

THE CITY OF HURON, OHIO
Huron Safety Committee
Meeting Minutes
September 8, 2020 – 4:00pm

A meeting of the Council Safety Committee was called to order by Christine Crawford on Tuesday, September 8 2020, at 4:00 p.m. at Huron City Hall.

Ms. Crawford directed the Clerk to call the roll. Members of the Safety Committee in attendance: **Christine Crawford, Sam Artino and Monty Tapp.**

Staff in attendance: Interim City Manager Michael Spafford, Police Chief Robert Lippert, Fire Captain Kurt Schafer, City Engineer/Zoning Inspector Doug Green, Parks & Recreation Operations Manager Doug Steinwart, Law Director Todd Schrader and Executive Administrative Assistant /Clerk of Council Terri Welkener.

Approval of Minutes

Motion by Mr. Artino to approve the minutes of the July 21, 2020 meeting, as written.

Ms. Crawford asked if there was any discussion on the motion. There being none, the committee unanimously approved the motion.

Old Business

Speeding/Speed Bumps in Huron Heights Neighborhood. Mr. Spafford said staff priced two options for speed signs. One is a mobile battery-powered radar sign with a battery that lasts about two weeks and could be bolted to an existing traffic sign (approx. \$3,000). You would put the sign out for two weeks, bring it back to charge the battery overnight, and move it around throughout the City. The second option is a semi-permanent solar powered radar sign (approx. \$6,500). He is leaning toward the second option, but was looking for any feedback from the Committee. We could deploy a few of them at a time on a rotating basis to cover various neighborhoods. Data regarding traffic counts and speed can be downloaded from the signs. The Committee thought the City should start by purchasing 2 radar signs.

Pier Ladders. The ladders and life rings have been installed since the last meeting.

Elimination of No Left Turn at Commerce Plaza. Mr. Green said that OHM's traffic engineer took a look at it and it is not a preferred direction to go because it is in too close proximity to Berlin Rd.

Nickel Plate Beach. Mr. Spafford asked when the City should stop having the alert system up and operational. The Committee decided that it should remain operational through October 1st and then reassess the situation at that time. Mayor Artino suggested that staff check with the Law Director to see if there is a liability issue related to having the gate open during the offseason.

New Business

Mudbrook Creek Buoy Placement Application. This application relates to buoy and sign placement only (not a request for grant funds), as grant funds have previously been denied. It will be a cost of approximately \$5,000 (on the high end) to the City. There are 6 buoys. Mr. Spafford said that grant applications for these buoys are not as competitive as the open water buoy applications. The Committee recommended that the application be submitted for placement only.

Chaska Beach Buoy Grant Application. This application requests grant funds to purchase buoys previously approved for placement. The Committee recommended that the application be submitted for grant consideration.

2020 Trick-or-Treat. Several years ago, Council determined that trick-or-treat would be held on October 31st from 5pm to 7pm. The various neighborhoods can make their own schedules. The Mayor said that we should recommend that we abide by any guidelines set forth by the Health Department.

St. Peter's 5K and Fun Run. St. Pete's is having their 5K on Halloween, which will be the first 5K run in the City since the beginning of the pandemic. The Health Department is being kept in the loop, and St. Pete's will be submitting some type of plan to them for approval.

Designated Outdoor Refreshment Area (DORA). There is a contiguous acreage maximum, as well as a minimum requirement of liquor permits that have to be within the area to be considered a DORA. A city the with Huron's population size would have a minimum of 4 liquor permits and no more than 150 acres. The concept is being presented to the Safety Committee because you are encouraging open container drinking, and there are obvious safety, trash and cleanliness issues. The DORA is not necessarily a 24-hour a day situation – Council can set certain hours and/or days for operation. A DORA would be advantageous from an economic development standpoint to draw more retail businesses. Staff is working on a way to include ConAgra in the DORA, perhaps through use of a water taxi, due to the requirement that the DORA areas are contiguous. All beverages must be dispensed from a participating DORA establishment, and must be served in a designated DORA cup. People cannot take drinks off their boat or refill with their own alcohol. The cup must be refilled by another DORA establishment. Mr. Tapp said the only problem is monitoring, but if that becomes a problem, the district can be eliminated by Council. Both Port Clinton and Perrysburg have approved DORAs. Liability-wise, it would be operated within the scope of legislation, and liquor license rules will still apply. The boundary of the DORA will be marked by signage with days and hours of operation. Mayor Artino said that he would like to talk with the church, and this matter should involve a public hearing. The proposed zone would cover from the pier to the railroad tracks. Ms. Crawford asked if there was a concern with excluding Pizza House or Jim's Pizza Box south of the railroad tracks.

School Zone Signage with Speed Display. Radar enabled flashing speed signs have been installed at Shawnee. Mr. Spafford recommended that similar signs be installed at the High School and McCormich. They are \$16,000/pair, or \$32,000 for both locations. We could include the purchase of the signs in next year's budget if Council is in agreement. Cost-sharing has not been discussed. St. Peter's school zone is awkward for use of this type of sign – maybe something could be installed on Huron Street. Mr. Tapp commented that there are no speed limit signs on Cleveland Road all the way north. Mr. Spafford indicated that signage for St. Peter's would be helpful. Mr. Green said that signage is included as part of the US6 project, and there will be additional painting as well. The Committee suggested that Mr. Swaisgood look into the financials for the purchase, and they

are in support of installation of the signs for McCormick and the High School. For St. Peter's School, staff will look into updated signage.


Road Diet. Mr. Spafford said that now that traffic has been operating in a quasi-2-lane system all summer with few issues, the outside lane has been used by both pedestrians and bicyclists. When the US6 project is complete, Council will have the option of going back to the previous 4-lane striping pattern, or implement a "road diet" by eliminating the outer lane with one lane traveling in each direction, adding a center turn lane, and adding a 6' bike lane as an outer lane. As a cyclist comes over the bridge, it is a tight squeeze, and this is a good way to provide connectivity to the east and west sides of the City.

Mr. Critelli went over the logistics involved and safety impacts. Road diets are part of a FHWA safety program. There are certain benefits to a road diet, which include a protected lane with the center lane. The models also experience reduced speed of 3-5 mph. There is enhanced safety in that now we have an intersection that no longer has an unnecessary signal light, and reduced the number of lanes to be crossed by pedestrians. Mr. Critelli discussed Options A and B (copies attached) with the Committee. The refuge island provides a stopping point for pedestrians as they cross US6. The bike path will go from Berlin Road to Williams Street. Golf carts will not be allowed to use the bike lane. The only vehicles that should be using the bike lane is the fire department, police, or a broken-down vehicle. Mr. Tapp said there are a lot of people against it, and if Council tries to push this through there will be a lot of pushback. Ms. Crawford said Council had the same pushback with the concept of a roundabout at Berlin Road, and now that the project is underway, people are asking why we aren't doing a roundabout. The problem is we primarily hear from the negative – not the positive. Mr. Tapp and Mr. Artino said they have both seen long waits at Berlin Road. Mr. Artino said once it goes into the turning lane, it is in the path of the bicycle lane. Mr. Critelli said there is no deviation from the current condition with the sidewalk. Mr. Artino said the bike lane is better than using the sidewalk, even though bikes are not supposed to use the sidewalk. Mr. Artino asked if the concrete barrier on the bridge could be made smaller. Mr. Critelli said their structure detail plans have specific requirements.

Mr. Critelli said that the current size of the island allows for large vehicles to turn, but that did not include a bike lane. The island will now be modified to be sure none of the vehicles' path goes into the bike lane. They will be doing a test run with the ladder truck before installing the island. He has reached out to ODOT about design modifications. ODOT is in favor of the road diet. The island will be reduced to allow pedestrian refuge only, and there shouldn't be any issue with turning vehicles.

The Committee members want to hear what the public has to say about the road diet, and should set a public hearing at the Council meeting. Ms. Crawford said that we need to emphasize the safety improvements that come with the road diet. Mayor Artino said the winter would be a good time to give the road diet a try. The Committee recommended that this matter be brought before Council at tonight's meeting.

There being no further business to come before the Safety Committee, **Mr. Tapp made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 4:58 pm.** All in favor, meeting adjourned at 4:58pm.


Terri S. Welkener
Clerk of Council