

## **Minutes of the Public Works Committee**

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The Public Works Committee met on Tuesday, March 15, 2011. The meeting was held in the Main Conference Room at Leawood City Hall.

### Members in Attendance:

James Azeltine, Committee Chair-Councilmember Ward 4,  
Andrew Osman, Councilmember Ward 1,  
Jim Rawlings, Councilmember Ward 2,  
John Burge,  
Ken Conrad,  
Jon Grams,  
Marsha Monica,  
Kip Strauss

### Committee Members absent:

Adam Abrams,  
Michael DeMent,  
Carrie Rezac, Councilmember Ward 3

### Staff in Attendance:

Sgt. Mark Hackathorn, Traffic Supervisor, Leawood Police Department  
Joe Johnson, Director, Public Works Department  
David Ley, City Engineer, Public Works Department  
Julie Stasi, Administrative Services Manager, Public Works Department

Chair Azeltine called the meeting to order at 7:30 AM.

- **Old Business-Past Minutes.**

Marsha Monica motioned to approve the Minutes of the February 15, 2011 Meeting.

Jon Grams seconded the motion to approve as written.

All present members were in favor. Motion passed.

- **New Business-Review request to replace YIELD signs with STOP signs at 121<sup>st</sup> Terrace & Wenonga** (City Council assignment-February 21, 2011)

Joe Johnson advised the City Council had received a request for Stop signs to be placed where the current Yield signs are at 121<sup>st</sup> Terrace & Wenonga. Residents concerned emailed the department and their letters were included in the packet for review by the Committee and staff had a pretty detailed summary for review.

Joe Johnson described the traffic counts that were taken. When a request is made like this or when someone wants to put in signs, change signs or install traffic signals generally the first things we do is work with the Police Department and they set up their stealth unit so they can

measure speed, volume (measuring it in a single direction). In this case the unit was set up south of 121<sup>st</sup> Terrace on Wenonga, measuring North bound traffic. It also does an average daily count of daily traffic for the time the trailer is set up. In addition to that, Public Works sets up traffic counters and there are three sheets in the packet with that outcome. The posted speed limit is 25mph at this location. PW placed counters at all four sides of the intersection, so you see what is measured north bound north of the intersection, north bound south of the intersection, (on all four corners) so we are measuring traffic as you come into the intersection and as you leave the intersection. We take the measurements and then go back to the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) and it is adopted by the Department of Transportation and Federal Highway Commission. Most cities, states, and county governments use this as a guideline with the information they collect to determine if changes, in this case, at an intersection are needed to improve either the flow of traffic or the safety of the intersection.

What you want to do is change the driving behavior

The other thing we look at is the number of accidents.

So we look at those for two things. 1) Just the pure number of accidents that have occurred at an intersection. 2) What type of accidents-what is occurring at the intersection?

Where if you put up a stop sign or a traffic signal, is that going to change the driving behaviors to minimize or control the types of accidents that are occurring at this intersection?

The bottom line, the intersection is posted at 25 mph. The eighty-fifth percentile of drivers is 29 mph; which is really good. People are staying within 5 miles of the posted speed limit. Occasionally you have one or two people that like to drive fast and you see a few of those recorded. (*The speed limit number here represents drivers going from south to north on Wenonga as you come up to 121<sup>st</sup> Terrace. The unit was 300 feet south of the intersection, so you are getting accurate speeds as drivers approach the intersection*). The good part is the 85th percentile are driving 29 mph. We had about 669 vehicles on both the north bound and south bound part of the intersection. (The sheets in the packet list a single days counts.

David Ley explains how the chart is read: The vehicle will enter the intersection and then it will exit the intersection; so everything is doubled. Codes on the data are listed as "SBN/O" which means (south bound north of the intersection) "NBS/O" is (north bound south of the intersection). He measured SBN/O then NBS/O; those are the counts that the police captured, so if you add those together it would be 420 and then 234 which is 654.

Joe Johnson shows a graph he made for better explanation.

Joe Johnson looked at the approaching traffic into the intersection. So if you are a car on 121<sup>st</sup> Terrace, you have to yield to those cars on Wenonga. Then we compare these numbers to the standards of the MUTCD (Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices). In looking at a Stop Sign, we need to have 6,000 vehicles a day on the main street (and we do not have that) and you need to have 3 more crashes reported in a 12 month period, 5 or more crashes in a 2 year period.

Sgt. Hackathorn advised we have had 2 accidents since 2005. (2 in the last 5 years).

Joe Johnson-so when we compared our numbers to the MUTCD Standards, there really is no warrant to change out the Yield signs to Stop signs. Wenonga is a 36 foot wide street. If you are east bound it probably is not a bad idea to keep the yield signs there and they are appropriate as there is a hill you are coming up to.

Sgt. Hackathorn-Last accident in May of 2009.

Joe Johnson- The driver actually did pull up, stop, pulled out and hit the car. Both accidents were where the person yielded or stopped and then was distracted and pulled out and struck something. So putting a stop sign up is not going to change the past two accidents.

Based on the criteria and what we found, it is staff's recommendation not to change the current signs.

Discussion-

Jon Grams-Wondered if the 2 or 3 people who had the concerns knew of the traffic count information.

Staff advised they did not, and it was directed to send those residents a copy of the traffic count result/summary.

Marsha Monica also spoke about the neighborhood and that she lives in the area and is familiar with the location. The bushes out there are nearer the sidewalk side. Drivers do have to pull to the top and look but part of that is because it is high.

Sgt. Hackathorn advised that on 121<sup>st</sup> Terrace going east, there are some bushes there, but if you pull up to the sign-you do not have to be out into the intersection to see. So there is a clear sign distance. The Data base goes back to 2003. (2 accidents in 8 years)

Marsha Monica was surprised the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile of drivers are only going 29 mph. As the road is a cut through and is wide.

Kip Strauss asked why is there a stop sign at 121<sup>st</sup> & Wenonga?

Marsha Monica. There also are stop signs at Aberdeen. She remembered that the neighborhood came in for a couple of the locations and asked for stop signs when the area was new and the school was going in.

Kip Strauss -Said some people may ask; what is the big deal? It's just a sign, what could it hurt? It is important for residents to understand what the impact is or may be at putting up stop signs at every location.

Joe Johnson-The one on High Drive is more understandable because that road goes right into the school. So that was probably more for the school traffic.

Marsha Monica remembers the neighborhoods coming into council on the Aberdeen one and the Wenonga one. The Council decided in favor of it at the time.

Joe Johnson-Said a lot of people like Stop signs because they think it controls speed. Generally what happens is that it irritates everybody and so they are accelerating well above the speed limit to make up for the stops. The other thing of why we use the standard--there are times when Cities will say, that's fine, we'll go ahead and put up stop signs. But if you do not pay attention and look at what is going on at the intersection in question, by putting up stop signs or other signing, you can make the intersection operate worse than it was before because you may not be addressing what is happening out there.

There is also a risk on the city's part if you modify the signing of an intersection without reviewing what is happening. That's why most jurisdictions use the MUTCD in making those determinations.

John Burge motioned for the recommendation that the Committee agree to keep the intersection the same. The location does not meet the warrants according to the standards adopted through the MUTCD / ASHTO Criteria currently used in Leawood.

Kip Strauss seconded the Motion.

All present members were in favor, Motion passed.

**Meeting adjourned at 7:55 AM.**

Minutes transcribed by Julie Stasi, Public Works Department