

MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

MEETING HELD MAY 9, 2012

The Public Works Committee met Wednesday, May 9, at 7:30 AM in the Main Conference Room at Leawood City Hall.

Committee Members in attendance:

James Azeltine, Chair and Ward 4 Councilmember
Andrew Osman, Ward 1 Councilmember
Adam Abrams
John Burge
Ken Conrad
Jon Grams

Committee Members absent:

Michael DeMent
Marsha Monica
Jim Rawlings, Ward 2 Councilmember
Carrie Rezac, Ward 3 Councilmember

Guests: (by order of sign in sheet)

Lisa Bengé, 8026 Manor, Leawood, KS 66206
Adam Tilton, 7959 Manor, Leawood, KS 66206
Mike and Erica Wren, 8017 Manor, Leawood, KS 66206
Kimberly Reene, 8021 Manor, Leawood, KS 66206
Illinois & Tracy Blasdel, 8030 Manor, Leawood, KS 66206
Carrie Mermis, 8009 Manor Road, Leawood, KS 66206

Staff in Attendance:

Joe Johnson, P.E., Director of Public Works
David Ley, P.E., City Engineer
Julie Stasi, Administrative Services Manager

- **Chair Azeltine, called the meeting to order at 7:33AM.**
Introduction of Committee Members and staff.
- **OLD BUSINESS:**
Review Previous Minutes.
Jon Grams motioned to accept the Minutes from the previous meeting of April 11, 2012.
John Burge seconded the motion. All present members were in favor.
Motion passed unanimously.
- **NEW BUSINESS:**
Review a Neighborhood Petition requesting a Cul-de-Sac in the 8000 Block of Manor Road.
Joe Johnson described the City's General Policy on streets. Advising that generally we do not close off or create a cul-de-sac on an established street. Years ago we did have a project on

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Somerset & Lee that had a 3 way intersection. High Drive was made into a cul-de-sac for intersection safety reason. Two consultants hired for the project years ago recommended the cut off to improve traffic flow and pedestrian crossing safety. At that time believes there was a lot of foot traffic for the elementary school that was west of the intersection on the north side of Somerset. Since then the City has not closed off any streets making any into a cul-de-sac.

What we did next with this request is to look at the City's Traffic Calming Policy to see how this request would fit within that policy. The Policy specifically states that placing a cul-de-sac on a street is not a recommendation for traffic calming. The other part of the Policy is to look at traffic calming and look at what impact any type of traffic calming would have to other streets. The Policy recommends against doing anything that would send traffic to alternate streets increasing the volume of traffic on a side street.

With that in mind, we had the Police Department place their Stealth Radar on the street in the area of 81st Street to see what speeds we had out there. The radar unit was in place between April 6th and April 12th of this year. The posted speed limit is 25mph. The average speed was 16.7 mph; the 85th percentile was 23 mph. Generally we look at the 85th percentile to set speed limits and also it is looked at when we do point determination for traffic calming. Speeds higher than the 85th percentile receive points. But with the 85th percentile being 23mph, which is less than the posted speed limit, when we did the scoring for it for traffic calming the street did not receive any points.

In addition, the Public Works Department went out and placed loops on Manor, 81st Street and Meadow Lane to capture traffic coming in and coming out to see where the highest volumes of traffic were coming and what direction it was coming from. We had the loops in place for 5 days capturing traffic flow. The survey indicated the highest north bound peak number volume was 24 vehicles that occurred at 7AM. We had a day that registered 30 but what was consistent with the higher volume (Peak hour measures the number of cars within a single hour). Generally we saw the highest peak hour NB Manor going to Somerset Highest was 30. Also we looked at SB traffic movement; highest peak hour for SB was in the evening at 5 PM; indicating folks coming home and we have 15 vehicles a day.

In a 5 day span the average daily traffic found for SB Manor from Somerset was 118 vehicles a day. NB an average per day was 200 vehicles using Manor to go to Somerset.

The scoring process using the City's Traffic Calming Policy (in the Policy you have to score a minimum of 30 points to be eligible for traffic calming); on Manor Road it scored just a little over 8 points. In looking at the Traffic Calming Policy, this street would not be eligible for traffic calming. The traffic is evenly distributed. In looking at the Traffic Calming Policy, if a cul-de-sac were to be placed on Manor, then you are going to take those 118 to 204 trips occurring in a day onto Meadow or you will send them onto 81st street. That would defeat the Traffic Calming Policy because the traffic would not be evened out, actually it would be increasing it at the other two points to get in and out of the subdivision.

Based on those findings, Staff's recommendation was not to place a cul-de-sac on Manor. We also spoke with Police and Fire and their opinion was the same. Their thought is any time you cut off access, that always has in their opinion a negative impact on their ability to provide emergency services as quickly as possible.

Andrew Osman asked for a comparison of the 85th Terrace analysis to this request. What was the score on that street?

Joe Johnson-Thirty-eight points (above the 30 point threshold).

Andrew Osman-The options that we gave them originally were? And what was the volume?

Joe Johnson-Options for 85th Terrace were a raised intersection, speed tables, and a modification of the intersection at 85th Terrace & State Line (and that option has some concerns). People would still cut through but they would use a different street to go north.

David Ley-The volume on 85th Terrace was approximately 1900.

Jon Grams-Is the traffic mostly the neighborhood or people cutting through or where were they from? Can we tell? Where were they going?

Joe Johnson-It all depends. There may be some cut through traffic. We would have to do a license plate count to see. When looking at distribution between SB and NB traffic, there is not a huge indicator that-you have a lot of flow through traffic going from one end to the other. It seems to be evened out at the three intersections.

Jon Grams-What was the main reason in the Petition? Traffic, speed or both?

Joe Johnson-The Petition indicated there is a development in Prairie Village that is coming in and the potential for cut-through traffic and they were indicating high speed using the street.

Andrew Osman asked Mike Wren from the neighborhood to give a brief synopsis for the group here today that is represented. Hypothetically if this were to go to a different level and there are traffic calming devices placed-the implications for that, how is it funded?

Joe Johnson-If the streets scored high enough and it was eligible for traffic calming the Policy is that whatever traffic calming measures are done, a Benefit District would be created. (It could include Manor Road only, or include everyone on Manor, 81st and Meadow)...depends on what you decide.

James Azeltine-The Policy though says it could not be elevated because of the score, right? That would be outside of the procedure.

Joe Johnson-Correct.

Andrew Osman-What about 85th Terrace, what is the process on that?

Joe Johnson-A Benefit District is created and the costs for the traffic calming are then assessed back to the abutting property owners. Whatever that district defines it as. This case could just define Manor Road or it could define all three streets of Manor, Meadow and 81st. Everyone within the defined district is assessed equally for whatever the construction cost is for the traffic calming.

Mike Wren-(8017 Manor)-First of all thanks to everyone and everyone from the neighborhood does appreciate the Committee's time and know this is a meeting being held because they asked for it. They wouldn't ask for the meeting if they didn't feel this was an important issue. They have had time to review the traffic study and they do hear the tone and realize you are not feeling so great about the petition. The fact that we are still here speaks volumes to the fact that we feel are a couple of issues that have not been addressed and we are very appreciative that you are giving us the chance to share our perspective as residents living in the area.

The core of our issue and the reason we are really here today is there is an intersection at Somerset and Lee Boulevard (designed by the City) and there for many years with a traffic light that is being virtually ignored. It is being circumvented by motorists. It has been figured out through the years that it is much easier (especially for north bound traffic); if I am coming up Lee Boulevard and I need to get to Shawnee Mission east-any of the locations North and West. It is

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much easier for me to just shoot through this local residential neighborhood. We can see that very clearly living in the neighborhood. This has created a very dangerous situation. It is dangerous for several reasons.

No 1, Manor Road has no sidewalks. So there is nowhere for people to go. There is very heavy foot traffic on Manor Road; both from joggers, walkers, not just children on bikes but the surrounding neighborhood. My kids probably pet five dogs a day and don't own a dog. There is a constant flow up and down our street; a very popular neighborhood for walkers, runners and bike riding.

The demographic on our street there are 17 children; 15 of which are under the age of 6 living on our street. So you see the demographic over the next 15 years, the bike riding, that type of issue only increases over time.

If Manor Road (and this is something we want to make very clear). If Manor Road were a straight line from Somerset to Lee Boulevard with a clear line of sight, such as Belinder, Ensley-a straight road where you could see a car coming hundreds of yards and you knew "hey, there's a lot of traffic coming up and down this street and you could say ("Hey Honey there's a car coming and it will be here in 20 seconds)"; we wouldn't be here today having this discussion. The problem we have in the real world when you are sitting here in our street is that you do not have time because of these curves. Pedestrians do not have time to see a car coming, let alone hear a car coming until it is upon you. Motorists cannot see someone on the road. [Mr. Wren displays photos taken with a camera phone to give perspective-vantage point of the driver of how the street appears to a driver and how in part of the car you only see the street and a moment later you see children riding on bicycles on the side of the road.] This is the scenario on both of their curves.

We will hear a lot about speed. We never mentioned speed really as our concern. You can't speed on our street. You can't hit 25 unless you are Mario Andretti because of those curves. If you took those curves at 25, you'd feel reckless, very reckless. While it seems these people are moving fast up and down our street on a constant basis and man there is a lot of volume, speed is not really the issue, it's volume. Volume is really our concern.

So that 322 vehicles per day that travel up and down our street (which is what the traffic study showed), they don't need to be there. Many of them do. But probably 70 to 80% of them and we would be thrilled if you would do a study; (by the way we appreciate the traffic study and the cost of what has already been conducted), but I would assure you if you would delve deeper and you can sit in my driveway and watch it all day long. Seventy to eighty percent of the traffic along Manor Road has nothing to do with the residents. Which is why I think we all take great issue with the conjecture that a cul-de-sac up here at Manor Road would increase traffic at 81st Street, because, it wouldn't. Because I have a map (passes out a map from Google). Counting the homes, even if you go all the way down to Meadow. The traffic that can be accounted for by this study most, the vast majority of traffic that comes through our neighborhood, you know your neighbors. You know, you understand who the cars are you recognize the vehicles. We see 70 to 80% of the traffic coming from who knows where. Coming through just to avoid the light. That is what the traffic is all about. If you were to not have access now, up top at Manor Road and Somerset. If you are assuming that all the traffic was from the residents, then yes, if you all of a sudden drive us all down to 81st Street and Lee. But I'm saying that the traffic is not from our residents. The traffic is from the surrounding area.

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Committee asking about the length of the street. (Not a quarter of a mile) It is very short. If you closed it off, you would be increasing traffic on Lee, going towards a traffic light, which is what it is designed for. And you would actually have less traffic on 81st & Lee, not more. The traffic would be diverted. We feel that Manor Road is not a collector street; it is a local residential street. There is no double yellow line, but is how it is treated. If this was a straight shot we would have moved into that neighborhood expecting it to be a busy street. If we were on Lee Boulevard, our children would know-you don't go in the street and you do not play in the street. But this is Manor Road. This is not supposed to be 300 cars a day, 250 or so of which are cut-throughs. And this is what it is.

Jon Grams asked about the people coming on 83rd and they want to miss the light why wouldn't they take Belinder?

Mike Wren. What they find happening a lot, if you are on 83rd you are going to go all the way down 83rd to Mission and hang a right. Right on red, no problem. The problem we have is people coming from the south. Drivers are coming up Lee Boulevard. If drivers are already on Lee Boulevard they wouldn't go left on 83rd to go right on Belinder because you have to make a left there at that light. What drivers realize over time is that if they can go up Lee just a little bit further a quick little left on the first street (81st) then they can shoot right through (up Manor to Somerset) and have no light (no waiting).

James Azeltine. Is there room on both sides in the right-of-way for sidewalks?

David Ley-No pretty narrow street. Curbs and a mill & overlay should be replaced on this street within the next five years.

Joe Johnson-There are large trees there, you would have to place the sidewalk behind the trees.

Andrew Osman-This is his district; he has walked and driven the district. Mike is right. When you are on a straight shot street you can see the traffic. He has been on this street numerous times and just to see, there is a problem there. Not from speed but from a visibility standpoint. When you are driving around multiple curves and it is a line-of-site issue. Because in Ward 1 we do not have a lot of sidewalks, the residents. That is the bone of contention on 85th Terrace-two things: speed and when the kids and neighbors want to walk, they have no place to go. This petition seems to be unanimous with the neighbors in that the first time around, they had most of the residents signing the petition. There are huge oak trees there, so we would have to see how a sidewalk could fit here without the roots damaging the walk if we could install one.

James Azeltine-If we were to put a cul-de-sac there, wouldn't there be some properties that would have to dedicate some property?

Joe Johnson-Yes, there are four properties there that would have to dedicate right of way for a 36-foot radius cul-de-sac.

Mike Wren advised has support from those properties and they are in favor of it.

James Azeltine-reminded everyone that the group here today is not making the vote today; this would be a group making a recommendation to the Council.

Ken Conrad-suggested staff taking a license plate count to see where the majority of the traffic is coming from. It seems the source of the cars is important.

Jon Grams does not know how we can recommendation of creating a cul-de-sac to the Council if the criteria we are seeing does not fit within the guidelines of the City. If it is based on safety, then we would probably see every group in this part of the City coming to us when they have an

issue.

James Azeltine-and it is not necessarily limited to that part of the City either.

Jon Grams-We need more of a basis to be able to present this to the Council.

Mike Wren-That is a very valid point. Thinks that if you look in Leawood you may not find a road that has that pointed of a curve with that situation. There is not much to compare it to. With this signal so nearby, where they just cut through to avoid it.

Ken Conrad-This is why we should probably need more information. This location does not meet criteria by a far stretch what would be the threshold to consider doing something. So that means that there is other issue involved. I think if we could define where the traffic is coming from. Or maybe another line item of criteria to consider.

David Ley-Advised staff could conduct a license plate study. We chart and would have two people at each intersection. They have a chart that is broken down in 5 minute increments. They write down license plates and then we get back in the office afterwards and we compare. Within the 5 minute intervals we can then determine how many people actually cut-through. You have people who are visiting or live there and that is all that is captured. But if they are there for more than 5 minutes then they are not cutting through, they are. We write down each plate that comes by.

James Azeltine-Along with the feasibility of narrowing the street and placing a sidewalk somewhere along there. Or placing sidewalks somewhere as well. Before we make any recommendation.

Ken Conrad-Sounds like narrowing the street would only make the line of sight worse. Would support tabling the issue until we can collect more information. It seems to be a unique situation because it does not come close to our current threshold of criteria defined for traffic calming. Possibly another criteria or line item needs to be considered in determining traffic calming devices.

Ken Conrad motioned to table the discussion to another meeting in order to collect more information prior to any recommendation to Council. The Committee would like more information such as the source of the traffic on Manor and feasibility of sidewalk placement.

Jon Grams seconded the motion. All present members were in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

- **CHAIR AZELTINE ADJOURNED THE MEETING AT 8:19AM.**
Minutes transcribed by Julie Stasi, Leawood Public Works Department.