

Traffic and Transportation Committee

January 3, 2023

A conference call meeting of the Traffic and Transportation Committee was held this date at 4:03 p.m. over video.

PRESENT

Committee Members: Councilmember Karl Brady (Chair), Councilmember Boyd Gregg, Mayor John Tecklenburg

Also Present: Thomas Tisdale, Michael Mathis, Dan Riccio, Troy Mitchell, Robert Somerville, Melissa Cruthirds, Mallory Scheer, Lt. Heath King, Officer Engless, Julia Copeland, Magalie Creech, Tracy McKee, Councilmember Jason Sakran, Councilmember Peter Shahid, Rick Jerue, Philip Clapper, Donna Constance

Invocation

The meeting was opened with a moment of silence led by Chair Brady.

Approval of Minutes

Meeting minutes were not approved.

Pedestrian Safety Upper Peninsula

Councilmember Sakran said he wanted to give an overview of the agenda item. He said he hosted a community meeting that was held downtown on October 24, with Mr. Somerville, Mr. Mathis, Senator Kimpson, Representative Gilliard, as well as other folks from the City, Sheriff's Office, SCDOT, and Charleston Moves in attendance, along with forty downtown residents. He said the purpose for the meeting was to draw attention to some of the ongoing issues they had experienced. He said since he was elected Councilmember, he heard about Rutledge and the King Street corridors and several intersections. He said during the meeting they focused on four intersections: Rutledge and Simmons, Rutledge and Moultrie, King and Moultrie, and King and Grove because of the volume of traffic and the four schools that were within a couple of blocks of those intersections. He said Senator Kimpson and Representative Gilliard had become politically engaged and advocated for change.

Councilmember Sakran said he wanted to gauge the standing committee's appetite before moving forward. He said the Upper Peninsula experienced heavy traffic volumes during the morning and late afternoon, and most were natural traffic patterns. Also, some neighborhoods had seen an increase in population. He said that was juxtaposed with the 2018 Charleston City County City-wide plan that was adopted by City Council in 2018. He said he wanted to read a paragraph that kicked off the plan and that was adopted in 2018. *'In preparation for the continuous influx of people and businesses, the City of Charleston has developed an updated Citywide Transportation Plan that provides Solutions, as well as a long-range vision for Charleston's transportation system aimed at improving Mobility mitigating traffic congestion and improving safety for pedestrians and vehicular traffic and enhancement of the transportation*

corridors.' He said there were three recommendations he would make that would fit and align with the transportation plan they had adopted.

Councilmember Sakran said there were requests he wanted to make and those were for the bulb outs and/or curb extensions at those four intersections, which included a Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB). He said those were the improvements they were advocating for, which were consistent with the 2018 plan. His last request was to ask if the staff could prioritize formal conversations with County and State colleagues to determine where funding could be found. He said folks from the South Carolina DOT were there at the meeting and said they needed to find money for funding. Also, Senator Kimpson was particularly interested and said he could help grease the wheels or he could speak and advocate for them. Councilmember Sakran said it was incumbent for the City staff to reach out and make those connections and to figure out how to get those four projects funded. Chair Brady said he would send this over to staff since Councilmember Sakran had mentioned it to see if they had any preliminary thoughts about the proposals.

Mr. Somerville said after the last meeting, he sent a letter to the DOT informing them of the request to improve those intersections. He said he received a letter from the DOT that indicated they would need to send a request through the CDC, as well as the TS and submit a request that the money was for those projects. He said they agreed the bulb outs, as well as the increased division triangles at those intersections, would be an improvement.

Chair Brady asked them to request another round of funding and if there was a deadline when this would need to be submitted. Mr. Somerville said he asked Mr. Mathis to assist him but the TST requests were due in February, and the CDC were due in June. He said they did submit for the intersection at Rutledge and Simmons under the CTC last year.

Chair Brady said they were open for any questions from the committee regarding Councilmember Sakrans proposal. Mayor Tecklenburg asked if their State representatives and Senator agreed to give them a letter with their letterhead requesting same because it was good to have letters of support when those requests were made. Councilmember Sakran said they had not indicated that they would, but he would reach out to Senator Kimpson and Gilliard if they needed. Mayor Tecklenburg asked if Councilmember Sakran and Mr. Somerville would help draft a letter asking them what was needed to be said, once they knew what they were applying for so that their letters matched their requests, and eventually follow-up with them.

Chair Brady said based on his own experience those letters of support helped when he put in for a TST request for the stoplight at Sanders and Bees Ferry.

Councilmember Sakran said he was picking up advocacy steam with members of the community who would be coming to Council meetings to articulate those same points he was making.

Councilmember Gregg asked if Councilmember Sakran could go over those intersections again. Councilmember Sakran said they were at Rutledge and Simmons, Rutledge and Moultrie, King and Moultrie, and King and Grove.

Chair Brady asked Mr. Somerville if that was something the staff could handle or if the committee needed to endorse a letter to move forward. Mr. Somerville said he thought an endorsement letter from the Traffic and Transportation Committee would be helpful. He said

they did the request in-house and, as the Mayor mentioned, a letter from the DOT and the other representatives would be helpful as well. Chair Brady said they could draft a letter and that he would sign it in his capacity as Chairman for the committee. He said he would like to get a consensus from the committee to move forward requesting they recommend those improvements.

Councilmember Gregg said he wanted to understand the process, and there were some intersections in District 1 that were waiting for improvements. He said he wanted to make sure the improvements for those four interchanges would not come at the expense of other things that had been in queue, and also needed improvements. He asked if Mr. Somerville or Mr. Mathis could explain to him how that could work. Mayor Tecklenburg said money was funneled through Charleston County, so there would be no impact. Also, they could make a request from a separate CTC Committee in Berkeley County.

On a motion of Mayor Tecklenburg, seconded by Councilmember Gregg, the Committee voted unanimously to request funding for the Pedestrian Safety for the Upper Peninsula requested by Councilmember Sakran.

Sumar Street 18-Wheeler overnight parking

Chair Brady said the next item on the agenda was for the Sumar Street 18-wheeler overnight parking requested by Councilmember Shahid. Councilmember Shahid said during one of their December Council meetings he circulated photographs of 18-wheelers, that included a photograph of a portable on-demand storage unit. He said this was parked on Sumar Street and was used for a variety of purposes, such as a place for sandbag collection and was a dumping point for storm debris removal. The Fire Department also used it for training grounds, and a movie production had filmed there. He talked to Lieutenant King about this problem and said there were 'No Trespassing' signs out there, but people still parked at Sumar Street. He said over the weekend and during the holiday season he had not seen any out there, and thought those signs made an impact. He said he was unsure if Lieutenant King would be able to tell him if his officers were there patrolling that area, or if it made some impact on Sumar Street.

Councilmember Shahid said this had gone beyond Sumar Street, and now impacted areas across the street. He said if they pushed one person off one Island, they would go and hop onto another Island. He said that was private property and was not owned by the City, and they still had 18-wheelers parked on what he called abandoned land. He said across the street from the City's property on Sumar Street, was an old Captain D's and a BP gas station that became the parking spot of choice. He said they were successful with the new signs that were posted, and that got them off the Sumar Street site. Then down over at the lot across the street, he was not sure if any contact had been made with the property owners to see if they gave their permission for them to park there. He said down further at Sam Rutenberg at Ashley Hall at the Hall Manor neighborhood, the South Carolina Department of Transportation used that as a staging area for heavy equipment. He said they complained to them about the equipment from time to time, and they continued to allow the Department of Transportation equipment to be placed there.

Councilmember Shahid said when dealing with private property versus City property, this was a terrible eyesore, and that this looked like a dumping ground for West Ashley that should be addressed. He said he was not sure if this was done with a zoning ordinance or something with Livability Court. Also, they wanted to put an end to large lots being turned into parking garages for 18-wheelers, and heavy equipment over at West Ashley. He said they needed to start a

conversation on how to get that rectified and having those over there right next to that neighborhood was disgusting.

Councilmember Shahid asked how this could be allowed to take place, and the message this sent was that they did not care about their residents, the beauty of West Ashley, the sanctity of some of those folks who invested their money, and time in their residences. He urged the committee to come up with a solution, or to address this from happening. He said they could also get an ordinance on the books, either by zoning, or other means to get that heavy equipment out of their neighborhoods.

Mr. Riccio said they had been dealing with this through the Councilman for some time. He said there were agreements with the bowling alley that was zoned as a general business. Also, they were allowed to have heavy equipment, which was kept to the back. He said that his staff were dovetailing with the Police Department, and even Traffic and Transportation had been monitoring that area. Mr. Riccio said he would defer this to Mr. Batchelder. He said they were not sure how much they could do at this point with the zoning and commercial activity that allowed those types of vehicles on private property. He said he was not sure if Zoning had entered into some type of contractual agreement but would defer to them regarding some type of ordinance.

Mayor Tecklenburg said there were a lot of discussions about tractor-trailer trucks that parked in the neighborhoods in the City of North Charleston, but not in the City of Charleston. He asked if there were any prohibitions in place for neighborhood parking of tractor-trailer trucks. Mr. Riccio said based on his experience the tractors were not prohibited in residential areas if they were on their private property. He said he would get in touch with Zoning. Also, he believed that this had not been explored, and that complaints were generated in residential areas with tractor-trailers who started their engines early in the morning. He said he spoke to Mr. Batchelder on many occasions, and this was allowed by their zoning. He said he would recommend that to be changed.

Mayor Tecklenburg said he understood that Councilmember Shahid made a complaint and would need to be enforced over time. He said if this would get to a certain point, they could put a chain up. Mayor Tecklenburg asked Councilmember Shahid if those were for the tractor-trailers that were parked on business commercial properties adjacent to the neighborhoods. Councilmember Shahid said yes and when he was coming into his office, there were three or four rigs parked on the property across from Sumar Street. He said he could not locate the owners of that property to ask if they gave their permission. He said this was still an eyesore for this location. He said they were trying to revitalize West Ashley, and they needed to step forward to have that rectified. He said they needed to get those tractors off private properties that were subject for revitalization and redevelopment and to reach out to the owners of those properties to see if they had permission or were allowed to do this.

Councilmember Shahid said they should go back to what Mr. Riccio said about looking into ordinances and see if they were allowed to change the ordinance, or to disallow this type of use in the city. He said there should be specified locations for those tractors. He understood that truck drivers' jobs were tough, and they had long hours and stretches, but they should not have to accommodate them by using open slab properties to park their rigs. He said there should be designated areas for them, and this was something they could work on, and help pay and develop a place for them to park their rigs. He said having them parked on abandoned

properties next to neighborhoods was sending a terrible message to the residents of West Ashley.

Mr. Riccio said that he would notify the property owners of those vacant properties at the Captain D's and the BP gas station where they had been parked, and place signs there as well. He said since those were privately owned properties, he would ask the owners to post their own signs and have their own tow company to facilitate parking enforcement.

Lieutenant King said the new signage helped, and that his officers checking on this property pulled them away from doing other things. He said he had brought this up at Parks a few months ago about putting a couple of chains across that lot. He said by putting some signage and having a padlock on one entrance so Fire could get in, that this would solve the problem instead of becoming a recurring issue for the Sumar location. He said this was what he suggested and would keep his people free from continuously checking that property.

Mayor Tecklenburg said he would ask Mr. Kronsberg of the Parks Department what chain they could put there and talk to the property owners. He said that he would be willing to entertain the idea of an ordinance change but wanted to be mindful there was a Publix grocery store that had deliveries from tractor trailers, and they did not want to get in the way of commerce. He said those sounded like instances where people had parked overnight where there should be some permanent commercial space to park.

Chair Brady said that Mr. Riccio would look into contacting those property owners and have the Parks Department install a chain. He said should that problem continue despite their efforts; they would go forward and look at that again.

Councilmember Shahid asked if the committee could refer this to the Legal Department. He said he agreed with everything that Lieutenant King said. He did not want to take away from people who were making deliveries to the Publix, but this was long-term overnight parking, and thought an ordinance change was warranted. He said if they could get the process started now, that would help address some of those issues when they had pushed people off those locations, and they would go find another spot over in West Ashley.

Chair Brady said he would ask the Committee if there was a consensus for Legal to look at any proposed ordinance changes they could act on. He said they would need to look at this from a City-wide perspective as well, instead of just certain zones.

Bike Share Program update

Chair Brady asked if this Item could be deferred until the next Traffic and Transportation meeting.

On a motion of Councilmember Gregg, seconded by Mayor Tecklenburg, the Committee voted unanimously to defer Item Number Five the Bike Share Program update until the next Traffic and Transportation Meeting.

Approval of traffic calming on Purcell Lane, Daniel Island Neighborhood

Mr. Tisdale said they received a request to install one speed hump on Purcell Lane off Daniel Island. He said the request had come in March 2022, and the applicant had met the requirements. He said the ADT was 735, which was well over their minimum threshold, and they had 92% buy-in from the community. He said the average speeds were about 26 mph, which

was above the posted speed limit, and that he was requesting if the Committee would approve TNT with the installation of the speed humps. He said they did get Fire to agree to that location for the speed hump and that this would not be an impedance for their response time.

Councilmember Gregg said that he would like to thank Mr. Tisdale for getting this through the long and difficult process for him and the folks on Purcell Lane. He said they were clamoring for that traffic calming device for some time. He asked Mr. Tisdale if he could verify that a speed hump could not be placed any further than 350 feet to a stop sign. He said since they were going to build one speed hump but had preferred that they would install two. Mr. Tisdale said that if they had speed humps too close together, that could cause a problem for people who were traversing over, so the rule of thumb should be within 300 to 500 feet near an intersection. Mayor Tecklenburg said the reason why they were careful about placement and distance was the impact they had on fire trucks and Public Safety Vehicles getting to where they needed to go.

On a motion of Councilmember Brady, seconded by Councilmember Gregg, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the traffic calming installation on Purcell Lane in the Daniel Island Neighborhood.

Sanders Road sidewalk and Sanders Road at Bees Ferry Road Traffic signal update

Mr. Mathis said he had good news on both items. He said they were working with DOT to make minor tweaks to their plans where the race crosswalk was on Sanders Road sidewalk up in Charleston County. He said they were expecting to put this out to bid within the next three months and then hopefully construction could begin. He said one should be happening this year in terms of the Sanders Road at Bees Ferry traffic signal. He said that the signal was up but had not been operational, and that they were going through their final inspections. He said there were some punch list items that the contractor had to take care of, but their hope was to get it operational within the next few weeks.

Chair Brady said that he noticed there was an 'out of service' bag on the signal. He asked if there was a state requirement that should be bagged for a certain amount of time to give people time to see the signal before it had become operational. Mr. Mitchell said when they get ready to activate a signal, it would be put in a flash condition for approximately 72 hours before it would be put into normal operation. He said the flash period was a time of notification that the signal was being prepared to be activated. Chair Brady asked would there be a sign on the road that would indicate that was a new signal. He said when the light at Carolina Bay Drive became operational, there was a yellow diamond sign that said new traffic signal. Mr. Mitchell said yes, those would be installed before it would be put into the flash operation.

Discussion

Chair Brady said the last item on the agenda was for any discussions that were not covered in the agenda.

Mr. Somerville said they had a group that went through and reviewed the submittals for the parking meters. He said they had shortlisted down to three, and the committee selected Flowbird Urban Intelligence. He said they seemed more apt into pay stations, but they did have the single-spaced meters, and they were currently in negotiations with them and with their Procurement Department. He said they hoped to get this moving as soon as possible to get

these pay stations into their service lots throughout the city. He said Flowbird had passports and they were partnered with passport that would provide the pay-by-sell option as well as the Duncan's solution that would help with their enforcement aspect. He said that he hoped that they could get everything ironed out as soon as possible so they could move forward.

Mayor Tecklenburg said they had a significant discussion during their final budget deliberations about parking fees. He said he wanted to know if there was an intent of the Chair and the Committee to bring the matter to discuss the impact of additional parking fees of their City, and their citizens before they recommended any increases down the line to the Budget Ad Hoc Committee and City Council.

Chair Brady said they could address this at their next T&T meeting. He said that Councilmember Seekings would also be very interested in having that discussion.

Mayor Tecklenburg said he wanted Mr. Somerville to get together with Budget and Finance to see what the staff had thought about any recommendations in addition to what they talked about at Council.

There being no further business, the Committee adjourned at 4:46 p.m.

Donna Constance

Clerk of Council's Office