

**PROSPECT HILL NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION (PHNA)
MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, AUGUST 2, 2010
6:30 PM**

Meeting Location: the Green Bean Coffee House, 410 W. 4th Street

Attendance: George Bull, Jacob Carter, Caroline Clay, Laurel Cornell, Rachel Guglieho, Don Harp, Krista Holmstrom, Jean Kautt, Karen Knight, Richard Lewis, Faye Mark, Glenda Murray, Patrick Murray, Susan Park, Lucy Schaich, Richard Slinkard, Tom Stryker, Chris Sturbaum, Helen Sturbaum, Mona Syed, Carol Thompson, Timothy Waters, Sharon Wells, Doug Wissing, and Natalie Wrubel

Guest: Justin Wykoff and Paul Keerburg City Engineering Office

I. Approval of the Minutes and Treasurer's Report: The minutes of the July meeting were distributed.

II. Pressing Issues and New Business:

A. Traffic Calming – W. Third Street.

Chris Sturbaum began the meeting with an introduction of Justin Wykoff and Paul Keerburg from the City Engineering Department who came to listen to neighborhood concerns, report on their research on traffic volume and speeds throughout the neighborhood, talk about traffic calming issues and process, and answer questions from the neighborhood.

Chris gave a brief explanation of the process that the City of Bloomington has developed to study, design and install traffic calming devices on city streets. The process is designed to address one street at a time. That is the process that we are following. If we plan carefully as a neighborhood we can make the process work for everyone.

Justin gave a brief report on the City of Bloomington's NTSP - Neighborhood Traffic Safety Program. The information is available on the City of Bloomington Engineering web site <http://bloomington.in.gov/media/media/application/pdf/7383.pdf>. This is the process that the City has been using since 2001-2003 to address neighborhood traffic safety concerns with traffic calming projects. Justin handed out traffic counts at 18 different sites in the neighborhood that also contained the speed of traffic based on the 85th percentile of all traffic counted.

The 85th percentile (+/- 5 mph) speed is considered the "normal" speed limit for a location. There are other considerations that go into considering the safe speed for an area (more crashes than normal, situations causing dangerous conditions, etc.). Justin said that the 2003 traffic calming project on West Third Street reduced speed. Although the project achieved many good results there are still sections with a speeding problem.

Moving the problem to another street is not the intent of the program. Kirkwood Avenue and Second Street are the major east-west thoroughfares in this area. They are designed to carry heavier traffic loads. Second Street is 34 feet wide with three 11 foot lanes (a center turn lane). It carries approximately 16,000 cars per day. Once the potential capacity of a street is reached, congestion occurs and drivers begin to seek alternate routes. West Third for comparison carries

1,172 per day. The recommended traffic volume for a residential street is 400-600 cars per day. Justin said that W. Third definitely carries more traffic than would be expected for a local / residential street. Several long-time residents of the neighborhood mentioned that W. Third used to be a calmer street, but that it had always been an alternate route to the west side and beyond.

Design of traffic calming devices: Step 6 of the NTSP is the testing phase of the program, testing various concepts. Step 7 is the evaluation of the various concepts. For instance, it was found that the traffic island at Rogers and Third Streets slowed traffic in the block west so much that it became a bottle neck. However, the speeds increased beyond previous levels in the blocks immediately west of that. Traffic counts indicated that it did not reduce traffic volume.

One concept / design that is being considered is the use of traffic cushions. These are modified “speed bumps” with gaps for the wheels placed such that it would allow larger (wider wheel base) safety vehicles (fire trucks, etc) to pass through but would cause vehicles with narrow wheel bases to need to slow down to pass over the cushion. Possible locations could be the block between Jackson and Maple, and Maple to Buckner. There are no examples of this device installed yet in Bloomington.

The specific proposal as outlined by Justin is:

- 1) Narrow the entrance to the neighborhood at Rogers and Third from 29 feet to 20 feet. This was the purpose of the island. Test this concept for 30 days, then evaluate; then
- 2) Install cushions at the locations mentioned and test for 30 days, then evaluate; then
- 3) Install a 3-way stop at Walker and Third. Test the concept for 30 days and then evaluate. This process would take 90 days total.

A brief discussion of stop signs ensued. The Manual of Traffic Control Devices establishes conditions for the use of stop signs. They are not recommended for intersections with volumes below 500 vehicles per hour. We do not have these volumes on this section of West Third. The overuse of stop signs can teach disregard of stop signs lessening their effectiveness (personally, I think we’ve already lost that campaign).

Neighborhood-wide traffic calming vs One street at a time

The question was raised about addressing all the neighborhood traffic issues with one process instead of trying to do it one street at a time. It seems like it would be a more holistic plan and would solve the problem of diverting traffic from one street to the next with the one street at a time approach. Several of the Fourth Street neighbors favor this approach. The response was two fold: the process for Third Street has already progressed through several steps, and second, the official process is established around one street at a time.

On the other hand, those in favor of a whole neighborhood approach argue that it could identify most of the major issues; devise solutions around a larger integrated plan, different phases that could then be implemented one street at a time according to the established process. The neighborhood wide approach would stand a better chance of preventing the diversion of one street’s problems onto the next street which is the worry of the non-Third Street neighbors. Neighbors would know in advance that an area-wide plan was in the works and know that in time, the problems on their street would be addressed. It would not necessarily prevent the third Street projects from going forward, just make them part of a coordinated plan.

There was some agreement that this approach made sense. Could we do both at one time? Continue with the Third Street process and begin to develop an area-wide plan?

At this point we went around the room to gather comments from the neighbors.

- A transparent process is essential, would like to see the neighborhood web site used to keep everyone up to date (there are about 170 email participants but about 470 households in the neighborhood. Email does not reach all the neighborhood),
- We need to communicate door to door with flyers,
- Worried that the existing Third Street plan will divert traffic to adjacent streets,
- Favors a comprehensive approach,
- Thinks the islands create an hazard and are dangerous, no bumps or islands in the historic neighborhood,
- Wonders what the impact of Patterson Pointe development will be on Third Street---we should make it not so convenient to get there,
- Thinks the NTSP is a flawed process since only the people living on that street can vote on that particular project when it could have area wide repercussions,
- Third Street east of Rogers is very wide and invites people into the neighborhood at high speed, we need to address this issue,
- Clearly there are many issues to resolve and we need to work with City officials to work through them,
- We should not kill one project to do another,
- We are trying to modify human behavior with these devices. Since there is very little or no penalty for speeding in Bloomington there is little incentive for motorists to observe the speed limits. Fortunately a majority of motorists respect the law and try to drive safely, but there is a percentage (for whatever reason) that do not and create problems for the rest of us, and it is that percentage that we are trying to reach with these traffic calming devices,
- Some time back, a car coming down hill on Maple ran into a house on 4th Street demolishing the porch.

In the interest of the late hour and in an effort to bring the discussion to a resolution, there was an effort to draft a motion that would incorporate the majority position yet not lose the work and the existing momentum that has already been established on Third Street.

A motion was discussed and drafted, to wit: The Prospect Hill Traffic Committee will be formed to review the 3rd Street proposal in relation to other traffic concerns from the neighborhood. The committee will report back within two months (October PHNA meeting). The West Third Street traffic calming process will not move forward until the two months is up and the committee reports back. This was moved by Karen Knight for approval and seconded by Glenda Murray. The motion was passed by a voice vote, with one nay vote.

The next step is to activate the committee and move forward with research.

III. Old Business:

A. None

IV. Committee Reports:

A. Conservation District: No report

B. Fairview School Committee: No report

C. HAND: Trades Park Update. No report

D. Newsletter Committee: No news.

E. CONA: No news.

V. Odds and Ends From Around the Neighborhood: No report

VI. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 pm.

Next Meeting will be at 6:30 pm, September 13, 2010 at the **Green Bean Coffeehouse**, 410 W. 4th Street (This meeting is scheduled a week later than usual due to the Labor Day holiday.)

Respectfully submitted,
Patrick Murray, Secretary