

THE CITY OF HURON, OHIO
Huron Safety Committee
Meeting Minutes
December 2, 2020 – 4:00pm

A meeting of the Council Safety Committee was called to order by Sam Artino on Wednesday, December 2, 2020, at 4:00 p.m. at Huron City Hall. Committee members in attendance: Sam Artino and Monty Tapp. Member absent: Christine Crawford.

Staff in attendance: City Manager Matt Lasko, Assistant to the City Manager Michael Spafford, Police Chief Robert Lippert, Executive Administrative Assistant /Clerk of Council Terri Welkener, and OHM Advisors Representative Russ Critelli.

Approval of Minutes

Motion by Mr. Tapp to accept the minutes of the September 8, 2020 meeting.

Mr. Artino asked if there was any discussion on the motion. The Clerk called the roll on the motion. All in favor – motion passed.

Old Business

No old business.

New Business

CUS-6 Bike Lane Signage/Delineation

Mr. Lasko provided an update on the status of the US-6 road diet striping plan implementation. Alterations continue to be made based on that alternative striping plan. The turn lanes are now reinstalled at ConAgra, River Road and Tiffin and the traffic lights and signage were installed as if it were a 2-lane road in each direction. Mr. Critelli, Mr. Green, Mr. Spafford and CTL will be doing an exhaustive walkthrough on Friday to take a look at all street lights and installed signage to ensure consistency with the road diet striping plan that is in place. There may be areas throughout the corridor where you will see two street lights, but only one vehicular lane. We are trying to clean up those types of situations. Obviously, we wanted the traffic lights installed in case we keep the 2 lanes. In the interim, we may want to consider bagging some lights to avoid people driving in a bike lane. There are also street signs that show two straight lanes when there is only one – we will determine if that street sign should be taken down temporarily or is there an alternative street sign that should be installed. Mr. Critelli and CTL will be doing that walkthrough on Friday to clean up all of those items and, hopefully, that will address the majority, if not all, of the situations where we have people driving their vehicles in bicycle lanes, buffers, etc. He thinks that in addition to things being new, there are some things that tend to promote people driving in those lanes – we need to correct those. Mr. Critelli confirmed the walkthrough on Friday and the goal is to educate the residents through messaging or additional temporary signage.

Mr. Artino asked how long it would be before these changes are made. Mr. Critelli said it could be implemented by the week following the walk-through. We will need ODOT to acknowledge what we are doing from a signage standpoint. They have been extremely responsive in getting their feedback to us.

Mr. Tapp said that he knows nothing about bike lanes or how they are supposed to be, and wanted to know if there is a standard way they are supposed to be. He has gotten some comments asking why they weren't done like they did it in Wakeman, for example. Is there one way they are supposed to be and that's it per State code? Mr. Critelli said the specifications for the bike lanes are standardized and specified by ODOT. We are not creating something at the designer's whim. That is why ODOT has to sign off on the striping plan – particularly because it is a State road. What we have in place replicates what is on the Detroit-Superior bridge in Cleveland. We don't have the luxury of changing that design. Mr. Tapp said that it doesn't really bother him. He was originally against it and then more recently, we have a lot of people that are for it. Now, he is receiving comments from people that are against it again. His concern as a citizen is that it looks dangerous. Mr. Critelli said, as a design practice, it meets all the standards and specifications and is approved by ODOT. In that regard, the Council and this committee should recognize that it has been done in conformance. If it is not desirable, that is another issue. Mr. Tapp said his concern is that he is in a lane with a bike lane on his right, and then there is a turning lane. Mr. Critelli said that when we approached ODOT with the request to keep the bike like to the curb, ODOT made us revise those plans according to standards and specifications. Chief Lippert said there is nothing we can do if ODOT changes the plans. He initially said they should move the bike lane to the curb, but ODOT said no (at Route 6 and Main Street westbound). Cars have to yield to all traffic, for example at Williams when turning north onto Williams from westbound Route 6. Whoever makes that turn is at fault because that bike lane does not have to yield. Mr. Tapp said it seems like when you get up to a turn lane, that out of consideration the bike might want to stop. Chief Lippert said he would think they would, but they don't have to – they are in a bike lane, so automobiles have to yield to them when making a turn. If you are traveling in the same direction as the bicycle, once you vary from that direction you have to yield to all traffic.

Chief Lippert asked if the bike lanes are enforceable at this point, or do they have to be journalized in the traffic code. For example, if we change the speed limit it must be journalized with a resolution or ordinance before it can be enforced. Mr. Artino asked if the ordinance regarding passing on the right would apply. Chief Lippert said it would apply if that bike lane is journalized – just because we lay one down, does that make it enforceable? He doesn't know the answer to that question. Mr. Artino asked if these people can be pulled over and educated in the meantime. Chief Lippert said that may put his officers in a tough spot if someone gives them a hard time without having the new lanes journalized. We have to be sure we have a legal traffic stop – he would rather wait until we get the answer regarding journalization before enforcing it. If we have an accident in the meantime, there probably won't be anyone cited at this point. Mr. Artino asked if we have bike lanes somewhere else. Chief Lippert said there are, but those are dedicated in the traffic code. Chief Lippert needs to know if that will apply to these lanes, as well. He would like Council to pass an ordinance saying this is the traffic profile for this road, just as required for every stop sign, traffic signal or speed limit change. Mr. Artino asked that we get that question to our Law Director. Chief Lippert said that we will also have to have something regarding removal of the light at Berlin Road from the traffic control file.

Mr. Tapp asked if bikes are still allowed to ride in the automobile lanes. Chief Lippert confirmed that they are. Mr. Critelli said uniformity of our infrastructure of highway systems is good for motorist education. These standardized practices help with the driver recognition. That split bike lane at Main Street is the same as those in Cleveland, Columbus or Akron. Chief Lippert said it is an adjustment for them, as well – it is odd to see bikes in the middle of cars. If that's the standard, he is fine with it.

As a follow-up to Mr. Artino's question, Mr. Lasko asked Mr. Critelli if there are things we can do more quickly than others; fabricating new signage and installing new signage may take a little bit longer than bagging traffic light. Do all of those changes require ODOT's blessing? Mr. Critelli said the portable variable message signing is the quickest thing we can do. We just need ODOT to recognize what we are doing out there. He anticipates bagging signs or lights, and then adding temporary messaging. This is a quick introduction of information. The customer is using it, and we need to inform them quickly. Mr. Lasko said even if there are no bicyclists, if you have two cards going the same direction and the one on the north side thinks they are the only one that can turn right because there shouldn't be a car there, it can create havoc. Mr. Artino asked that we at least bag the signs that have the arrows showing multiple lanes. Mr. Critelli confirmed that the contradictory signs would be changed. Mr. Artino asked that we do as much as we can, as soon as we can. Mr. Critelli said that with or without bike lanes, if there is a bike between travel lanes, in some places the bike lane is painted a solid green which delineates it even further. We don't have that option right now due to climate and weather, but that is an option. He would recommend doing something that stands out. Mr. Artino said that if he had to vote two weeks ago on whether we were going to do this or not, he would have voted no, but the vote to give it a try is okay with him. He would hate to think that because we did or didn't do something, it would cause it not to happen or otherwise cause a problem.

Bike May Use Full Lane Sign

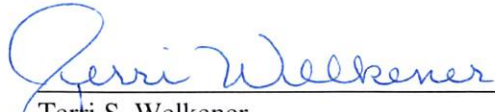
Mr. Lasko said there was a request from a resident for a "Bikes May Use Full Lane" signs, and as Chief Lippert just affirmed, even though we have bike lanes bicycles can continue to use the vehicular lane. That was a request from a resident for signs at both eastern and western terminus of the City limits stating explicitly that bicycles can continue to ride or be present in the vehicular lane. Chief Lippert said that you can't stop bicyclists using the full vehicular lane, as it is allowed by the Ohio Revised Code. Just because you put a bike lane in doesn't mean a bicycle has to ride in that bike lane. It is there for their extra safety to get them out of the road so that cars aren't crossing the center lane to get around them. That's why it is there. Mr. Lasko said he is of the opinion that it is legal, but he doesn't know that he wants to promote it when there is an alternative. Chief Lippert agreement. Mr. Critelli acknowledged that it is not a requirement – it is engineering judgment if there is need for it to be used. Mr. Lippert said that he prefers the bikes to be in the bike lane. There may be situation where someone is eastbound at Main Street and wants to take a left turn – that is a situation where the bike must leave the bike lane to make the turn. Mr. Artino, Mr. Tapp, Chief Lippert and Ms. Crawford were all in agreement that the signs are not necessary.

Reduction of Speed Limit in R-1 Districts

Mr. Artino said this issue was brought up by Joe Dike in a Council meeting. In his neighborhood (Chaska Beach), the speed limit is 25mph, and he thinks that is too fast. Mr. Tapp said he thought we had talked about this before, but doesn't know what is involved in reducing a speed limit. Mr. Critelli said regardless if jurisdiction, any speed reduction requires some sort of speed study. That is an Ohio Revised Code requirement. A jurisdiction has the right to ask for a speed increase without a study, but a reduction requires some sort of study and approval process. A 15mph speed is not statutory, so it would require a study. Mr. Artino said this is not a state road; Chief Lippert said all streets/roads (other than private streets) are governed by the Ohio Revised Code. Chief Lippert said he doesn't see why every R-1 District in the City needs a reduced speed limit – 25mph has been the standard for years. He said that traffic statistics that would not support a reduction in speed limit anywhere in the City, even on Laguna which has many speed complaints. He would never be behind a reduction of the speed limit. 25mph is the standard in all cities all over the State of Ohio, and he doesn't see we don't need to reduce it. Mr. Tapp asked what the traffic study would entail. Mr.

Critelli it is a speed data study showing what the normal speeds on that road. The 85th percentile dictates at what speed people are driving at. Other conditions such as accidents unique to that road can also be taken into consideration. Statistically, there is no data that supports lowering that, and from ODOT's standpoint, they are going to ask the City to show them the data that proves the speed limit must be lowered. Mr. Tapp said that he didn't think that people are going over the 25mph a lot. It is more of an issue of a lot of kids playing on the road. Chief Lippert said that he doesn't disagree with that, but if we are going to reduce the speed limit in all R-1 Districts, that would entail many traffic studies. In response to a question from Mr. Tapp, Chief Lippert said that if a driver was not exceeding the speed limit and a person was hit, more than likely the person in the street would be at fault. Mr. Artino asked if would make sense to place "Children at Play" signs instead. Chief Lippert said they did that on Center Street several years ago and haven't had as many complaints since. Mr. Critelli further explained how the traffic study data could be used to lower a speed limit (80th percentile being primary criteria). Mr. Tapp asked if the radar speed sign would help. A discussion ensued regarding the speed signs that have been ordered, but have not yet arrived. The committee decided to start with the portable speed signs as a first step. Those signs will attach to existing signs and are solar.

There being no further business to come before the Safety Committee, **Mr. Tapp made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 4:39pm.** All in favor, meeting adjourned at 4:39pm.


Terri S. Welkener
Clerk of Council