



TRAFFIC COMMISSION

City Hall—Council Chambers, 590 40th Ave NE

Tuesday, July 19, 2022

6:00 PM

UNAPPROVED MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Davis at 6:01 p.m.

Members present: Commissioners Ciesynski, Davis, Finkelson, Nekora, Schluender

Staff present: Kathy Young, Assistant City Engineer
Captain Markham, Police
Sue Chapman, Administrative Assistant

Council Liaison: Amáda Márquez Simula (absent)

APPROVE MINUTES

1. Motioned by Finkelson, seconded by Nekora, to approve the minutes of June 21, 2022 as presented.
Motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARING

2. Designate No Parking on North Side of 41st Avenue from Monroe Street to Jefferson Street and South Side of 41st Avenue from Jefferson Street to 30' East

Residents Present:

Kt Jacobs, 4104 Monroe St	Mary Murzyn (via Zoom)
Jeff Brein, 4057 Madison St	Rileigh Cole (via Zoom)

Kt Jacobs has requested No Parking on the north side of 41st Ave from Monroe St to Jefferson St. The concern is that the width of the street cannot accommodate two-way traffic with parking on both sides.

Ms. Murzyn lives in the area. She asked why these two blocks have been selected for no parking and if the commission is aware that the main property entrances are all on 41st Ave. Davis advised that no parking is already posted east of 41st Ave to Central Ave, this is an extension of that to allow emergency vehicles to get through as the road narrows on these two blocks. He is not aware of any properties on 41st Ave, they are on the cross streets. Ms. Murzyn stated that if you drive between Madison and Jefferson Streets you'll see that the main entrances are on 41st Ave. Her main entrance is on 41st Ave as well as the people across the alley from her. This will be a huge inconvenience for her and other homeowners. She also has handicapped parking.

Kt is aware that Ms. Murzyn has handicap parking on 41st Ave. She explained that the no parking designation would be on the north side of 41st Ave, Ms. Murzyn's handicap parking is on the south side of 41st Ave. Residents on the south side of the street would not be affected but residents on the north side would need to cross the street. Ms. Murzyn asked if this will be extended further up on 41st Ave, it's hard to make it

through the intersection at 7th St. Davis advised it's not in this proposal and the commission is not planning to go further at this point.

Ms. Cole asked where this request is coming from--is it coming from the emergency team, have there been crash reports or are there records of folks that have been impacted. Davis advised the main reason this is being considered is because the road does become narrower and it has a centerline that cars try to avoid crossing, and there is parking on both sides of the street. Ms. Cole is worried about multi-family homes with multiple vehicles and people coming and going as this already impacts people in the winter. She does not want to burden any of our multi-families. Davis advised the no parking will not be in front of any homes.

Kt stated this is not eliminating parking, just moving parking space from one side to the other. She's been there since 1994 and the parking has never been full on both sides of the street. All the driveways are accessible and there will still be parking on the north-south streets. One of the main reasons for bringing this forward is the visibility issue for westbound traffic at the hill on Monroe St. The other night she saw the fire engine coming up 41st Ave, a vehicle was parked on the north side of 41st Ave and there was eastbound traffic. The fire truck had to stop and wait for the eastbound car to pass through the intersection before continuing. Her neighbors have a concern about northbound traffic on Monroe St turning onto 41st Ave with the hill and parked cars obstructing visibility. This was brought to the Traffic Commission due to vehicle and pedestrian traffic safety and neighbors coming forward.

Mr. Jeff Brein provided a written notice that he agrees that two-sided parking on 41st Ave can impede emergency services.

No other comments from the public. Public Hearing was closed.

Finkelson questioned the crosswalk diagram that was provided with the MN State Statute 169 Traffic Regulations. Subd. 20 "Crosswalk" means (1) that portion of a roadway ordinarily included with the prolongation or connection of the lateral lines of sidewalks at intersections; (2) any portion of a roadway distinctly indicated for pedestrian crossing by lines or other markings on the surface. Young advised that parking is prohibited 20' from a marked or unmarked crosswalk. Finkelson confirmed that there is already no parking in place per this statute and the parked car off 41st Ave is parked illegally. Young agreed, but she feels this is a very unknown statute and drivers do not know to park 20' from an intersection. Finkelson asked if the police could be called to ticket illegally parked cars. Young advised that the 20' does not come into effect where there is no sidewalk, it comes into effect only when there is sidewalk at the intersection. Finkelson feels that instead of prohibiting parking where it's already prohibited, we should mark all crosswalks. Captain Markham asked if we could yellow curb the intersections. Young advised we're trying to get away from the yellow curb because these are covered with snow 4-5 months out of the year. She feels this is such an obscure statute, drivers are not going to realize that if there is sidewalk present, they must park 20' from the intersection. So, she feels signage is required.

Finkelson feels we're removing traffic calming by eliminating the parking, and having drivers cross the street makes it more hazardous for pedestrians in that area. He is against the no parking. Davis is in support of the no parking as it would help emergency vehicles get through and still maintain parking on the south side. This is a priority road for public safety and the no parking is an extension of that.

Motion by Davis to designate No Parking on the North Side of 41st Avenue from Monroe Street to Jefferson Street and on the South Side of 41st Avenue from Jefferson Street to 30' East. No second. Motion dies for lack of a second.

OLD BUSINESS

None

REPORTS

City Engineer

1. MN STATE STATUTE CHAPTER 169. TRAFFIC REGULATIONS

There were no further questions or comments on this item.

2. REQUESTS CONCERNING TRAFFIC ISSUES

A property owner at the corner of 41st Ave and Arthur St requested that the 2-way stop sign be changed to a 4-way stop sign at this corner. Currently there is a "Cross Traffic Does Not Stop" sign at the intersection. Red flashing lights were also installed on the stop signs to draw drivers' attention to them. The Police Department reviewed the accident records for the previous five years. There were two accidents in 2019 and one in 2020. The MUTCD guidelines for a 4-way stop state that there needs to be five or more reported crashes in a 12-month period that could be corrected by a multi-way stop. There was also a comment that the accidents involved primarily southbound and westbound traffic. Staff looked at the intersection two times. One time there were no cars parked on the east side of Arthur St and the visibility was good for oncoming traffic. The second time there were cars parked on the east side of Arthur St and this did block visibility somewhat. So rather than change to a 4-way stop which is not warranted, if the Traffic Commission would like to take further action, they could designate no parking on the east side of Arthur St. Finkelson asked about designating no parking 20' from every intersection to keep visibility clear. Young advised that in this case, the parked cars on the east side of Arthur St that obstructed visibility were actually further up the block. Staff would probably need to do an engineering study.

3. PUBLIC MEETINGS

- A. There are two public meetings coming up. One is the open house for the 37th Ave Reconstruction Project from Central Ave to Stinson Blvd. The design is nearing completion. The open house will primarily be addressing stormwater improvements—there are some rain gardens and tree trenches. They would like to hear from residents regarding what they would be willing to maintain in their boulevard areas.

The other meeting is an invitation from MnDOT to "share your vision" for University Ave (TH 47) and Central Ave (TH 65). They are holding some in-person meetings and some virtual meetings to hear from residents. Davis advised he shows the next meeting being an in-person meeting on July 20 from 3-5 pm at the Columbia Heights High School.

B. CHANGE IN STAFF LIASON

Young advised she is retiring the end of July and this is her last meeting as staff liaison. Mr. Sulmaan Khan has accepted the Assistant City Engineer position. Mr. Khan worked for MnDOT prior to accepting the position with the City of Columbia Heights.

Police Chief

None

Commissioners

None

ADJOURNMENT

Motioned by Finkelson, seconded by Ciesynski to adjourn the meeting at 6:39 p.m. Motion passed unanimously.