

**CITY OF MANHATTAN BEACH
PARKING AND PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS COMMISSION
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
December 4, 2008**

A. CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Parking and Public Improvements Commission of the City of Manhattan Beach, California, was held on the 4th day of December, 2008, at the hour of 6:35 p.m., in the City Council Chambers of City Hall, 1400 Highland Avenue, in said City.

B. ROLL CALL

Present: Silverman, Stabile and Chairman Gross.
Absent: Adami.
Staff Present: Thompson, Danna.
Clerk: Schilling.

Commissioner Silverman questioned Director of Community Development, Richard Thompson, regarding the selection of Commission Chair after the City received the resignation of Patrick Donahue.

Community Development Director Thompson explained that the decision was determined on the basis that Commissioner Gross was appointed first therefore, making Commissioner Gross Chair and Commissioner Silverman Vice-Chair.

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – October 23, 2008

A motion was MADE and SECONDED (Stabile/Silverman) to approve the minutes of October 23, 2008 as written.

D. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

None.

F. REORGANIZATION

Community Development Director Thompson restated the fact that Chairman Donahue had resigned as Chairperson of the Commission leaving his seat open. Commissioner Gross was selected as the New Chair based on the time of appointment as a commissioner.

Action

A motion was MADE and SECONDED (Stabile/Silverman) to recognize the new Chair Paul Gross and Vice Chair Lester Silverman.

AYES: Silverman, Stabile and Chair Gross.
NOES: None.
ABSENT: Adami.
ABSTAIN: None.

E. GENERAL BUSINESS

Evaluate Trial Installation of Stop Signs, Loading Zones and Crosswalk: Peck Avenue and Curtis Avenue

Director of Community Development Thompson introduced the item regarding the Trial Installation of Stop Signs, Loading Zones and Crosswalk at Peck Avenue and Curtis Avenue. He explained that traffic engineer Erik Zandvliet was unable to attend tonight's meeting due to illness, but felt that the report prepared by Staff and submitted to the Commission prior to the meeting should be sufficient information for the Commission to move forward.

There was some discussion among the commissioners regarding several emails that had been received from residents regarding this item and their concern about having the time to read them.

Director of Community Development Thompson suggested that the Commission continue with staff's presentation of the item and the public hearing and then recess in order to read the emails recently received on the item. The Commission agreed to Director Thompson's recommendation.

Assistant Planner Esteban Danna presented a brief history of this item explaining the result of Traffic Engineer Zandvliet's initial study, PPIC recommendations to City Council and ultimate direction to staff by City Council to install and implement several traffic safety measures on Peck and Curtis Avenue in June 2007 on a trial basis.

Assistant Planner Esteban Danna concluded that staff recommends that the stop signs be removed, and the crosswalk and loading zones remain as implemented in June 2007.

Chair Gross stated that there have been some significant changes in the area construction at the church have been completed. He stated that there is a decrease in pedestrian traffic, the Montessori School is using the church parking lot once more for drop off and pick up and that congestion along Peck Avenue has also decreased.

Chair Gross also commented that there appeared to be good compliance at the cross walk with the presence of the crossing guard supplied by the Montessori school. He also noted that State code does not mandate a stop sign be placed at the intersection of Peck and Curtis Avenue. He questioned why this item was before the Commission at this time.

Assistant Planner Danna noted that this item returned to the PPIC Commission tonight as part of Council's direction to re-evaluate the measures implemented after a one year trial period and because residents have voiced complaints regarding the delay in traffic caused by the installation of the stop sign.

In response to questions asked by Chair Gross about the number of resident complaints received and if traffic conditions had improved with the implementation of the cross walk and stop sign, Traffic Lieutenant Andrew Harrod of the Manhattan Beach Police Department contended that they had received complaints from residents who expressed concern over the reason for stop signs going north and south at Peck and Curtis.

Audience Participation

Chairman Gross opened the public hearing at 6:56 p.m.

Dale Keldrauk, Principal of Pennekamp Elementary School, voiced his concern over pedestrian safety due to speeding and felt that the stop sign installed has proven to noticeably slow traffic in the area. He contended that the majority of parents who had children at Pennekamp Elementary School would like the stop signs to remain in place.

Cindy Avol, 1520 1st Street, stated that she uses Peck Avenue constantly and the stop signs drive her crazy. She has witnessed parents crossing their children to the Montessori School without using the crosswalk.

Jane Meade, 401 25th Street, maintained that while picking up her granddaughter at the Montessori School she found it difficult to make a left hand turn out of the church parking lot with the stop sign due to the traffic backing up on Peck Avenue.

Chairman Gross closed the public hearing at 7:08 p.m.

Commissioner Stabile expressed his desire to read the emails received prior to the meeting.

At 7:11 PM, there was a recess until 7:25 PM, when the meeting reconvened.

Discussion

Commissioner Stabile observed that motorist seemed to abide by the stop sign in place at Peck and Curtis Avenue. He did question the need for a stop sign at both Peck and Gates and Peck and Curtis. His concern for the children's safety over rides any other issue people might have with the stop sign and supported leaving them in place.

Commissioner Silverman observed the site and found that there was approximately 1% of the motorist that actually stopped at the intersection the remainder did the rolling, California Stop. He acknowledged that the situation for the Montessori School had changed since City Council's direction to install the stop sign. He stated that the construction at the church has been completed and that the Montessori school was using the church parking lot for drop off and pick up and felt the presence of the crossing guard help enforce the traffic rules. The state does not mandate a stop sign at Peck and Curtis and he would like staff to look into alternatives to a stop sign. He suggested the school could put out an orange cone at peak pick up and drop off hours to alert motorist to school crossing. He supports the removal of the stop signs.

Chair Gross agreed with Commissioner Silverman regarding the change in circumstances at the school now that the church has completed construction. He feels Council's direction was based on the concern for the children's safety during construction. He supports the removal of the stop signs.

Director of Community Development Richard Thompson suggested that the Commission could chose to approve it now or could continue the item to the next meeting in January 2009.

Commissioner Silverman supports the recommendations of the Staff Report.

Chair Gross also supports the Staff Report based on the fact that construction has been completed at the church, that there have been no accidents to date, and his observation that the crossing guard and cross walk appear to be very effective.

Action

A motion was MADE and SECONDED (Silverman/Gross) to present staff recommendations to City Council on January 6, 2009 and request the Traffic Engineer to consider installing additional traffic control signs on Peck.

AYES: Silverman, Stabile and Chair Gross.

NOES: None.

ABSENT: Adami.

ABSTAIN: None.

Request to Evaluate the Location of an Existing Crosswalk: 25th Street at Alma Avenue and Vista Drive

Assistant Planner Esteban Danna presented the Staff Report prepared by Traffic Engineer Zandvliet in May 2008. This evaluation took place after residents complained about the loss of a parking place on Alma Avenue and their concern regarding the visibility of pedestrians at the existing crosswalks at 25th Street at Alma Avenue and Vista Drive.

Assistant Planner Danna shared that according to Traffic Engineer Zandvliet's report, staff met with Grandview Elementary School before they decided to move the crosswalk from the north side of the street to the south side of Alma Avenue and 25th. The change was completed by Public Works in September of 2008.

Traffic Engineer Zandvliet's report evaluated the need for stop signs and concluded that a sign was warranted at Vista and 25th for the safety of pedestrians but that installation of a stop sign at Alma Avenue and 25th could result in more traffic conflicts.

Traffic Engineer Zandvliet report determined that the crosswalks on 25th street were in the optimum positions for pedestrian safety.

Chair Gross asked why this item was before the PPIC Commission tonight.

Assistant Planner Danna explained that it was initiated by a petition presented by residents to return the crosswalk to the north side of 25th Street at Alma.

Chair Gross contended that the red curb was painted in June of 2008 and residents objected to the loss of a parking place. After his traffic study, Traffic Engineer Zandvliet recommended in his report that they remove the red curb on Alma at 25th and that the crosswalk be placed on the south side of the street. Both items were completed by the Department of Public Works in September of 2008.

Audience Participation

Chairman Gross opened the public hearing at 7:55 p.m.

Kelly Meade, 25th and Alma, provided the Commission with a photo and text

presentation to support her request that the cross walk be returned to the north side of 25th Street and Alma, that the red curb be increased by an additional 12 feet and signage be installed on Alma Avenue to indicate to motorist to slow down – school crossing.

Will Arvizo, 410 23rd Street, voiced his opinion that there was greater visibility with the crosswalk on the south side of 25th Street. He felt visibility was still an issue on Alma and suggested that the space be reduced to accommodate one car.

A discussion ensued between the Commissioners and Director Thompson regarding the visibility of the cross walk with it's bright yellow paint, the visibility of pedestrians at the corners of 25th at Vista and Alma Avenues, and the enforcement of the speed limit on these streets as well as the size of a standard parking space.

Tom Courtney, 2417 Alma Avenue, contended that the crosswalk was better served on the south side of the street and that the residents use the parking spaces available because parking is a premium in town. He also stated that the residents were not notified prior to painting the curb red in June 2008.

Chair Gross suggested that the traffic plans for Grandview Elementary School may be out of date. All the other elementary schools in the City had received recent traffic studies with the exception of Grandview. He further stated that one has not been done since the remodel of Grandview. He would like to see traffic studies be rotated among the school and updated as needed.

Bill Meade, 401 25th Street, expressed his opinion that the visibility of pedestrians was better with the crosswalk on the north side of the 25th Street at Alma. He would like to see the parking space redefined for one car.

Chairman Gross closed the public hearing at 8:27 p.m.

Discussion

Commissioner Silverman maintained that the crosswalk is best left on the south side of Alma and on the north side of Vista. He expressed his concern about keeping as much parking as possible in the City.

Commissioner Stabile stated City Council had directed that staff do a traffic report for all of the schools. He feels it might be time for Grandview to have a traffic study performed again. He maintains the crosswalk at Vista should be left where it is and doesn't see any justification for eliminating a parking space. He would like staff to look into additional signage on Alma notifying motorists of a school crossing.

Chair Gross noted that there is little traffic on 25th Street and no history of accidents. He upholds staff's recommendations to leave the crosswalks on the south side of 25th. He would like for staff to look into more signage on Alma Avenue, and the possibility of making an existing sign more visible. He would also like the signage on the pavement at the crosswalks to get a fresh coat of paint.

Action

A motion was MADE and SECONDED (Stabile/Silverman) to uphold staff's recommendations regarding the crosswalks on 25th Street at Alma and Vista Avenues, to consider additional signage and repaint street lettering at crosswalk on Vista Avenue.

AYES: Silverman, Stabile and Chair Gross.
NOES: None.
ABSENT: Adami.
ABSTAIN: None.

Director of Community Development Thompson stated that this item will be brought to City Council at the next meeting, January 6, 2009

F. COMMISSION ITEMS

1. Parking Meter Revenue and Traffic Violation Revenue Report

Assistant Planner Danna reported that revenue from parking meter and traffic violations was higher in the summer months; June, July and August because of the increase in visitor and beach traffic.

Lt. Harrod explained that the Police Department is now at full staffing, which provides more man power on the streets to enforce traffic and parking restrictions. He shared that he attends the regular Downtown Business and Professional Association (DPBA) meetings and that they support the efforts of the police department to enforce the traffic and parking rules. He is pleased with the collaboration of the DPBA and the police department.

There was a discussion between the commissioners and Lt. Harrod regarding the increased number of booted vehicles, the reason an automobile is booted, the impact of local employees parking in public parking spaces, and the use of Community Service Officers (CSO) in the peak summer months.

Commissioner Stabile announced the Downtown Parking Study was approved by City Council and that implementation has begun. He requested a monthly or quarterly revenue statement for analysis and tracking.

G. STAFF ITEMS

Chair Gross told Commissioners that he would confirm the invitation to his home for the Holiday fireworks on the 14th via email on Wednesday, December 10th.

In response to a questions asked by Commissioner Silverman regarding the PPIC vacancy, Director Thompson stated that the announcement of a vacancy would be made at the January 6th, 2009 City Council meeting and they would hope to fill the position in February.

Lt. Harrod relayed the success of the electronic sign used on Highland as you enter the El Porto area in decreasing the speed of motorist. Laser radar indicated that traffic was not traveling as fast as it appeared due to the configuration of the street.

He said they will continue to educate residents and visitors. And in response to Chair Gross's question regarding the traffic on Ocean Avenue, Lt. Harrod said he will place a small radar on the street to check speed of motorists.

Lt. Harrod announced that two new motorcycle officers will begin in January 2009. He

also maintained that he is committed to do his best in all aspects related to traffic.

H. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:12 p.m.

PATRICIA SHILLING
Recording Secretary

ATTEST:

RICHARD THOMPSON
Director of Community Development