

Traffic and Transportation Committee

February 22, 2021

A meeting of the Committee on Traffic and Transportation was held this date, beginning at 2:02 p.m. over Zoom Conference Call.

Notice of this meeting was sent to all local news media.

Present

Councilmember Seekings, Chair; Councilmember Brady (joined at 2:19 p.m.), Vice-Chair; Councilwoman Jackson, Councilwoman Delcioppo; and Mayor Tecklenburg. **Also Present:** Andrea Derungs, Tracy McKee, Josh Johnson, Troy Mitchell, Councilmember Appel, Janie Borden, Julia Copeland, Keith Benjamin, Robbie Somerville, Ryan McClure, and Bethany Whitaker.

The meeting was opened by a moment of silence led by Chairman Seekings.

Approval of Minutes

On the motion of Councilwoman Jackson, seconded by Councilwoman Delcioppo, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the February 9, 2021 meeting.

Application for Original Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity for Approval

- *Red Carpet Limousine Services, LLC (Limo)*

On the motion of Councilwoman Jackson, seconded by Mayor, Tecklenburg, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the above item.

Folly & Formosa Financial Agreement

Mr. Benjamin said this was one of the intersections identified by SCDOT for a signal rebuild. When they had a signal rebuild, SCDOT had a process of what they funded and supported. Anything that was non-standard, there were ways that the City and municipalities could participate as well via the Signal Maintenance Agreement. There had been many questions and comments about these intersections being safer for signalization, pedestrian traffic and also the potential for a flashing yellow turn.

Mr. Johnson said that signals got rebuilt every so often. Whenever there was an opportunity for them to partner, the City liked to have the mast arm upgrade and other things that SCDOT considered non-standard. When there was that opportunity for partnership, they entered into a financial participation agreement where the City was paying for that extra cost. This project had been in a design for awhile and working its way through the administrative pipe. It was ready to go into a package for a letting to be awarded to a contractor. If they could get the City's signature and approval on the agreement by March 3rd, they should be in the June letting date for this project. He believed the City's cost portion was in the \$150,000 range and the SCDOT portion was in the \$310,000 range.

Mr. Benjamin asked if Mr. Mitchell could speak more specifically to the benefits coming to the intersections and what was changing/being improved. Mr. Mitchell said this was one of the chosen intersections and had been going on for about six years. Some of the improvements included pedestrian signals along with the flashing yellow arrow. That would allow left-turn movements into the

neighborhood without having to wait for the protected-only movements. It would be permissive protective. Mast arms would also be installed which would be better suited for that area. The flashing yellow arrow would allow the intersection to operate better and maximize movements.

Mayor Tecklenburg said they did have recent requests about beautification of this intersection and they were open to those considerations. They didn't want to hold up the agreement because SCDOT was ready to go. They would like to reserve the ability to come back and have a planted median or other beautification efforts at the intersection. Councilwoman Jackson said this would be well-received by the neighborhood and everyone who traveled this way. It was a large, wide stretch and seemed like accidents waiting to happen. Beautification would be a good fit. Chairman Seekings asked where this money was coming from. Mr. Benjamin said they had encumbered funds from 2018 through the Signal Maintenance Agreement. Regarding beautification, they did get estimates. Those funds couldn't come from SCDOT or Signal Maintenance Agreement, so they would have to come from other means to be executed, but it was feasible. Chairman Seekings asked what the speed limit was currently between that intersection and the Wappoo cut. They had a wrestling match over this when it was in his district over the speed limit being 40 or 35. He thought they were going to drop it to 35 and asked if they ever did that. Mr. Johnson said he thought there was a segment that was 35 toward the north and somewhere in this area it increased but he didn't know exactly where it increased. Chairman Seekings asked if he could look at that. It was a very traveled road and 45 was very fast.

On the motion of Councilwoman Jackson, seconded by Mayor Tecklenburg, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the above item.

Hwy. 61 Traffic Response System Activation (Information Only)

Mr. Benjamin said that almost three years ago, they had a presentation from Mr. Johnson letting the Committee know they would be doing various signal intersection improvements throughout West Ashley. When they rode through those corridors, they could see where some of those improvements had happened. Hwy. 61 was part of that conversation and there had been a lot of discussion about how to improve traffic in that area. One of the improvements to be made was the general traffic flow and how to improve the actual signal system for that. There was some work that SCDOT, in coordination with the Signals Division, had been doing in relation to that. They wanted to discuss that and let them know what would happen in that corridor.

Mr. Mitchell said he would talk about the traffic responsive system activation. That portion of the project was part of the intersection improvement project that SCDOT was doing along all of the corridors. This project was to happen at the end of all the improvements along the corridors of Ashley River Road, Glenn McConnell, Paul Cantrell from Parsonage all the way to Wesley Drive. This would help improve traffic flow by using traffic responsive technology. The system would work with the volume of the traffic. The traffic volume was collected by vehicle sensors strategically placed along the corridor. They would pick different cycle lengths according to the traffic volume. At this time, the engineering firm was waiting on the contractor to do all the terminations for the vehicle sensors. Once that was done, all of that information would be collected from the advanced traffic controllers through the traffic management center. Once the data was collected, it could run in the background of existing information. The data would be looked over and the best possible times would be put out in the field. The entire process took about ten weeks, but it wouldn't start until after the contractor had made all

the terminations. He would have a schedule from the contractor the following week to see where they were on the process.

Mr. Johnson said that this was the contractor coming back and tying up some loose ends on the terminations so it could collect that specific data. They had been actively working on intersections on US 17.

Councilwoman Jackson said she was looking forward to seeing the technology in action. She asked if they had gone to the traffic control center. Mr. Johnson said that when they could see each other in person he had, but it had been awhile. Mayor Tecklenburg said they were looking forward to getting this wrapped up and in use. He thanked their partners at SCDOT for working on this and making it happen. Chairman Seekings referred back to Folly/Formosa and asked when that would commence and how long it would take. Mr. Johnson said if they got everything turned in in March, the letting would be in June. That was when the bids were opened up. It would be a 30-day window to awarding the contractor. The schedule was in the 15-18 month time range. The majority of that would be ordering the mast arms and waiting on them to come in.

Traffic Calming Update and Approvals

Mr. Somerville stated that last year they installed 17 traffic calming devices. There were seven 12-foot speed humps, nine 14-foot speed humps, and one 22-foot raised crosswalk. They conducted maintenance on 57 existing speed humps within the City. He wanted to present four locations where they were ready to go last year but didn't have the funding to complete.

The first location was Bogard Street within Cannonborough/Elliottborough. The concern they were getting from the neighborhood was that on Bogard Street, from Rutledge to Ashe, there was no form of traffic control. Residents were concerned that cars were driving in the 50mph range in that stretch. They completed the 24-hour study and recorded 1,182 vehicles. 9.92% were traveling in excess of 55 mph. The average speed was 23 mph, but there were cars going through that section pretty quickly. They received the 75% petition requirement and were requesting approval. Chairman Seekings asked if they ever looked to see whether citations had been issued for traffic laws like speeding. Mr. Somerville said they didn't ask for that information. Chairman Seekings said he didn't know that a speed hump would help that situation. He asked if there was street parking on both sides and Mr. Somerville said no. It was only on the south side.

The second location was in Carolina Bay on Conservancy Lane. This was the newer section of this street. They treated the older section of this street in 2015. The newer section had about 120 homes. The residents expressed concern with the connection to Sanders Road and cut-through traffic. There were 1,146 vehicles recorded in the 24-hour study. They wanted to place four speed humps in this section of street. Councilmember Brady said this was the street he lived on. Mayor Tecklenburg asked if they considered adding stop signs at the few intersections rather than speed humps. Mr. Somerville said he believed there was a four-way stop at the intersection at Bethel Way. Councilmember Brady said there were stop signs, but people blew through the stop signs because they were so deep in the neighborhood. Chairman Seekings asked if they had talked to the individuals where the speed humps would be located. Mr. Somerville said that would be a part of the location approval form. He would verify the locations and work with Police and Fire to make sure they didn't have concerns over the locations. He would make sure the neighborhood signed off on the locations.

The third location was Jackson Street by Martin Park. It was a request from the Eastside neighborhood and Councilmember Mitchell. Mr. Benjamin said they had done a number of walks with the community in this area. They had implemented some traffic calming on Aiken Street. One of the main things talked about is that now with the swimming pool renovated and with school kids in the area and pedestrian traffic, they needed to make sure Jackson street had markings, signage and traffic calming. They implemented a raised crosswalk speed table on Aiken Street to assist with the speeding and wanted to do something similar on Jackson Street. Chairman Seekings asked if that had done a traffic and speed study on Jackson Street. Mr. Somerville said he didn't have the data for the traffic study. He knew the traffic operations division monitored the area along with some others. Chairman Seekings said he believed that the ordinance required that to place a speed calming device. Mr. Benjamin said they could go back and do that due diligence to bring a more updated study for Jackson Street. They had multiple accidents that had come up. Mr. Somerville said one of the biggest concerns with this area was mid-block crossing by pedestrians. Chairman Seekings said he understood that and was in favor of calming traffic in any place where they had people crossing, especially children. There were a number of places this was an issue and hoped they were talking about the ability to do this type of traffic calming without going through the ordinance process where needed. If they were going to set a precedent they should be ready to defend it and put this in place in other areas. Councilwoman Jackson said she agreed with that and asked if that was something they had knowledge of and if there was a different way of handling this that they should put on the agenda for future discussion. Chairman Seekings said that it seemed like they should either amend the ordinance and just have a community buy-in requirement, but they did have a process in place. Mr. Benjamin said they weren't opposed to adhering to the process. This was an outstanding item of a community walk. They would do the prerequisite pieces. They were looking at coming to them with a different way of handling the traffic calming program, not necessarily around the check-box approvals, but in terms of when they received requests. They were also looking at their marketing documents. He was comfortable with what was in the ordinance for approvals, but if their will was to change it, they would adhere and respond. When/how they received requests and how they evaluated them could be streamlined. They could have a set time when residents knew they had to get their documents to the City.

Mr. Somerville stated that the fourth location was Amber Hill Way, also in Carolina Bay. The concern was the cut-through traffic to the middle school. They received emails about Pleasant Hill Drive and Pixley Street. They did the 24-hour study and 398 vehicles were recorded. The average speed was 25 mph but 45% exceed the speed limit and .85% were traveling in excess of 55 mph. Councilmember Brady said this was near the entrance of the neighborhood, so the cut-through aspect wasn't surprising. The new middle school was opened, so he wondered how many were cutting through to the old school.

On the motion of Councilmember Brady, seconded by Councilwoman Jackson, the Committee voted to approve the four locations (Bogard Street, Conservancy Lane, Jackson Street, and Amber Hill Way) for traffic calming with the amendment that they did a traffic/speed study for Jackson Street. The vote was not unanimous. Chairman Seekings voted nay on Bogard Street.

Chairman Seekings asked if they had money for the new requests. Mr. Somerville said they did. He continued with the Maintenance Plan. Emerald Forest Parkway had two humps installed in 2005 and had deteriorated. They would be a full rebuild. Country Club Drive was treated in 2009, but they had one hump that was deteriorated and they would rebuild it. With the approval of the four speed humps, they were at a cost of \$29,709. The two rebuilds were \$7,974. So, the total was \$37,683 spent on new humps

and full rebuild installations. For the maintenance plan, they were working through 2003 and 2004 locations with 45 locations in various neighborhoods at a price of \$33,750. That left them at \$71,433 with a balance of \$40,067 for the remainder of the year. Mr. Benjamin said that they wanted the Committee to be aware of what they were working on and to be up front with how much was left. They welcomed the requests for traffic calming and it made it easier when the constituent had the petitions. They were sitting on a number of requests that didn't have the neighborhood buy-in yet. Mr. Somerville said they were also looking at other things they can do like stop signs and crosswalks to implement that may work better than speed humps. Mayor Tecklenburg asked if they repainted when they did maintenance. Mr. Somerville said that maintenance consisted of a re-coating and stamping of the existing speed hump.

Councilwoman Jackson said that she was told about a driving safety concern on the south part of James Island. There was a gentleman who mentioned that people came around the curve very fast. It was an SCDOT road and she knew they would probably have to get their State representative involved. She asked if City became authorized to look at something like that and look at the various ways to control traffic. It wasn't a neighborhood. Mr. Somerville said that would be a tough one because of the volume on Secessionville Road. SCDOT's requirements were less than 4,000 vehicles a day and that road was heavily traveled. They could maybe work on another traffic calming option. Mr. Benjamin said to send the request to them and they could get it to the traffic team at CPD so they could do the clocks for them to see what was happening. That information would be helpful to have when they went to SCDOT. Chairman Seekings asked if they had looked at shaving the speed humps down that were really talk and had pointed tops in areas like Byrnes Down. It could cause an issue for public safety. Mr. Somerville said they ran into a small issue when they were looking at humps like that because some residents wanted them left like that to really slow people down. Chairman Seekings said they may want to talk with Chief Curia to see if they had any issues with those.

Director's Update

Mr. Benjamin said that he wanted to tell them that they had two incidents in the last week and they couldn't pass over those they were losing in the public right-of-way. There was a lot of due diligence they still needed to do, specifically working on the King Street corridor. They had gotten the commitment from the District Office to do something similar to what they did on Maybank Highway, a road safety study from Line to Huger. Road safety audits were federally mandated, so he couldn't call it an audit. The King Street audit stopped at Line Street. They wanted to identify some opportunities and create some prioritization. Fairchild Street was going well and if the weather got better they would finalize it and get it up and going. Brigade was also going well. A lot of the follow-ups were with markings. Camp/Folly was being worked on with the consultant. The biggest thing was they didn't want to negatively impact Folly Road or have to do a corridor study. Harborview/Folly, they talked to the Council of Governments who had sent their CAD forms for the right-of-way. They would look at that and coordinate with SCDOT. There were two individuals on the Bike/Ped Committee asking to reappoint but they had open seats that they were asking for recommendations on. They welcomed any and all to be a part of that.

Having no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.