



**VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST
TRAFFIC AND SAFETY COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, September 18, 2024**

A regular meeting of the River Forest Traffic and Safety Commission was held on Wednesday, September 18, 2024.

ROLL CALL AND CALL TO ORDER

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

Chairman Rees asks if there are any comments regarding the last minutes of May 15, 2024, July 17, 2024, and requests a **MOTION to approve the Minutes. Minutes were approved and all were in favor.**

PUBLIC COMMENT

Michael Anderson, 1215 Park Avenue. Talks about his frustration due to parking concerns on west side of Park Avenue due to maneuvering his 3 cars daily, fire lane, speed limit and street being dangerous. Park is only street without parking restrictions or speed limit signs.

Gerri Humbert, 1319 Park Avenue. Talks about Dominican University changing their campus by its Master Plan in 2005 regarding building a parking garage and installing a gate prohibiting traffic which was removed. Also discusses KLOA Traffic Study in 2020 regarding reversing progress in traffic, removing 2-hour parking signs on Park Avenue and reinstalling gate which are safety issues. Nobody on her block was advised of parking restriction changes.

Louise Flagg, 1331 Park Avenue. It's a challenge living on the corner of Greenfield & Park due to street being a cut-through street which is dangerous. I have called the Police Department everyday for last several weeks to issue tickets.

Mark Titzer, Chief Financial Officer at Dominican University, apologies for increased traffic due to record enrollment. Confirms the gate has been reinstalled as it was damaged. They are currently monitoring parking garage statistics and investigating shuttling and other out lot opportunities, carpooling, etc. Also confirms parking fee rates.

Michael Anderson, 1215 Park Avenue, directs comments to Mark Titzer indicating that the parking situation needs to be addressed by Dominican University not the residents that live on Park.

COMMISSION COMMENT

Chairman Rees indicates there are no parking restrictions on Thomas and very few parking restrictions on Franklin. Indicates the Commission will consider the knock-on effects if they reimpose parking restrictions on Park.

Commissioner Hoyt indicates that she would like to find a solution for the residents to provide additional parking as they have a unique situation.

Commissioner Gillis talks about his drive in today at 11:15 a.m. on Division and garage was full. A lot of cars today were on Thomas, Franklin and on Greenfield near Park. Talks about possible solution to split up 35 parking spots and turn 15 of them into resident only on the west side which allows residents somewhere to park and gives another 15 spots for students.

Commissioner Osga talks about feedback from residents, and they should be priority. Also discusses ways to solve traffic & safety issues and to reinstate resident only parking for residents.

Chairman Rees directs comment to Commissioner Osga to clarify when you say reinstate resident only that previously it was 2-hour parking, not resident only. As one of the residents pointed out, after resident complained, the Police changed it by temporary order to be resident only. Members of this Commission and I complained. We want those changes to happen through this process not just because somebody calls and talks to the Police Chief. It used to be 2-hour parking, and I don't hear any of you asking to reinstate 2-hour parking. As your petition says, you are asking to have resident only parking 8:00 until 4:00. Is this your proposal?

Commissioner Karrow inquires if it was 2-hour parking between 2005 until 2019?

Chairman Rees indicates he doesn't know the exact period. Also directs comment to the public as to when the Commission asked to remove the temporary restriction that the police placed so they can obtain data and assess how the block was being utilized.

Commissioner Karrow indicates for several years, the 2-hour parking did work and to revert to exempting residents so they can park there all day as this would accommodate the University students and residents to park.

Commissioner Jayaraman feels that the 2-hour parking will not resolve parking problem for residents. He likes Commissioner Gillis' idea to keep it split up so residents can park there all the time.

Commissioner Osga talks about the percentage of parking spaces available. He does not feel 5% of parking spots on Park would not make a difference. Parking for residents needs to be prioritized.

Chairman Rees asks Mark Titzer if he knows how many River Forest residents are enrolled as students at Dominican?

Commissioner Jayaraman asks Mark Titzer if there are 3,000 full and part time students? How many staff, personnel and parking spots total inside the campus? So, 2,000 spots missing.

Commissioner Osga indicates that Dominican has a need for more parking. You have a lot of cars coming in. I'm willing to throw a motion out there now and see if we have the votes as we have other things to talk about.

Commissioner Chase indicates that she is under the impression that there is an existing Ordinance for Park Avenue on the west side. Exactly what is that Ordinance if I may ask?

Matt Walsh, Village Administrator, indicates that Ordinance - restriction was revoked in 2020. It was a 2-hour restriction that was struck from the Code.

Chairman Rees indicates that there is no Ordinance or restriction on the west side. There is a limited restriction period for limited space there.

Commissioner Karrow indicates that if we put 2-hour parking in place and cars are not being ticketed, talk to the Police Department and ask them to start ticketing, be more aggressive about it and continue that practice for couple months until word spreads around. I would hate to restrict all parking there or make it resident only parking there as don't think traffic enforcement will be enforced.

Chairman Rees indicates there is restricted parking in other parts of the Village. You are right that there is not that kind of 2-hour restriction which used to be on your block.

Chairman Rees answers a question to resident, not using the microphone, that at a prior meeting, we did make a request to rescind that temporary order that the Police put in. We, as the Commission, try making decisions on a data driven way to avoid ad hock decisions. If we do make a recommendation tonight, it would go the Village Board, and they would decide if they would accept or deny our recommendation.

Commissioner Karrow replies to resident, not using the microphone, not putting up 2-hour parking as we don't think it will be enforced but I don't think that lack of enforcement should be what drives our decisions with respect to signage.

Commissioner Jayaraman agrees with John. The University has more resources than all the residents trying to figure out whether there should be parking. We can put in place that the University is forced to do more parking construction.

Commissioner Osga indicates that the benefit to the residents is 5% of the detriment to the University and that the benefits to the residents of River Forest is much greater than the detriment to the neighbor to the west as they have all this money coming in with their enrollment. They have the resources and the land.

Chairman Rees states that John is in favor of resident only and Dave suggesting taking an incremental least restrictive approach to reinstall the 2-hour parking and push for enforcement. Are there any other comments on the choices we are considering?

Commissioner Chase indicates that she lives on the 800 block of Bonnie Brae and compares the parking to when the Sheridan put in their assisted living facility. We have 8:00 to 4:00 or 8:00 to 5:00 parking. It worked. Maybe we can transfer that over to Park Avenue.

Chairman Rees talks about parking on the blocks of Forest and Keystone immediately south of Dominican are resident only. Thomas is open and there are some issues with overflow parking happening on Thomas. Franklin is open except for student loading area by Willard School. We recognize there might be an effect on an adjacent street, but we wait to see if neighbors complain, and we react to that too. We can anticipate that we may be back to addressing this issue if we restrict the parking on Park.

Commissioner Osga indicates that we certainly will be back here addressing that issue if Dominican does nothing about their parking issue. Yes, I agree with you.

Chairman Rees asks if there is a Motion to be made?

Commissioner Osga would like to make a Motion that we turn the 1200 – 1300 block of Park Avenue on the west side to resident only.

Chairman Rees asks what hours?

Jack Bielak, Director of Public Works & Engineering, indicates that the petition was 8:00 to 4:00 for residents on school days.

Commissioner Osga indicates that he will go with the petition.

Chairman Rees asks if Monday through Friday from 8:00 to 4:00 would be the Motion?

Commissioner Osga confirms yes, that would be the motion.

Chairman Rees indicates so resident only from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. from Monday through Friday would be the Motion. Is there is a second? Commissioner Chase seconds. Any discussion on John's Motion?

VOTE TAKEN

Commissioner Osga, yes – Commissioner Gillis, yes – Commissioner Jayaraman, yes – Commissioner Chase, yes – Commissioner Karrow, yes - Chairman Rees, yes.

Chairman Rees indicates that that Motion carries, as I mentioned, a non-binding recommendation. That will go to the Village Board but not sure if it will go by the next meeting.

Jack Bielak, Director of Public Works & Engineering, asks if they would like to discuss the data in terms of the 85% speed and crash history.

Chairman Rees indicates yes, let's talk about that briefly. One of things we did note at the last meeting was that we do have this Toolbox, Matrix and Point Scale which try to be guides for

what kind of traffic improvements we might make based on speed, crash history and volume. Also talks about Level 1 and Level 2 data regarding the summary pages that were collected.

Jack Bielak indicates that since our last meeting, we did buy a speed monitor that is not visible but tracks speed, number of cars, and provides data and charts for us which saves us Engineering Consultant fees around \$5,000.00 per situation. Cover sheet has everything you are looking for when talking about the Matrix that Thomas Engineering put together.

Chairman Rees talks about the Scoring and Improvement Matrix which is in those materials and be aware of data that is available in making decisions. Thanks Jack, Bill, Matt and Village for obtaining the speed monitor which is helpful and for all the work that was done for this project.

Jack Bielak indicates they met with Dominican twice to discuss the parking issue. Dominican stated Village staff was welcome anytime to come take a look even though it is their property. The first Monday when school started, I received 3 phone calls from multiple residents concerned about traffic flow. There were freshman students that did not know where to go. This may be an opportunity for Dominican to reevaluate when their classes are scheduled.

Commissioner Osga indicates to Jack, that Mr. Anderson mentioned when going south on Park that there is no speed limit sign. Is this accurate?

Jack Bielak indicated that he is one of the residents that contacted him due to safety and parking concerns. I explained the process for new parking restrictions but I had Public Works put up two new 25 m.p.h. signs that day in each direction.

Commissioner Oga asks if we are done with the parking garage and if we are addressing Iowa and Monroe?

Chairman Rees answers no.

Jack Bielak indicates that he can do a quick overview of what was provided for Washington.

Chairman Rees indicates please do with respect to the installation of bollards which was due to speed reduction.

Jack Bielak talks about the Village Wide Traffic Study which showed that Washington had excessive speeding. Then we introduced the bollards. One of the reasons we asked Thomas Engineering to do the revaluation was to make sure it was identical. In the future, we will be using our own speed monitor. We wanted to make sure we had that feedback was included with our ITEP Grant Application which is due at the end of this month.

Chairman Rees indicates Thomas Engineering noted that bollards seem to be working they reiterated their recommendation to move forward with the other recommendations. Is this part of your grant?

Jack Bielak answered correct. As we go for the Grant, we are putting in what Thomas put in the Village Wide Traffic Study. Once we get into the Phases like Phase 1, there will be two public meetings so there will be significant resident and Village feedback.

Today, on Chicago, we added little reflective strips on the corners of the fences to hopefully reduce the amount of times they are hit.

Chairman Rees asks Jack to explain what the petition we received the other day was about.

Jack Bielak explains we received a petition from the lady that was here at the last meeting regarding the no turn into Franklin Avenue from North Avenue. It will be on the agenda for the next meeting. I would suggest using our new speed monitor to collect data for the next meeting.

Chairman Rees indicates to Jack the data collected for this would be handy and asks for a Motion to adjourn.

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

Respectfully Submitted:



Jack Bielak, Director of Public Works
& Engineering



Doug Rees, Chairman
Traffic & Safety Commission

Date: 11-20-24