman Rees indicates that he appreciates Julie and Anne Marie for coming and advises they can stick around as they are going to talk about a request for a stop sign at an intersection.

Do we have Sean Herring on the phone? I understand he may have an issue and participate remotely.

Matt indicates that he is not on zoom.

Chairman Rees indicates that the request that is on the agenda, for the record, is by Sean Herring on behalf of several neighbors on the 800/900 blocks of Monroe. Sean lives at 915 Monroe Avenue. He had requested that we convert the intersection of Iowa and Monroe to a four-way stop. It's currently a two-way stop, stopping the traffic east/west on Iowa and they want to add stop signs to stop the traffic north and south.

Commissioner Hoyt asks if we know what the general lay of the land is there. Rick might be able to comment on this better. Generally, up in that area, we have a stop sign every two blocks. Certainly, north of Chicago, meaning if you are receding north or southbound on Monroe, the current status that you have a stop sign every two blocks. There is not a stop sign currently north/south at Iowa, but there is on the next block.

Talk amongst Commissioners regarding stop sign locations at Augusta and Jackson.

Chairman Rees indicates there are stop signs that stop the north/southbound traffic but not east/west. Rick and I were talking before the meeting that might be related to the Safe Walking to School Program. When I was looking at it today, it would have made sense to me, that we would stop traffic at Oak and Quick, but instead we stop north/south traffic south of Chicago. I think it is because of the schools being near there and that is because we had the safe walk to school. That is my recollection.

Commissioner Hoyt asks Jackson and Iowa?

Chairman Rees indicates no not Iowa, Monroe.

Commissioner Hoyt asks Matt if he found the document.

Matt indicates no he wasn't able to find that document.

Commissioner Hoyt would like access to that.

Chairman Rees indicates there were a couple comments. 1. It might be good if we can put that on the screen or have Andy at the meetings of map, show the existing controls within the Village. The second thing that would be good to have - we do have this Thomas Engineering Study. It has the Scoring Matrix that we talked about. They also make reference to various warrants. I had to do some research before the meeting to confirm what the accepted warrants are for stop signs. There are accepted warrants for a four-way - to turn an intersection into a four-way stop. Generally, one warrant is several crashes in a twelve-month period - five or more within a twelve-month period. I understand from the Village at that intersection there were two crashes in five years. We are looking for as many as five crashes in one year. The current data shows two crashes within five years.

Commissioner Osga indicates that typically when we receive a request like this, you guys will send us accident data and the map so we can just access this on our computers. We are familiar with the warrants but thank you for refreshing to five in a year and there's more. Typically, we have all this data because I have no idea where to go on the Village website to see if it is there. You will have to hold our hands a little bit to get us this information. If we had the data and we

knew where the stop signs were, with or without Sean, that is what we need to make a recommendation to the Board and without it, it is tuff to do so.

Chairman Rees indicates that we can hear what people have to say. Knowing that the crash data is nowhere close, that could be enough to end the question. Generally, the 85th% tile of speed is over 40 miles an hour.

The neighbor's report is that they think people speed, but we don't have any data on what the speed is. The other key warrant is volume. There are a couple ways to count volume. Generally, you count during an eight-hour period. One way is looking at the minor street which we are assuming is Iowa. But whichever one is the minor street, if you count pedestrians and other vehicles of more than 200 per hour on the minor. I saw a warrant that was for 500 vehicles per hour for any 8 hours per an average day. I think just anecdotally from data, that Thomas pulled for other intersections in the area, I think it is safe to say that intersection is not going to hit the volume numbers. We have to decide, or the Village would have to decide – knowing that the crash data is not close, do we want them to do a speed study or a volume study. I know maybe Rick you can comment on this maybe there are some devices that would allow them to measure some speed without a huge expense. To me, if we are going to consider this at a future meeting because Sean is not here – and on our Matrix we put stop signs at Level 3.

Commissioner Hoyt asks what are we trying to address?

Chairman Rees indicates he says speed.

Commissioner Hoyt indicates if it is speed, maybe he is suggesting a stop sign as that is the first thing that comes to his mind. Let's talk about the other things that might be able to help the block.

Talk amongst Commissioners and Jack Bielak regarding a solution.

Commissioner Gillis indicates to Jack that Jeff Loster had talked about putting speed signs up without flashing as people slow down when they see it flashing. It was something like that he had suggested that you can put it on a pole and count the speed and turn off the warning to get real numbers. That might be an option. We have the solar ones which can be an option. The trailer you can mount somewhere possibly without it flashing but that is obvious for most people. But I think both those would give you a count and speed.

Chairman Rees indicates that this is one of those cost benefit things where we know that the accidents aren't anywhere close, then the questions are if there is an easier way to get the data on volume or speed. Do you guys know?

Jack Bielak, Director of Public Works & Engineering, indicates that one thing he noticed over in Bill's cubical, it seems like we do have some type of equipment that has been with us for a while. Whether that piece of equipment is functioning/working and what that does, from my understanding, is from my previous job. I was the Village Engineer for Northbrook. In that situation when I received a request for a stop sign, I would put out the speed tubes. They are two straight lines that cross the road and when somebody would drive through, I would leave it out for a week and collect the data. It would tell me what the 85th% tile speed and what was the total volume. I would take that and hand it to the residents and say it does not warrant that and we

were done. Obviously, we have a petition, so we have to go through the other process. The plan would be to test that equipment and see if it is in working order so in these types of situations, where somebody is coming in and making these types of requests, we can at a cost-effective way, get that information instead of hiring a consultant to do the data so we don't have to do this every time somebody makes a request.

Chairman Rees indicates that Jack is new to the job and needs to figure out what equipment we have and whether it would work. Does anybody else have a comment or question?

Commissioner Osga indicates that with lack of data, I do not want to make a recommendation. Also, with everything we put into this over the years with Safe Ways to School, I am less inclined to throw up stop signs when we've done all this work. We have stop signs that push our kids in a safe route to school. If we can do something very cost effectively and I know the Village has plenty of options for us to look at on how to slow down traffic or whatever it is we are trying to accomplish over there, like Kim said, I don't even want to go down the road of a stop sign or change what we implemented from the safe routes to school. I am not interested in the stop sign, but on that two-block stretch, as we only have a few of them left in the Village of River Forest, if there is something we can do to make it safer or make it slower, I am all for it. Then I would need options from the Village and data.

Chairman Rees indicates to Commissioner Hoyt's comment – One thing that we might say to Sean Herring or to anybody else on that block is that 1, we table it for two reasons as nobody else was here tonight and 2, we have some data, and the preliminary data suggests that a stop sign is probably not warranted. We can let them know that. At least, the accident data wouldn't be warranted that is number 1. 2, to Kim's point, in their petition they note that their concern is speed. The request is made due to the high speed and volume. We don't know what the speed or volume is. Based on that data, that might help us to determine if there are things in Level 1 or Level 2 in our Matrix that might be justified for speed, short of a stop sign. The second thing would be to tell Sean or anybody else is to tell them we have this Matrix that is available on the website, to let them know that the issue is speed. Particularly, there are some other calming measures that may be appropriate based on the Matrix. The third thing would be with Jack being new to Public Works, to determine if the Village has equipment that would allow it in a cost-effective way to collect some data with respect to speed and volume which would help us make this decision efficiently without rehiring a consultant every time there is a request like this. Those are my two cents if anybody else wants to comment.

Chairman Rees asks how about a Motion to Adjourn?

Jack indicates that he has a couple of updates. William, Monroe and Clinton if anyone has noticed, we did do the striping for the Traffic Calming. They are out there and the only feedback we have received is there is an angry person regarding the stripes. I had to calm him down.

Chairman Rees asks why?

Jack explains that this person explained that it ruined the nature of the neighborhood. I explained to him the process of the Traffic Safety Commission, the reason for the lines and what that process looked like. After I explained it, he went away.

Chairman Rees asks Jack if he has another update on Park? I drove by there tonight, and I know we discussed that at the last meeting. Do you have an update on that or no? Park by Dominican.

Matt Walsh indicates that the temporary signs were removed there earlier this week. We will prepare once school starts again to bring that back for discussion. There hasn't been any additional feedback from the neighborhood about the signs being removed.

Chairman Rees indicates that he drove by there this evening. There was heavy parking along Division in front of Dominican. But on Park, there were two cars parked on that block.

Commissioners indicated that it is a concert night.

Chairman Rees indicates that it is interesting, as we kind of expected, people are parking along Division there and the two cars that were parked on Park for all we know could be residents. We will just keep an eye on that block. Any other updates?

Jack indicates yes. Washington was studied as part of the Village Wide Traffic Study. As part of that Traffic Study, there were a lot of recommendations for bump outs per the Traffic Study. The only thing I wanted to mention was for the bump outs we did put the bollards, however, on top of the bollards, one of things we did was when you look at the entire length, the entire segment of Washington, what is proposed is narrowing the entire corridor in the future. Not necessarily just bump outs but also parking, bike lanes, stuff like that. In effect in the future, the idea is one lane each direction all the way through. After we did the bollards at only the bump outs, we received a number of concerned citizens that there were still people cutting around at other intersections. What I did, I looked at the Traffic Study and looked at the intent, what it is supposed to be. There were three intersections. Gale, Keystone and Forest where I added bollards to be in tune with what the Traffic Study recommended. So, those were added, everyone is happy, and I haven't had concerns since.

Chairman Rees indicates that he was driving westbound on Washington coming from Forest Park. You have people lined up next to each other especially if somebody is turning left so you will get somebody jumping off the light to go down the right lane. Having the bollards at least in River Forest helps as the drivers proceeding east, have to get back into the single file. As far as what feedback you heard, the bollards keep people in a single lane right? Probably also better for biking and other things.

Commissioner Gillis indicates that he noticed that you put them by Washington Park at the crosswalk there which was very nice.

Jack indicates that not only did we added those bollards but additionally one of the big things with Washington, that project given the different elements at what it's looking to do, is a very attractive project for grants. One of the things we are looking to do is hopefully put in for a couple grants to be able to move forward with what that Traffic Study is recommending so we can hopefully in the future realize what it is that Traffic Study recommended with the bump outs, the signage and all that different stuff.

Chairman Rees asks Jack if he thinks or knows if it is the intention of the Village to move forward on Washington as a priority including Thatcher which I know has a number of issues. Or is it easier to just handle Washington or is that a priority do you know?

Jack indicates that Thatcher itself is currently undergoing a Phase 1. That is in conjunction with a larger Trail Study going north which is still proceeding/happening. Because it has so many different partners, it is an attractive project and is continuing and that is why Washington is so attractive as it butts into Thatcher. It is like you are creating this whole network. When you get to Washington, the parks and all those other elements over there, Washington starts looking like another great project. The reason is that Thatcher is still moving as it is with other communities and there are – Rosemont is the lead as that is the way it worked out. Washington is something River Forest staff is going to try to push forward.

Chairman Rees indicates that is a good update and thanks Jack.

Commissioner Chase asks Jack a question regarding the grants.

Jack indicates the two grants we are going for is ITEP is from the State and the other one is Cook County Invest in Cook. Because of where Washington is, we have to go through the whole process of Phase 1 and all the environmental requirements, Phase 2 which is detailed design and then construction. This is a multi-year process, not immediate.

Matt adds that hopefully the equipment works. Our plan would be once school resumes, to put that down on Washington to see if the bollards as they are now, have any impact on the 85th% tile we saw with the Village Wide Traffic Study. I can't remember if that was 38 m.p.h. or 41 it was significantly above the speed limit on Thatcher. I mix the two up. We are hoping to see if that has had a positive impact and working with bollards.

Commissioner Hoyt indicates that she lives in that area and noticed a big difference with people not going in the right-hand lanes. Hopefully the data will support that.

Chairman Rees indicates that not only with calming speed but making a safer situation by not having people with cars trying to go around.

Jack indicates this is regarding Bill's edification as he has been busy this summer. He has had a lot of streets repaved and 132 ADA curb ramps have been redone to be made compliant with the American Disabilities Act.

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting. All Commissioners voted in favor of the motion. Motion passed.

Respectfully Submitted:

Jack Bielak, Secretary

Doug Rees, Chairman
Traffic & Safety Commission

Date: _____

DRAFT