

**CITY OF MANHATTAN BEACH
PARKING AND PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS COMMISSION
MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING
MARCH 24, 2011**

A. CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Manhattan Beach Parking and Public Improvements Commission was held on the 24th of March, 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:	Stabile, Gross, Adami, Vigon, Chairman Silverman
Absent:	None
Staff Present:	Management Analyst Nhung Madrid Traffic Engineer Jack Rydell Lieutenant Andy Harrod Sergeant Mark Mason Recording Secretary Angela Soo

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

03/24/11 October 28, 2010

The Parking and Public Improvements Commission minutes of October 28, 2010 were unanimously approved as written.

D. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

None.

E. GENERAL BUSINESS

03/24/11-2. Consideration of American Martyrs School Area Follow-Up Study

Commissioner Silverman remarked that the Commission has reviewed the background of all the schools, traffic patterns and traffic flow in order to reach a resolution between the schools, neighborhood and parents. The Commission will now examine if the measures already implemented were effective, and if not, invite a discussion to ensure all concerns have been addressed.

Traffic Engineer Rydell summarized the staff report.

Commission Discussion

Commissioner Adami asked staff to explain why measures 9 and 18 were not approved by City Council, and the impact of those measures.

Traffic Engineer Rydell responded that measure 9, which was to prohibit left turns from westbound 15th Street into parking structure during school loading hours, was not approved because Dr. Baxter was concerned the prohibition would increase traffic congestion. Regarding measure 20, to encourage the school to prohibit pedestrian access to the School from any gates on Laurel Avenue, Dr. Baxter was concerned about safety and determined it would also add to congestion. Traffic Engineer Rydell said it appeared the City Council was not going to override the principal's concern.

Commissioner Stabile requested staff to address measure 8 (prohibit left turns into and out of the campus loading zone driveway on 15th Street during school loading hours), explain how that prohibition is accomplished, the location of the no left turn signs and if the signs were permanent or removable.

Traffic Engineer Rydell said appropriate regulatory signs were placed and the signs are considered permanent, but remarked that any sign may be removed if decided upon.

Management Analyst Madrid pointed to a map referring to the location of the signs, one being placed just as motorists are exiting and another on the south side of 15th Street for the off-street loading zone located on the school playground black top. .

Commissioner Stabile referred to the area on 15th Street just west of Laurel, that he interpreted the loading zone to be located there.

Management Analyst Madrid said there was also a loading zone on Laurel Ave with what she believes has 100 feet of white curb.

Traffic Engineer Rydell said the area on Laurel Avenue is considered an on-street loading zone, versus the loading zone on 15th Street which is an off-street loading zone.

In order to confirm staff was addressing the same area in question, Commissioner Stabile referenced a section on page two of the staff report, under Discussion the second paragraph approximately halfway down: "This off-street loading zone is accessed via a driveway on 15th Street just west of Laurel Avenue." He inquired if that area mentioned in the staff report is the same location as described in measure 8, as he did not see any left turn prohibition signs when he walked by the School a couple days ago.

Commissioner Stabile asked staff to also confirm that if he was travelling westbound on 15th Street from Laurel Avenue, there is a loading zone in the campus to the right accessed via a driveway, and that this loading zone is the same one mentioned in measure 8.

Management Analyst Madrid said the sign is on the corner as you pull out of the blacktop and confirmed Commissioner Stabile's inquiry that the off-street loading zone is accessible from a driveway on 15th St and that it is located on private property.

Commissioner Stabile reconfirmed that drivers exiting the loading zone onto 15th Street may not make left turns, and questioned staff if drivers going eastbound on 15th Street are allowed to make a left turn into the loading zone off of 15th Street.

Management Analyst Madrid said left turns are permissible into the loading zone when driving east on 15th Street.

Commissioner Adami included that he frequently travels that route on the weekends, and said the sign allowing the left turn is very helpful, but if you are leaving the campus, you must make a right turn.

Commissioners Vigon and Silverman both noted that the measures presented in the staff report are distinctive from other actions that would be considered for public schools. Since American Martyrs is a private school, there is no linkage of geography among the student body, that their commuting characteristics may have different factors. Commissioner Vigon added that what is sufficient for public schools might not be sufficient for private schools, as a higher percentage of students must be driven and dropped off at school.

Commissioner Gross recalled the difficulty in getting the Pre-School to conform, but said that in the staff report it appeared they were showing significant signs of improvement. However, he asked staff to comment on the recent emails received that showed otherwise.

Management Analyst Madrid recounted that after the Commission meeting in January 2010, it was determined that the concerns of residents focused more on Pre-School parents parking and picking up their children. Upon meeting with the Pre-School, the administrators said they were not interested in implementing the same carpool program used by the School. Management Analyst Madrid stated that neither she nor the School received any complaints from residents following the meetings, but mentioned one complaint related to after-school hour activity.

Commissioner Adami asked staff if they followed up on Debra Zelman's email dated March 18, 2011, and questioned why the Pre-School was not following similar guidelines as the K-8 School.

Management Analyst Madrid said red curbing was installed directly adjacent to Ms. Zelman's property prior to receiving the email and that Commissioner Adami may address Ms. Wood directly as to the Pre-School's efforts.

After reviewing in more detail the language described in measure 8, Commissioner Stabile said it appeared that the measure was only half implemented—that left hand turns are prohibited for outgoing traffic, but not for incoming traffic—when the measure calls for

prohibition of left turns from both egress and ingress. He added that he did not see any signage prohibiting left turns into the loading zone.

Traffic Engineer Rydell said the staff report may have been written incorrectly.

American Martyrs Principal Camryn Connelly spoke from the audience and recalled from last year that the signs created controversy when being installed. There was concern over the potential backup on Laurel Avenue from motorists lining up to make a right hand turn. The School contacted the City about its concerns and questioned the effectiveness of those signs, to which the City said it would further analyze.

Traffic Engineer Rydell recalled speaking with former Traffic Engineer Erik Zandvliet on there being an issue as to why the sign was not installed, and added that staff will readdress measure 8.

Management Analyst Madrid verified that staff would follow up on the turn prohibition and provide more information at the next meeting.

Audience Participation

America Martyrs Principal Camryn Connelly and Jeanne Wood, Pre-School Director, introduced themselves to the Commission.

Commissioner Gross said he was specifically interested in whether the Pre-School is operating to the same rules in terms of the instructions given to the parents about parking as the K-8 School.

Ms. Wood responded that the Pre-School has a parking policy form where parents sign an agreement that includes information about their car and license plate number. In the event of a complaint, the Pre-School can look up the information and contact the parent, though she did admit their filing system was still evolving. The last complaint received was more than a year ago, and the said car was not in their files. She encourages and depends on residents to bring forth their complaints. Ms. Wood also agreed that parents should not be parking in residential driveways and that most avoid parking in front of the school because there is signage and faculty would be able to see them. However, she cannot monitor what occurs around the neighborhood because there is not enough faculty to patrol outside. Ms. Wood also mentioned that installing a drive-thru would be impractical because parents are required to sign out their children and there is not enough space for one.

Commissioner Silverman asked if the Pre-School had any mechanism to relay information to parents on a regular basis instead of just sending a notice once at the beginning of the year. He said the notice should be impactful, not just a friendly reminder, and be distributed on a more regular basis via a newsletter or email. He also commented on the significant improvements that were made over the last year, and the importance of maintaining those positive relations by everyone pulling their own responsibility.

Ms. Wood stated that she has the ability to accomplish those goals, especially now that she has access to an email distribution list and is familiarizing herself with the computer system. She concluded that the Pre-School needs to be good neighbors and follow the rules.

Commissioner Adami asked Ms. Wood to address the email asking why the Pre-School cannot follow the same rules as the rest of the school and park in the parking lot, and suggested there be more police enforcement to achieve compliance, or have someone monitor the area in the morning and give a warning to parents parked illegally.

Ms. Wood suggested that Pre-School parents are in a hurry and are only parking for a very short time. Ms. Wood pointed out that parents seem to be parking legally, but thoughtlessly. They are parking in front of people's homes, and not necessarily in front of driveways, which is illegal. Residents may feel it is annoying to have the high level of parking activity occurring in front of their homes. This annoyance to residents appears more problematic further out into the neighborhood where it would be impractical to have someone from the school patrol the area. Ms. Wood said she would like to avoid ticketing people, as that may create animosity, and concluded the solution is to just follow the rules and be good neighbors.

Commissioner Gross confirmed with staff there is a 100-foot loading zone on Laurel Avenue and another section has one-hour parking. He asked staff if the whole length of Laurel Avenue between 18th and 15th Streets can be converted into a loading zone.

Ms. Connelly expressed her concern over that possibility as it would have a negative effect on the K-8 School and that the expansive loading zone would encourage the behavior they are trying to stop. The School has worked very hard on training the parents the two methods of drop-offs, which are the parking structure or on campus carpool. Ms. Connelly said the School has made tremendous strides in the last two years and will continue to send out reminders. They will especially focus on outside groups playing a game against the School, such as CYO. She has already spoken with the sports organization in educating visiting teams on appropriate drop-off procedures.

Ms. Wood agreed and said it is easier to remain consistent in not allowing Pre-School or K-8 parents to park there and simply direct them to the parking structure. She noted it may be a good time to send out a reminder.

Commissioner Gross also commended the School's achievement over the last three years and hoped to see the same results with the Pre-School.

Ms. Connelly noted the different challenges facing the Pre-School. The School has the benefit of having room for a carpool pickup area on the campus and many of the parents whose kids have other siblings are also in the K-8 School, whereas the Pre-School parents might have a sleeping child in the car.

Sandra Elsky, 1824 Laurel Avenue, said she wrote down two license plates and also took pictures of the cars encroaching in her driveway area. She indicated one problem is not knowing who to contact, and if she is expected to call on every occurrence. She is willing to call;

however, parking enforcement often arrives after the driver has already left. She is uncertain why cars are parking in front of her house when she is equal distance from the parking structure. Ms. Elsky requested that her driveway aprons be painted red like her neighbor, Ms. Zelman. She was informed by an officer that while it is illegal to park in the apron, it is questionable for an officer to give a ticket unless the apron is painted red. She commended the K-8 School on doing a fantastic job, but said the Pre-School parents still needs to improve.

Commissioner Silverman said Ms. Elsky is addressing a very specific spot in front of her house, and that the Commission needs to identify what the overall problem is in order to find an effective solution. Commissioner Silverman noted that the Commission may only address illegal parking issues, and not if people are parking legally. Someone could potentially leave their car there for three days without a violation.

Ms. Elsky questioned the safety aspect of parent's parking in the neighborhood, a walking program that the Pre-School tried to implement about a year ago, but then stopped shortly afterwards. She reiterated that the whole purpose of the parking lot was for parents to utilize it and not affect the community. Addressing Traffic Engineer Rydell, Ms. Elsky asked why the City only met with the schools and not the neighbors. She further noted that the City did not receive any complaints because she was unaware that she was supposed to contact the City when there was a problem. In the future, she will inform the City and parking enforcement when cars are parked in her driveway or at the red curb.

Commissioner Adami asked staff the reason for not painting Ms. Elsky's apron red.

In response, Management Analyst Madrid said the request that came in was for the driveway apron between Ms. Elsky's property and her neighbor's property at 1820 Laurel Avenue, so only one of her driveway tips was painted red and one of the neighbor's driveway tips was painted red.

Commissioner Gross noted that if Ms. Elsky is accurate in what was communicated to her by police, then it is important for parking enforcement to have the curb painted red in order to issue a ticket.

Ms. Elsky said according to the police code, it is illegal to park in the apron regardless if it is painted red or not. Her request to have her apron painted red is not arbitrary, but said that parking enforcement does not want to enforce the illegal parking unless the curb is painted red.

Carlene Eckhart, 706 18th Street, explained her property borders the easement American Martyrs uses to enter the fields. Last year, she handed out notices to the Pre-School but it apparently was not effective because an agreement did not exist. She later forgot about the issue, but said today she counted fifty cars between Agnes Road and a couple cars toward her house on both sides of the street all the way to Pacific Avenue and to the left of Agnes Road. She pointed out that 18th Street is narrower than Laurel Avenue and does not have a sidewalk on one side. Parents are forced to use the street when walking their children to and from school, which presents a safety concern.

Ms. Eckhart requested American Martyrs to lock the gate adjacent to the walkway from dusk till dawn, as she believes this would protect the school and reduce vandalism to the school. She remarked that last week lights were damaged. Other problems that also occur are underage drinking on the campus and litter from empty beer cans and bottles, which she has been cleaning up over the last 29 years.

Ms. Connelly commented that her understanding of the gate along 18th Street is that there is an agreement with the City to leave it unlocked as a pathway for neighbors, that the school does not condone those activities and should possibly revisit the agreement made with the City.

Management Analyst Madrid said staff will follow up on reviewing the agreement.

Ms. Eckhart inquired who is legally responsible for what happens after hours at the School.

In response to Ms. Eckhart's question, Ms. Connelly said the School would have to show measures were taken to prevent the intrusions and that trespassers climbed over locked gates. To date, the School has installed additional gates and is in the process of adding lighting in certain areas and setting up security cameras. She also shared her personal efforts of camping out at night and calling police. She believes the School has gone above and beyond in securing the campus, however, she remarked on the difficulty of trying to stop determined teenagers.

Rocky Mondelo, 1600 Laurel, said he never had a problem with the School or parents in the last 32 years, and learned to avoid exiting his driveway at 8 a.m. or 3 p.m. The only concern he had was the one-hour parking restriction on the west side of Laurel Avenue between 15th and 17th Streets. He questioned the purpose of the one-hour restriction during school hours and whether it could be eliminated, why his request for parking permits for him and his neighbors was denied by staff, and whether residents are allowed to parallel park in front of their own driveways.

Lieutenant Andy Harrod confirmed that parallel parking in front of a driveway, whether it is the homeowner or visitor, is not allowed.

Commission Discussion

In response to Mr. Mondelo's question regarding the one-hour parking restriction, Commissioner Gross recalled the reason for the restriction was to provide a maximum number of spaces for drop-offs.

Management Analyst Madrid and Traffic Engineer Rydell said they do not have any history on the parking restriction, but Traffic Engineer Rydell said those one-hour restrictions are typically enacted to prohibit long-term parking adjacent to schools.

Commissioner Silverman said it appeared that the implemented measures were going well overall, though additional assessment may be required to address Ms. Elsky's concerns.

He suggested a representative of the School and from the City can visit the property to determine if there really is a problem before implementing any further action. Regarding the easement, Commissioner Silverman said it appears that American Martyrs is trying everything they can to address trespassing problems.

Commissioner Adami commended the School for their efforts and said it appeared only smaller issues remained that needed additional research by staff; the first one being the gate which is under agreement with the City and, second, to approve Ms. Elsky's request to paint her apron red.

Commissioner Silverman instructed staff to further look into other possible measures to alleviate traffic problems on Laurel Avenue, or to determine if there are any other measures that can even be implemented.

Management Analyst Madrid said Traffic Engineer Rydell will review if other alternatives are possible.

Commissioner Gross had a minor suggestion regarding the crosswalk markings at the intersection of Pacific Avenue and 17th Street. He explained there are only parallel lines at the crosswalk when going across Pacific Avenue instead of large heavy dashes, which he said are more effective.

Management Analyst Madrid said staff will follow up on the crosswalk, but noted that as crosswalks are being repainted, the City is installing the high visibility bars and confirmed that it will eventually be painted in that manner.

Management Analyst Madrid informed Commissioners they can approve the agenda item as written and staff will follow up on any further issues to discuss with the Commission at a future meeting under Staff Items.

Commissioner Gross said the one continuing issue will be with the Pre-School, and asked staff to support them in any way possible since they do not have as many resources.

Commissioner Stabile explained that those areas are already addressed in measures 12 and 15. He further added that the Commission has already done what it could do and it ultimately is an issue of compliance and encouraging the Pre-School to continue working with the parents. An additional recommendation the Commission might consider is Ms. Elsky's request to have her apron painted red. Commissioner Stabile asked staff if they had any objections.

Traffic Engineer Rydell said yes, that Commissioners should consider the cost factor and the precedent to be set when installing red curbs on a residential driveway anywhere in the City. He explained that it will make it very difficult to deny any future red curb demands because residents will present equally valid reasons for their request.

Commissioner Stabile said the Commission was instructed by City Council to not consider costs when making recommendations. Furthermore, he said standards should be different in a school area given the traffic activity and strollers being present, all of which justify treating school zones differently.

Traffic Engineer Rydell said he respected Commissioner Stabile's opinion, but reminded the Commissioner there are implications for approving such requests.

Commissioner Adami said requests should not be denied on the basis of avoiding the difficulty of denying similar future requests.

Commissioner Stabile invited the Police Department representative to address whether it is necessary to have red curbs in place in order to ticket violators, as Ms. Elsky has been told.

Traffic Sergeant Mark Mason answered no, that officers do not need a painted red curb on the wing in order to issue a citation. He indicated that the wing of a curb is well delineated by an indentation located at the top of the wing, and that any portion of a vehicle extending beyond that point would be illegally parked. He apologized for the parking enforcement officer who presented incorrect information.

Commissioner Vigon noted that since it is already illegal to park in the winged area that slopes downwards, then it would be redundant to paint that portion red. Furthermore, he said it might imply that if other wings or aprons are not painted red, then it is permissible for cars to park there.

Commissioner Silverman requested staff to continue working with the schools and residents.

Management Madrid said staff can follow-up with both schools and all residents who left their contact information at the meeting.

Commissioner Vigon added that a long-term consideration for the schools is to reconfigure the parking lot to achieve better traffic flow. Currently, there is only one way to enter and exit, when it appears from the aerial photo that it is possible to design an entrance from Laurel Avenue and have cars drive through the lot.

Ms. Connelly invited the Commission to personally observe the efficiency of their pick-up operations at 3:00 p.m. on any weekday. She assured the Commission that they would be impressed with the number of parents and teachers assisting in the process.

Commissioner Gross said American Martyrs should be a model for other schools, but emphasized that much of their success is based on two advantages; one, the teachers are not part of a union which prohibits them from helping with loading and unloading children, and two, they have power over the parents because it is a private school. He applauded them on using both of those advantages to get amazing results over the last three years.

MOTION: Commissioner Stabile moved to recommend that the City Council approve the traffic safety measures referenced in the staff report as numbers one through 18 be made permanent. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gross.

Prior to roll call vote, Commissioner Silverman inquired about the other traffic measures staff is to follow up on and whether those items will affect the measures in the staff report. Staff was to further analyze the current state of the problem and some exceptions on Laurel Avenue.

Commissioner Stabile said any exceptions should not subtract from the measures they are approving, but that additional measure can be added if necessary.

Management Analyst Madrid said staff can follow up with the involved parties, and if it is determined that additional measures need to be implemented, that those Items may be addressed administratively.

The motion passed by a 5-0 unanimous roll call vote as reflected below:

Ayes: Vigon, Stabile, Gross, Adami, and Chairman Silverman
Noes: None.
Abstain: None.
Absent: None.

Commissioner Stabile directed staff to address Measure 8 at the next staff meeting.

Commissioner Silverman thanked speakers for their testimony.

Mr. Mondelo spoke from the audience asking Commissioners to address his earlier question about eliminating the one-hour parking restriction.

Management Analyst Madrid said she will contact Mr. Mondelo to discuss.

F. COMMISSION ITEMS

F1. Commissioner Gross said he and Commissioner Stabile attended the South Bay Bike Master Plan Coalition in El Segundo, and noted two points Commissioners should keep in mind; first, the initial formal action of the coalition will be with the Commission in July or later, and second, the coalition is working under time and money constraints in order to procure grant funding, which may reflect itself in the initial plan brought forth to the Commission.

F2. Commissioner Silverman addressed the meters installed on Park View, but first mentioned that about a month ago, he replied to an email and intended to only respond to that person but mistakenly clicked on the 'reply all' button. He recalled not seeing many parked cars at the meter spots and advised looking into the Return on Investment to the City. He questioned why there were only meters on one side and on the other side there were signs prohibiting parking anytime when the signs should only restrict parking during the same hours the meters are in effect, which is 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. The meters might have been a good idea at the time, but

in actuality is a solution looking for a problem. He advised staff to revisit the effectiveness of the meters in achieving the desired goals.

Commissioner Vigon said there is also a cost associated with removing the meters, and since they were already paid for, the City should keep them in place. His primary concern was how the meters could be installed in a manner that was outside of what the City Council expected. A large portion of parking was eliminated that was never under consideration.

Traffic Engineer Rydell explained that meters were supposed to go in on both sides of the street, but during execution, the Public Works Department determined meters could not be installed in certain locations partly because of grade and ADA requirements. It was too steep on the north side where the sidewalk ends and farther east there were trees, vegetation and some sloping, which would have required a significant amount of work to install the meters. City Council directed staff to implement the meters immediately, so staff installed the meters where they could and would revisit the issue in January 2012 to determine the project viability before investing any more funds into additional meters. He added the no parking signs were installed where meters could not be installed in order to accomplish the same intent set forth by City Council.

Commissioner Vigon said the area should have been surveyed to determine viability of the traffic meter installation prior to preparing the staff report and recommendation, that the Commissioners or the City Council may have forgone the meter installation project entirely if the findings showed the infeasibility. The item should have been brought back to the Commission or City Council.

Commissioner Stabile expressed his concern regarding staff continuing to implement a policy based on facts that have changed.

Commissioner Gross commented that the City Council is supposed to focus on creating policies while staff is responsible for implementation of those policies, where policy gives intent and staff carries out the details.

Commissioner Adami agreed another review of the meter installation would have been favorable.

Commissioner Gross also agreed the meter installation was a bad proposal that appears gratuitous because the City would have saved money by not installing the meters since he observed that very few cars park in those spots at different hours of the day.

Commissioner Silverman added that he appreciates the job done by staff, but stressed that staff needs to keep Commissioners informed if events change so that Commissioners are not basing their decisions on inaccurate information.

Commissioner Vigon confirmed with Traffic Engineer Rydell that in the future, staff will ensure the technical feasibility of installing any device or measure, so that Commissioners are assured that the recommendation will be executed in the manner it was approved.

Though not directed to by the City Council, Commissioners Gross and Stabile suggested that the Commission should consider cost when presented with projects given the ongoing budget problems, and would recommend the City Council reconsider that direction.

F3. Commissioner Adami inquired why the Commission did not hold a meeting for such an extended period of time.

Management Analyst responded that the November and December meetings were combined and the subsequent meetings in January and February were cancelled because there were not any items for Commissioners to consider. However, the 2011-2012 Work Plan was recently approved and include some items that will be brought forth to the Commission soon.

F4. Commissioner Vigon asked if an ordinance exists that specifies the maximum distance for parking signs, as he had to walk to the end of a block before seeing a street sweeping sign.

Traffic Engineer Rydell said there are no spacing interval requirements for the posting of prohibition signs, but said they are generally 50 to 200 feet apart in urban settings depending on the specific locations.

F5. Commissioner Gross inquired when the meters on south side of pier were going to be upgraded.

Management Analyst Madrid said the item went to Council and she believes the Finance Department is working on it.

F6. Commissioner Adami said the parking meters located by Wahoo's Restaurant and a few past Coffee Bean and Tea Leaf are difficult to see at night because they are not illuminated and the street does not provide enough lighting for patrons, forcing them to use their cell phone light as an alternative. He pointed out the City of Laguna Beach has meters that light up once you swipe a credit card.

F7. Commissioner Adami said he received many repeated concerns from residents regarding the lack of a crosswalk at the Target exit on Manhattan Beach Boulevard.

Management Analyst Madrid provided an update that the request was submitted to Public Works to be considered for the upcoming CIP, which will be reviewed in May by the Commission.

F8. Commissioner Silverman brought up a resident who complained about receiving a ticket for not having a front license plate. The resident felt police were being overzealous in ticketing people who were patronizing the downtown area.

G. STAFF ITEMS

03/24/11-3 Monthly Revenue and Expenditure Report

Received and filed.

Management Analyst Madrid reminded Commissioners to submit their 700 Form to the City Clerk's Office, and to fill out the voluntary ITE survey.

She also provided an update on the encroachment appeal at 619 Highland Avenue and 233 7th Street.

H. ADJOURNMENT

At 8:34 p.m., the meeting was adjourned to Thursday, April 28, 2011.