

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY, HEALTH & TRAFFIC

February 6, 2024 at 6:00 PM

Chairman Vincent called the meeting to order.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen Vincent, Morgan, Kantor, Barry, Goonan

Messrs.: K. Clarke

1. The Traffic Division has submitted an agenda which needs to be addressed:

2-HOUR PARKING

On Chauncey Avenue, on the whole circumference of the cul-de-sac

Alderman Morgan

*On motion of **Alderman Morgan**, duly seconded by **Alderman Kantor**, it was voted to approve.*

2. Communication from Kristen Clarke, Traffic Engineer, regarding a request for an all-way stop with vehicle activated flashing stop signs at the Union Street and Campbell Street intersection.

(Note: A review of the intersection is attached.)

Alderman Barry stated Kristen I spoke with you yesterday in reference to this, and I know we've spoke in reference to this in the past. Can you give us a brief synopsis of what your thoughts are on this and also the cost?

Kristen Clarke, Traffic Engineer, stated we have received numerous requests over the years to look at this intersection. The last time we did a formal study was in 2019, which was included in your agenda packet. It looked at evaluating whether an all-way stop or a traffic signal, those were the two main things, met warrant criteria established by the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). At the time, as the study showed that none of the warrant criteria was met. The warrant is based on crash history and traffic volume. We checked current traffic volume and it was similar to what it was in 2019. It is anticipated that the warrant criteria is still not met today. We do have some concerns regarding putting in an all-way stop when speeding is the major concern. The MUTCD says that stop signs should not be installed for speed control. Our biggest concern is if people are really going 40 MPH on Union Street and someone on Campbell thinks it is their turn and it is not, or if someone flies through a stop sign at a high rate of speed then the crashes could be worse. That is our biggest concern with installing an all-way stop.

Alderman Barry stated that would be a three-way stop.

Ms. Clarke stated yes.

Alderman Barry asked how many accidents have there been over ten years.

Ms. Clarke stated we looked at three years. The warrant criteria requires looking at three years, so over that time there were six crashes. Two of those were susceptible to improvement with the installation of an all-way stop; a right-angle type of crash. The other crashes were single vehicle crashes into telephone poles, and one side-swipe of a left turn hitting the person coming out from Campbell.

Alderman Barry asked are you in favor of this or not.

Ms. Clarke stated we don't think it meets the warrant criteria. If we were to move forward, we do think that the flashing stop signs are something that should be considered to draw additional attention for traffic coming on Union Street so it doesn't get missed. We'd recommend re-stripping southbound Union Street so it only has a single lane. Currently there is a left turn lane and a through lane. By putting them into a single lane, it creates less conflict over whose turn it is to go, the left turn or the southbound through. It will increase delays and it could increase noise of people coming to a stop and speeding up when they get past it. It doesn't meet criteria, but if it is something the Board wants, you have the authority to change the placement of traffic signal devices.

Alderman Barry asked how much would it cost for the flashing lights.

Ms. Clarke stated the flashing lights on all three approaches would be \$16,000.

Alderman Barry stated we do have a hiring freeze right now. You are aware of that.

Alderman Morgan moved to approve the request contingent upon funding in the FY25 budget. **Alderman Kantor** duly seconded the motion. Chairman Vincent called for a vote. The motion carried with **Alderman Goonan** and **Alderman Barry** being duly recorded in opposition.

3. Communication from the Traffic Engineer regarding costs for signage upgrades and installation of an overhead flashing light at the intersection of Webster Street and Smyth Road.

Alderman Morgan moved to approve the signage upgrades and installation of an overhead flashing light at the intersection, contingent upon funding in the FY25 budget. **Alderman Kantor** duly seconded the motion.

Alderman Barry asked what would the cost be for these.

Ms. Clarke stated on the second page of the memo that I provided there are various alternatives that Alderman Morgan had asked us to look into. It goes from replacing the existing intersection warning signs to replacing them with dangerous intersection warning signs. It is something that could be done within the DPW budget if it is just replacing static signs. We did provide the crashes over the last ten years. There were ten crashes within a 10-year period. In the last six years there have been two crashes. There are a lot of intersections in the city that have had more crashes. If we choose to do a dangerous sign, they might pop up everywhere in the city. There are some hard sight lines at the intersection, which is why there are intersection warning signs. We

have talked to Alderman Morgan and we're looking at options for trying to create more of a T intersection there to improve sight lines at the intersection itself so that people coming to a stop on Webster have better visibility but we're still trying to figure out exactly where our right-of-way is with our grading to see if we can make our realignment of that intersection work. The cost of flashing signs, depending on whether you want them flashing 24/7 or only when a vehicle approaches, varies. The prices are all included here, up to the highest priced item that was requested – a flashing three-way light over the intersection which has to be done on a mast arm because of the geometry of the intersection and the existing overhead wires. With the grade we can't sneak through them on wood poles on both sides. The cost estimate we got from a contractor was \$32,000.

Alderman Barry asked do you have money in your budget to pay for this.

Ms. Clarke stated we do not have money in the budget.

Alderman Barry asked do you know where they are going to get funding, Mr. Chairman. I guess you can include item two also.

Alderman Morgan stated we will find the money somewhere if we have it, and if we don't then we don't. It is one of those things that we will look for.

Alderman Barry stated so maybe we can start hiring people.

Alderman Goonan stated Kristen, I hate to put you in these positions because it is really tough because you don't want to make any alderman upset. I trust you as our Traffic Engineer to do these studies. For that particular intersection, it is essentially half in my ward. I haven't gotten any complaints, but I admit it is a funky angle there. I've been through it a million times. Is there any way to rework the angle to make it so that sight lines are better?

Ms. Clarke stated we had our surveyor wrap up some plans today of where the right-of-way is so we can look at the geometry. We have looked at it from a 2D perspective and think we can make some improvements in that intersection. We still need to look at the grading and make sure we can tie it in and work with the property owner on the corner because they do have an existing rock wall and there is guardrail in the right-of-way that would have to be relocated.

Alderman Goonan stated I'd like to see if we can take a harder look at this intersection. It is essentially half in my ward. I'd like to check with the locals to see if there is an issue with flashing lights on Smyth Road. I think the city has a little more to do on this. Bring it back to us saying I think this is the proper way to go. I'd like to hear my constituents out and hear you guys out once you make a plan to address the shape of that intersection.

Alderman Morgan stated I talked to all of the neighbors, and they are all for it. They want that.

Alderman Goonan stated I'd like to take a cheaper way out of it. I think we've talked about it in the past informally. I didn't think it was going to come up right now. I think we

can take a look at this again to see if we can work it a little bit better rather than investing whatever it is into this intersection.

Ms. Clarke stated with any of the flashing lights there will be recurring maintenance and operational costs to pay for power and batteries if it is a solar powered light. There is some additional maintenance.

Alderman Goonan asked how many accidents have we had in the last ten years there.

Ms. Clarke stated ten crashes.

Alderman Goonan asked do you consider it a hazardous intersection. I know we have a lot of hazardous intersections out there.

Ms. Clarke stated if you are coming southbound it is hard to see the intersection of Webster Street but in terms of crash numbers it would not be on a top list in the city.

*Chairman Vincent called for a vote. The motion passed with **Alderman Barry** and **Alderman Goonan** being duly recorded in opposition.*

*There being no further business, on motion of **Alderman Morgan**, duly seconded by **Alderman Kantor**, it was voted to adjourn.*

A True Record. Attest.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matthew Normand". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Clerk of Committee