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OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

June 18, 2019 | 6 p.m.

City of Powell Municipal Building Council Chambers | 47 Hall Street

Attendance: Councilmember Brian Lorenz, Brendan Newcomb, Melissa Riggins, Tom Counts and Daniel Swartwout; Mayor Jon Bennehoof; Citizen Representatives Heather Gonzalez and Ryan Herchenroether; City Manager Steve Lutz, Interim Chief of Police Stephen Hrytzik, City Engineer Chris Huber, Assistant City Engineer John Moorehead, Development Director David Betz, and Communication Director Megan Canavan; and other interested parties.

I. FOUR CORNERS TURN RESTRICTIONS PUBLIC FORUM

The Committee held a public forum to discuss whether or not to extend the time frame for restricted left turns at the Olentangy and Liberty Street intersection. Many people attended the forum and provided feedback. There was also feedback submitted via email in advance of the meeting.

Ed Cooper

I remember when there were four stop signs at the intersection. I'm not opposed at all to banning left turns at the intersection. It would be easier if we could get Grace Drive extended to the south. I was driving through on a weekend at 3 p.m. and traffic was insane.

Jim Biersdorf

I'm not opposed to the 24/7 ban. I live in downtown Powell. If it makes things move smoother, I'm for it. We need to make improvements to Hall Street.

Stacey Haney – Business Owner in Downtown Powell

I'm opposed to the 24/7 ban. This 24/7 ban would be putting a Band-Aid on the situation. Not all sides of the intersection create the same problem. Going east on Olentangy Street is the most challenging and creates the biggest backup. She used the example of driving to Annie's Wine Cottage. Someone coming from the south would need to turn left on Murphy Parkway and then a right on Olentangy Street. This is creating more issues. I cannot imagine redirecting people to Murphy Parkway to get people to businesses/destinations along West Olentangy Street. Several projects need to be done to improve the infrastructure. What if we extended Depot Street through Village Green Park? I see us putting the cart before the horse and it seems reckless. We need to do things to improve the downtown before implementing a 24/7 ban.

Brian Jaffe – Retreat Subdivision

I'm for an extended ban. We've done a lot of good work up to this point. I think some signage would help if we extend the time. I don't know about 24/7. If we're trying to encourage motorists to use the bypasses, wouldn't be wise to increase the speed to 30 or 35 on Murphy Parkway and Bennett Parkway?

Chris Huber – City Engineer

Murphy Parkway and Bennett Parkway are both designed to be 35 MPH; however, our policy has made these roads 25 MPH. We made Murphy Parkway 25 MPH so it could be aligned with the same speed as Bennett Parkway.

Mike Shaw

I'm fine with extending the turns. I have concerns with the pedestrian crossing at the Grace Drive and Liberty Street intersection. I've noticed cars running red lights and people failing to yield to pedestrians. Cars are not necessarily looking for people. It does help that there is a signal there now. It might be helpful to have additional crossing signals activated, such as a rapid flashing beacon at the intersection. There is a small yield to pedestrian sign. If we extend the hours of the no left turn, Grace Drive will likely get more traffic.

Patti Mills

If we extend the time frame, we will need to communicate this to Olentangy Local School District.

Mike Linehan

I support the extension of the left turn ban. I don't know if it needs to be 24/7. Is there a plan to do another traffic study to see if Murphy Parkway has improved the traffic flow?

Nicole Scott

Do we have any ways to communicate with some of the GPS/mapping to help re-route traffic?

Jon Bennehoof

I make a point to go through the Four Corners every day. The left hand turners are those that start the clog and delay of traffic flow. Incremental improvement can help. If we wait for perfection, we will never get there. He encouraged everyone to watch the Stockholm Study on Ted Talk.

What are the next steps?

The Committee will take all the comments and discuss during the next meeting in July. They will make a decision during the next Operations Committee meeting and then take it to City Council in August. Councilman Lorenz said he would anticipate a decision being made in the next 90 days.

II. MAY MEETING MINUTES

The minutes from the May 18, 2019 Operations Committee Meeting were approved.

III. REVIEW OF MAY 5TH STREET MARKET CLOSURE

The Powell Street Market was held from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Sunday, May 8 in downtown Powell. This was the first time Olentangy Street was closed between Depot Street and Liberty Street for the market. The Greater Powell Area Chamber of Commerce – Street Market Committee was able to use existing detour signage that was in place for a road construction project. During the Operations Committee meeting in May, staff members were asked to see what other communities do for event road closures, how they detour traffic around their city and what signage is used.

The City of Worthington closes their main state route a couple times a year for special events. Communication Director Megan Canavan held a phone meeting with Anne Brown, the Public Information Officer with the City of Worthington, in regards to their Old Worthington Market Day. This event is held every year in late September in downtown Worthington, along High Street, from SR 161 to South Street. On Market Day, Worthington's largest one-day festival, artisans gather on the streets of downtown Worthington. The event typically attracts more than 20,000 visitors.

Key Takeaways

- Traffic is detoured locally through neighborhoods rather than using a state route detour plan.
- Staff communicates the closure to the Central Ohio Transit Authority (COTA) and the general public.
- The Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) is not notified due to using a local detour.
- Existing detour signage owned by the City is used to notify the public.

ACTION ITEM: The Committee would like to discuss this in more detail at their meeting in July.

IV. CITY'S GOOD NEIGHBOR INITIATIVE

The City's Public Service Department continues to struggle to find adequate storage locations for equipment. The Department would like to store equipment at the former site of the barn in Adventure Park. As part of the Good Neighbor Initiative, they're considering placing a fence around the area where the old barn was located. This will help create a natural screen area that would hide snow plows and storage equipment. Grove City has done something similar for storage. The cost estimate is \$40,000 for the fencing, gravel lot and drainage.

ACTION ITEM: The Committee would like to continue having discussions regarding this initiative during their meeting in July.

V. SUMMER OUTDOOR CONCERT SERIES

Communication Director Megan Canavan updated the Committee and said that staff is still trying to secure sponsorship funding for this new event series. Their first priority is to fund their current events for this year.

ACTION ITEM: Staff will pursue funding for an outdoor concert series in 2020.

VI. MASSAGE ESTABLISHMENT REGULATIONS

City Manager Steve Lutz presented follow-up information from the last Operations Committee meeting. Constance Piwtorak spoke about working with the City of Delaware on their legislation that was recently approved. The City of Delaware will review establishments on a case-by-case basis. They will have a permit fee and will be reviewed by City Council. Delaware went in a different direction with their ordinance. They come to the City to obtain the zoning permit. Those businesses that have a permit are subject to inspections by the zoning or building department. They've also chosen to exclude certain businesses, such as chiropractors that may offer massage therapy.

ACTION ITEM: City Manager Steve Lutz will invite the City's legal counsel to attend the Operations Committee meeting in July.

ADJOURNMENT

Having no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 7:25 p.m.