

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY, HEALTH & TRAFFIC

July 2, 2024 at 5:30 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:

STOP SIGN

On Blackstone Street at Overland Street, southwest corner

Alderman Burkush

CROSSWALK

On North Street, west of Ash Street

Alderman Goonan

NO PARKING ANYTIME

On Chestnut Street, west side, from Harrison Street to Prospect Street

Alderman Long

On Merrow Street, west side, from Irwin Drive to a point 155 feet north

Alderman Morgan

RESCIND NO PARKING ANYTIME

On Chestnut Street, west side, from Prospect Street to a point 140 feet north (ORD 10663)

Alderman Long

On Merrow Street, west side, from Irwin Drive to a point 65 feet north (ORD 8044)

Alderman Morgan

SLOW CHILDREN

On Belmont Street at Fiske Street

Alderman Morgan

Alderman Barry stated I am going to support this but I agree with Kristen Clarke in reference to the Slow Children signs and I will give you an example. A few years ago, there was a lady in Ward 10 that wanted a Slow sign. It was a small street and it was a cut through street off of Varney, Milford Street. So I put the sign up a week after she asked. She called me up about a month later screaming at me saying I can't believe you haven't put the sign up yet. I said can you do me a favor and go down there where you told me to put it up? They don't see these signs. She lives on the street and she didn't see it. Kristen, could you come up to speak to this? I don't have a problem doing this but we have to consider that unfortunately signs aren't going to do anything.

Kristen Clarke, Traffic Engineer, stated in general we find that almost all streets in the city have children on them and why should you look in some wards and not others. I will say between what I get from you guys and the See Click app, we have had at least 20-25 of this already this year. If we start accepting them, we do have to think long-term about do you want these to come to you every time we get a request? If people

don't see kids out playing, they start to ignore the signs. That is our general position on them.

Alderman Goonan stated those are good common sense reasons why these types of signs aren't effective. I told my constituents that this is what the Traffic Engineer came back with and these are the reasons why. They were very understanding. I think that if we start putting signs up...I don't know about you guys but in Ward 2 Kristen is on my hotline because I am calling her all the time about signs. If she says it is really not appropriate, I think she does a lot of background on all of these signs in every situation. I think she does a great job and if she says they are not appropriate, we should take that recommendation because we don't want signs on every street corner.

Ms. Clarke stated they do make those signs that look like children that you can put out at the end of your driveway. Something like that could be so much more effective if you put it out when your kids are out playing because there is actually a warning and they may see the children and slow down whereas just a generic slow children sign at the start of the street, unfortunately, does tend to get ignored.

Alderman Barry stated you are right and I will tell you that when I was working in Auburn as a police officer I found myself, even though I was going very slow because there were a lot of big residential neighborhoods but I automatically slowed down when the people had those signs in their yard saying drive as if your child lived here. It goes a long way. I know that even for me in the cruiser, I slowed down even more when I saw those portable signs.

Chairman Vincent stated I understand what everybody is saying, I really do. When it comes to the Slow Children signs, what is a better approach to this? I know you can tell your constituents to go and buy one of those little signs for your children but is it where we are putting the signs because if you tell me they are not really working that puts weight on the city when we are putting a sign up and it is not working. What is our fix for that?

Ms. Clarke replied they are not recommended by the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control because of this; because they don't provide a location of where the children might be playing and they don't tell you a safe speed to be traveling at. In general, any type of children or playground kind of sign is recommended at a playground where you might have kids crossing regularly to go to a playground or a facility, not just someone's house where every once in a while there might be children out playing.

Alderman Morgan stated I appreciate what everyone is saying and I totally agree that if we start one it could potentially turn into more but this specific spot, where you cross Webster and go up north on Belmont, at the intersection it literally sticks right out in front of your face. I live there and I see it every day. The kids are out playing and people are speeding. There have to be exceptions to situations around the city when we see something and I think this is one of those. I wouldn't want it everywhere of course but I think when you come up on Belmont it is going to be right in your face and help with the speeding from that standpoint. That is why I believe this is important.

Alderman Goonan stated I get it and I would like to say to everyone who calls me about a sign that hey I think that is great but I just don't think that makes any sense because I know I am going to start getting calls from my constituents saying well you told me the Traffic Engineer said the sign is not appropriate and the traffic standards we go by say the same thing. I don't think it is appropriate for us as a committee to have the Traffic Engineer here telling us...I think you did some background on that street also and car counts and all of that. Every time I ask Kristen to take a look at something, she takes a pretty in-depth look in my opinion. This is just opening up a big can of worms.

Alderman Morgan stated I agree and I think Kristen's reports do come back and give you an idea of what is happening but there is also common sense. People live there and it is their houses and they see the traffic and it just comes down to common sense. I think this is one of those situations that warrants the sign.

Alderman Barry stated I get it Alderman Morgan but everyone in the city is going to say well it is common sense to put one in our neighborhood and it is common sense to put one on this street and that street and the other street because they live there and they are concerned. We are all concerned but when the signs don't do exactly what they are supposed to do, we are just going to have signs throughout the city. Just like I said with the resident in Ward 10, she asked for a sign and it was put up a week later and she didn't even notice it. A month later she called and said why didn't you put that sign up. She didn't notice it and she was the one that asked for it and she lives there.

Alderman Morgan moved to approve the traffic agenda. **Alderman Kantor** duly seconded the motion. Chairman Vincent called for a vote. The motion carried with Aldermen Barry and Goonan duly recorded in opposition.

2. Communication from Chris Goodnow, Parking Manager, requesting the parking rate for the Myrna Lot be set to a standard rate of \$1.00 per hour.

On motion of **Alderman Morgan**, duly seconded by **Alderman Barry**, it was voted to approve and direct the Parking Division to create a draft Ordinance Amendment to be referred to the Committee on Bills on Second Reading for technical review.

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

A True Record. Attest.



Clerk of Committee