

City of Kalamazoo  
TRAFFIC BOARD MEETING  
Minutes  
May 12, 2016

Members Present: Jim Hoekstra, Traffic Engineer  
Rebekah Kik, City Planner  
Matt Johnson, City Engineer

Members Absent: Vernon Coakley, Captain, Public Safety  
James Baker, Director, Public Services

City Staff: Amy Thomas, Recording Secretary

Guests: Sonja VanderVeen, Central City Parking,  
Elaine Carroll, St. Vincent DePaul,  
Michael Flynn, Byce & Associates  
Ian Kennedy, Warner, Norcross & Judd LLP  
Michael Emmons, Diocese of Kalamazoo.

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Hoekstra advised that a quorum of members was not present at 2 p.m. Therefore, a vote could not be taken on the agenda item but a discussion could take place.

**2. ROLL CALL**

Mr. Hoekstra and Ms. Kik were present at 2 p.m.

**3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

There were no changes to the May 12, 2016 Traffic Board Agenda.

**4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES (April 14, 2016)**

There were no changes to the April 14, 2016 Traffic Board Minutes.

**5. NEW BUSINESS**

**a. Eleanor Street Parking.**

- This request pertains to the section of Eleanor from Old Orchard Place to Westnedge.
- Mr. Hoekstra stated that City Commissioner Anderson requested this change due to concerns regarding child safety and the playground nearby.
- Ms. Carroll mentioned that the kids are inside the fence.

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- Mr. Hoekstra stated that the City can't install "children at play" signs. "Playground ahead" signs on Eleanor and Old Orchard might be an option.
- The previous changes were approved at the February 5, 2015 Traffic Board meeting: no parking the north side of Eleanor Street and ninety-minute parking from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. on the south side of Eleanor Street. The current request is for removal of parking on the south side of Eleanor Street.
- Ms. Kik stated that no one has been hurt but Commissioner Anderson feels there is potential for someone being hurt.
- Guests present were involved in the last parking change request. Ms. Carroll advised that the President of St. Vincent DePaul was unable to attend the Traffic Board meeting and he requested that she attend on his behalf. She inquired as to how many people signed the petition. Mr. Hoekstra stated that three property owners signed the petition.
- Ms. Carroll observed that there is no gate from the play area that would lead the kids out onto Eleanor Street. Mr. Emmons responded that there is a gate past St. Vincent DePaul and into the playground area.
- Mr. Flynn advised that it is a 42" aluminum fence that extends from the building to the corner of the property. There is a controlled gate near the barrier-free ramp.
- At one time there was no-parking on the south side of the street. The north side of the street was interrupted by a series of driveways. The Diocese petitioned the City to reverse that, thinking it would be beneficial to have more parking on the south side of the street. The duration of parking was reduced from all-day to 90-minute.
- This change helped provide parking for the retail customers at St. Vincent DePaul. It also provided easy access for visitors to the park to safely off-load passengers into the curb lawn or barrier-free area and then go through the controlled gate to the playground. The entrance to the playground is clearly marked by a pavilion/pagoda structure.
- Mr. Flynn stated that the previous request was for more parking but less duration of time and to provide easier access for people going to the park. No one is dashing out through the gate because of the controlled access. The gate is closed during recess. He knows that because he volunteers at the playground. Mr. Kennedy is a volunteer at the playground as well.
- Mr. Kennedy commented that people were parking on Eleanor all day before the previous request was granted. The intention of the 90-minute parking was to provide more parking for the park and for retail use.
- Mr. Emmons stated that the Eleanor House had unauthorized people parking in their lot just past Eleanor so the street parking has helped them too.
- Mr. Flynn confirmed that the gate is open after school hours. Mr. Emmons commented that if access to the green space is limited, that defeats the purpose of having it open after hours for the community.
- Ms. Kik commented that if cars are parked on the street that would provide a buffer for pedestrian activity. Access to the park from those parking spaces is important. The Commissioner who brought the request was not present at the meeting. It sounds like the parking has been a positive thing for the neighborhood.

- Mr. Emmons advised that there is handicap access for people coming to the park. The request is well-intended but counter to current thinking. To not have parking would be counter to what the Commissioner is trying to achieve.
- Mr. Kennedy suggested that the commissioner come to the school to discuss his concerns.
- Mr. Hoekstra suggested watching this area more closely and pursuing the request at a later date if there are issues. Maybe playground signs would address the concerns.
- Ms. Kik suggested that maybe the commissioner has seen issues the Traffic Board is not aware of.
- Ms. Carroll commented that there was no representative from the Eleanor House present at the meeting. There have been no incidents that she is aware of.
- 2:22 p.m. – Mr. Johnson arrived and provided quorum.
- Ms. Kik commented that she would be hesitant to have a mid-block crossing because that would provide unexpected pedestrian movement. Pedestrian crossings are typically at the end of the block. A walking tour with the applicant might be helpful for clarification.
- Mr. Emmons mentioned there is a handicap parking space on Eleanor, which is important to St. Vincent DePaul.
- Mr. Flynn stated that he works closely with SARA (Stuart Area Restoration Association). With their support, there is an area to off-load kids going to the park.
- Mr. Hoekstra stated that a quorum of members was now present. **The Traffic board was in favor of postponing this agenda item to await further information from the applicant.**

#### **b. Monroe Street Parking Change Petition**

- Mr. Hoekstra advised that he received a petition from the owner of Henderson Castle. He owns all the property on that block.
- The request is for no-parking on the west side of Monroe from W. Main to Grant. The applicant made the request because parked cars on Monroe St. cause undue traffic congestion.
- The applicant attempted to remedy this problem by requesting that people exiting the Henderson Castle property turn right only but that has not provided a solution.
- People parking on the west side of Monroe are potentially customers of Henderson Castle.
- The property opposite of Henderson Castle is City property so that does not factor into the petition.
- **The request was unanimously approved by the Traffic Board.**

#### **6. OLD BUSINESS**

None

#### **7. MISCELLANEOUS COMMENTS OR CONCERNS**

None

**8. NEXT MEETING**

The next Traffic Board meeting is scheduled for (June 9, 2016). All agenda items for that meeting are due to Mr. Hoekstra by (June 2, 2016).

**9. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

Submitted by:  Date: 1-9-17  
Recording Secretary

Approved by:  Date: 1/9/17  
Traffic Engineer