Traffic Commission

Meeting Minutes

March 11, 2021 @ 6:00pm

602 S. Main St, Joplin, MO 64801, 5th Floor Council Study

Roll Call:

- Members Present: Robert Schroer, Trevor Frerer, Michael Mayer, James Fleischaker, Cassandra Maxfield
- City Staff Present: Sgt. Jared Delzell; Dakota Rusk, Civil Engineer; Dan Johnson, Assistant Director of Public Works

Approval of Minutes:

- Approval of the Minutes of the November 12, 2020 meeting and the January 14, 2021 meeting.

Discussion Topics:

- Concerns about Zora between Main and Range Line from Mr. Hull
  - Mr. Hull states there is a speeding issue and he would like to discuss the speed limit itself.
  - He states that it is a different experience as a pedestrian rather than being in a vehicle.
  - He asks that the committee consider a speed limit that is more appropriate for a residential neighborhood.
  - Mr. Hull states that it is a safety issue, especially at the crosswalk and it is difficult for him to have a conversation.
  - He says that you rarely see anyone outside, especially children.
  - He proposes dropping the speed limit to 35 and increasing the enforcement.
  - Michael Mayer asks if there is a sidewalk to which Mr. Hull responds there is.
  - Mr. Hull also talks about how dangerous the crosswalks are at St. Louis and Zora.
  - A question is asked about if there is a difference between the stretch from Main to St. Louis and from St. Louis to Range Line as far as people having houses facing the street.
  - It's proposed to consider lowering the speed limit from St. Louis to Range Line.
  - Sgt. Delzell states that they place enforcement based on collision numbers and Zora is not a high collision roadway, but he does make sure to go through there every day. He also says he gets on average 2-5 speeding complaints a day and he has 10 traffic officers. He says they focus the most on school zones. He states resources must be used more towards roads with high collision rates, but he does try to balance them.
  - Sgt. Delzell says that he collected 48 hours' worth of data and 46 MPH was the 85th percentile.
  - Michael Mayer asks if Sgt. Delzell gets any additional officers if he is going to assign them to traffic to which Sgt. Delzell responds that it takes a year to get an officer patrolling after being hired and he is only short one traffic officer.
  - Sgt. Delzell states that pedestrian fatalities are one of their biggest concerns and he will try to give some extra attention there.
  - Dan Johnson says that we do have a policy on speed limits and a lot of it is based on safety and level of service with safety coming first.
  - Mr. Johnson also states that the City must provide for all transportation modes and that includes cyclists and pedestrians.
  - Mr. Johnson says the bike lane helps put the sidewalk further away from the traffic and we follow a set of guidelines.
  - Mr. Mayer asks what the policy says the speed limit should be to which Mr. Johnson responds that the City set it based on what the policy says. Mr. Johnson states many factors go into it such as how wide the lanes are and if there is a bike lane or not and says the City could set it higher.
  - Sgt. Delzell states that he doesn't think lowering the speed limit will make a difference, but they will get out there and do some heavy enforcement.

- Mr. Hull states that it seems like the priority is placed on vehicular traffic and not on the people that live there and that he doesn't feel like the community is well served by following the guidelines the City has in place.
- Mr. Hull asks that if the speed limit can not be lowered, that other traffic calming procedures take place.
- Mr. Rusk says there has been a push to take more of a holistic approach but unfortunately that wasn't considered when most of the roads were built and Joplin is more car centric. He says moving forward he hopes to see different designs and solutions.
- Mr. Mayer asks if we can treat the crossing as a school zone by lowering the speed limit during certain times. Sgt. Delzell responds that they will enforce what the ordinance says.
- Sgt. Delzell says that two days a week they do zero tolerance enforcement on high collision areas and they will add Zora to that. He also says in response to Mr. Mayer's question that people don't slow down for school zones as is so he does not think that would be an effective solution.
- Mr. Frerer talks about how if Zora is intended to become a pipeline, the speed will just increase instead of decreasing. He asks at what point would the speed limit be excessive enough to require some sort of accommodation for the crosswalk such as a pedestrian bridge.
- Mr. Johnson responds that this would be referred to as grade separations and it has a lot of guidelines. He says that it is easy to count cars but more difficult to count pedestrians on trails, but we do have a gadget that works and will focus on what trails are the busiest.

- East 26th Street speed study results
  - Mr. Rusk says that the City put out their speed study devices on 26th street east of Connecticut and with a 25 MPH speed limit eastbound the 85th percentile was 37 MPH and westbound the 85th percentile was 33 MPH.
  - Mr. Frerer states that he thinks this road should be a 35 MPH speed limit since it is three lanes wide.
  - Mr. Rusk states that as far as traffic calming measures, we could potentially do speed humps, but we must take into consideration the curves and that it is a snowplow route. He says that they could take out the turning lane, but he believes people would not be in favor of that. He also says that narrowing the road is an option as the speed drivers go at is how they perceive the road. He says this would realistically be the most feasible.
  - Mr. Rusk also talks about temporarily putting up barricades to see how that goes before committing to narrowing the road. He also discusses increasing the speed limit but the issue he sees with it is that most of the road is residential use.
  - Mr. Frerer suggests raising the speed limit where the road is wider and keeping the speed limit the same where it narrows.
  - Sgt. Delzell suggests using the rubber speed humps and being able to remove them if there are issues with the public. He believes people will find a different route.
  - Mrs. Maxfield asks if the City could put a dip in the road. Mr. Rusk says the dips in the road are for stormwater and if we are going to do something vertically, we would do the speed humps.
  - Mr. Rusk says that we are going to be ordering the rubber speed humps soon and then we could potentially try them on this road. He hopes to get them ordered soon and as long as COVID doesn't affect it he expects to get them late Spring.
  - Mr. Rusk also says he thinks the rubber speed humps are better than the asphalt ones because they are easier on cars.

Other Business:

- Mr. Mayer says that they were talking about trying to get an overpass over the railroad tracks on 32nd street.
- Mr. Rusk states that preliminary plans have been approved by MODOT to put a signal on 32nd. He says this is one of our projects in line for grant funding, but grants have been scarce.
- Mr. Mayer says southbound on Murphy at 15th, the left turn lane needs to be painted again.
- Mrs. Maxfield asks if the road by Sam's Club is something that the City maintains, and Mr. Johnson responds that it is a private road. He says the City plans to take over that road, but it will need to be brought up to City standards.

- Mr. Mayer says that there are streetlights out along Murphy. Mr. Rusk says that most of those are maintained by Liberty.
- Mr. Johnson says that the plan is on all the main roads to have those streetlights owned by the City and the City has already added in 700 streetlights on the 44th and Connecticut widening project.

Michael E. Mayer

Michael Mayer, Traffic Commission Chair

Dakota Rusk

Dakota Rusk, Traffic Engineer