

CITY OF CORONADO

**A SPECIAL MEETING OF THE
TRAFFIC OPERATIONS COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

Thursday, September 29, 2005

A special meeting of the Traffic Operations Committee (T.O.C.) was held on Thursday, September 29, 2005, at 2:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers. Present were Scott Huth, Ed Walton, Tony Peña, Kim Raddatz and Paul Crook. Also present were Dave Johnson, Assistant Engineer, and Laszlo Waczek, Patrol Sergeant.

1. Minutes of the September 1, 2005 Special Meeting – The minutes were unanimously approved.

2. Oral Communications – None.

3. Recommendation Regarding the Request to Install a Handicap Blue Curb Zone in Front of the Residence at 736 F Avenue – Mr. Johnson reported that Gene Kemp, 736 F Avenue requested a blue curb handicap zone in front of his residence. He provided proof that his wife and a neighbor have disabilities which limit their mobility. The property at 736 F is served by a driveway that leads to underground parking and there is alley access for what appears to be egress rather than ingress. It looks like it's one-way off of F Avenue out to the alley. The property is on a 50' lot and the driveway that serves that underground parking is approximately 25' wide and situated approximately in the middle of the 50' lot. The City has a warrant for installing blue curbs in residential zones and the three criteria that need to be met are that: (1) the person has a verified disability; (2) a doctor's note with proof of limited mobility is provided; and (3) the subject property has no areas that could be converted to on-site accessible handicap parking. Unfortunately, in this instance the last criteria is not met due to the underground parking situation, so this does not qualify for a blue curb under the warrant and the staff recommendation is to not install a blue curb at this location. Mr. Huth asked how many units are on this property and Mr. Johnson said there are five.

Gene Kemp, 736 F Avenue, thanked the Committee for listening to and reviewing his petition. He said that Mr. Kincaid, the other blue curb requestor, apologizes that he is unable to attend today's meeting due to family illness problems, but he and Mr. Kemp are in concurrence with everything Mr. Kemp will say. If the Committee would like an affidavit to that effect they'll be happy to provide it. The other day Mr. Kemp watched with some dismay as Mrs. Kincaid tried to make it from her residence down to the garage and it was really painful to watch. She needed help every inch of the way. His understanding in reading the turn-down is that they qualified for two out of the three criteria so he'd like to discuss those two. As far as the recommendation that they may use the driveway to offload people, the concurrence of all the residents there is that it's probably not a good, safe thing to do. Nor, because of the time it takes for some elderly people to ingress and egress from a car would it be such a good idea. One of the objections was that they would encroach on the neighbor's property and he checked with

Mr. Falletta recently as to whether there would be any problem with him or the owners for them to have an additional seven feet. Mr. Kemp was told a blue curb requires 20'. He measured that 13' would be inside his property line and the other 7' would be on theirs. Not only does Mr. Falletta have no objection, he encouraged them to have the blue curb zone. Another factor is that the four separate units he's building on that property will add eight additional parking areas to the back. They can't see any logical objection for turning down this request. On the way home on his bicycle today he noticed there is a blue curb zone on Ninth between D and E Avenues that a friend of his measured at 18'. Mr. Kemp thought that 20' was a standard, but evidently it's not, so if somebody needed the additional two feet, instead of the total 20', it wouldn't be a problem for them. He wonders what the ADA would think if a senior citizen or two were turned down by a senior-friendly Coronado city for a blue curb zone.

Mr. Peña asked Mr. Kemp if there is an elevator in the garage and Mr. Kemp replied that there is not. The garage area is semi-submerged, almost underground, but not quite. There are no ramps – it would be too steep. One of the reasons it's too steep is because the code was different then, so there's a much steeper ingress and egress into that garage than would be authorized now. Mr. Peña agreed that driveway standards have since been modified. Mr. Huth said the staff report indicates there's a 25' driveway apron and asked if the driveway going down to the garage is the same width or is it 20'? Mr. Kemp wasn't sure, but it's less than the 25' because the brick wall that comes in narrows as the driveway enters into the garage area itself. The answer is that it's tapered. As you get into the garage it's probably more like 18'.

Philip Gallo, 745 F Avenue, lives almost directly across the street from Mr. Kemp. Mr. Kemp is a good and friendly neighbor and it pains him tremendously to speak against this, but he thinks this is a case of the individual good versus the common good. F Avenue is an R-4 zone and it's a mixed area of condos and individual homes. It is a highly impacted street as far as parking goes and a single family home was torn down right next to Mr. Kemp's condo and four new condos are going up there which will add an additional six cars to the traffic on that street. They will have eight off-street parking places, but only about one of every five garages in Coronado is used to have a car in it. The others are used for storage because the houses are so small. In addition to the impact, F Avenue gets all of the overflow from all of the activities at the elementary, middle and high schools, so every time there is an open house, a teachers' meeting, a football game or any other type of sporting event, all on-street parking on F Avenue is taken. Most of the residents on F Avenue are senior citizens and many are not able to use their garages because they were converted before they bought their houses and they have to park on the street. Putting a blue zone there is taking away a parking place and making the rest of the residents, in many instances, have to walk a block, two blocks or more to get to their residences during peak parking. The driveway of this condo is at least 25' wide and it does narrow down. It is very easy to pull a car into that and the car could sit there on a level area and a passenger, even a disabled one, could be discharged and allowed to go to their residence. This might put a five to ten minute delay for someone who wanted to get into the parking structure; it would not interfere with anyone who wanted to get out because the egress is on the alley. Finally, he was told that it costs \$350 to have a blue zone painted and it also costs the same amount to remove one. He is aware of several areas in the City where a blue zone has been allowed to be put in, the individual has stopped driving, has moved away or has died and there is nobody who is

willing to pay the \$350 to take away the blue zone. So once the blue zone is put in it apparently seems to remain there forever, long after it has fulfilled its use.

Mr. Peña said that Engineering has a system now to track the expiration of and need for blue zones and is following up on that so he believes this is not an issue. He said, to follow up on what had been discussed earlier about an elevator and ramping, that this appears to be a fairly difficult site for a handicapped person and you have to weigh this against the available parking on the street. He thinks that people have to walk a little longer because they can't find a spot on the street to park. You should have off-street parking regardless of the history of the property and the people who can walk are walking. The people who are handicapped can't walk, so he has a little problem weighing the ability to park on the street if you're not handicapped versus a handicapped person struggling to get into a parking spot.

Mr. Walton feels this is a tough one because as Mr. Peña pointed out, it's a difficult site. He looks at it as having available space for a parking spot down below, but it doesn't have an accessible path to serve the residents. Then it comes to who's responsible for that? Is it a City responsibility to make sure that a private resident has an accessible path or is it the resident's? He feels the residence could be modified; there are lifts and ways to make that path accessible for someone who can't negotiate stairs. Also weighing on his mind is that in all the other instances where there is residential blue curb they are directly in front of the residence and don't cross property lines. He's a little reluctant to set a precedent by doing so. Technically, it's all public parking but in the past it's always been put in front of the residence that has the placard. This is very difficult for him. He thinks it's a public good versus the needs of the individual and it's hard to say which one weighs out.

Mr. Crook said he took a look and it is a difficult property. The grade looks pretty steep. He wouldn't want to be parked there trying to get in and out. The recommendation about parking and leaving the car for five or ten minutes while they make egress or ingress into the home is going to block the sidewalk so that a pedestrian can't get around the car but it's difficult because there's no way you can do this parking spot unless you get in front of the other person's property. When he was down there the block was almost fully parked. It would seem that there would be that could be some kind of entry into that residence with some kind of an elevator or a lift so they can pull down inside instead of trying to do it out front.

Mr. Raddatz likes the City to stay consistent; he knows this would cross property lines, but by the same token, he also looked at Mr. Kemp's property and his options are pretty limited. The property probably could be modified to be ADA accessible but he wouldn't want to front that price tag. The bottom line is we've done this for other people, although we haven't impinged on two parcels. He personally doesn't have a problem, providing they can show written approval or permission from the other property owner. He knows that the City Council has given the Engineering Department direction on being able to evaluate blue handicap zones on a regular basis so they don't stock up and when people no longer live there they can be taken out. He's leaning toward the property owner getting the blue curb.

Mr. Peña added that with more recent condominium development there is better handicap access built in. This is kind of an older condo.

Mr. Kemp said what exists now at the property next door is the old driveway. The project is five-eighths to three-quarters completed now and that driveway will be curbed in and then could be painted blue. They wouldn't need this done right now, but

actually, 13' could be approved now and then the additional, if you need 20', but they don't think you do. He thinks 15' would be absolutely fine because nobody has an automobile longer than that in their residence. Mr. Walton said that would have to be made a standard parking stall which is either 18' or 20'. Although Mr. Kemp indicated that no one in the residence has a vehicle over 15', it's still a public parking spot, so it has to be a full standard length. Mr. Walton asked if Mrs. Kemp or Mrs. Kincaid drive solo and Mr. Kemp said neither one is authorized to drive. Mr. Walton said the reason he asked that is because utilizing that driveway entrance as a loading zone and knowing the Police Chief's concern about blocking the sidewalk, he feels you could actually pull parallel to the curb in that 25' and use that as a loading zone, and although you'd block the entrance to the complex, it'd only be for a short time while passengers were loaded or unloaded. He's not sure about the legalities, but certainly there's space available for that.

Mr. Crook said the Vehicle Code doesn't allow blocking of the driveway, but as long as they were actively loading and unloading passengers he doesn't think anybody is going to take exception to it. Usually what happens is that somebody parks and doesn't allow ingress or egress and that's when the Police are called.

Mr. Huth asked if there is enough room to park a vehicle on one half of the driveway while loading and Mr. Johnson said two vehicles may be able to use the driveway but it would not be ideal for loading/unloading passengers. Mr. Huth asked about the back exit which is about 10'. Mr. Walton said you would also have to negotiate more steps loading off the alley side because it's at a lower elevation so it wouldn't be conducive to access as it is from the front.

Mr. Huth likes as a compromise using the driveway apron because in the case he's hearing, the individual isn't able to drive so it's another person who will provide for them. He said he assumed Mr. Kemp would be parking there most of the time and Mr. Kemp indicated that they wouldn't park there all of the time. The plan would be to house the cars in the garage at night, but they might be left at the blue zone in cases of having to go back out again.

Mr. Gallo pointed out that since there are two people who need to use the blue zone that obviously neither one of them should be parked in it because that would make it impossible for the other person to use it and the other problem is that every time there is an event at the school, and even when there isn't an event at the school, there aren't enough blue handicap blue places at the library, and since you cannot reserve a blue parking spot they're going to constantly run the risk that somebody else will be parked in that blue zone. He's sure there are plenty of people who go to events at the high school who have handicapped stickers and who will be allowed to park in these zones and will prevent them from using it. In fact, the lady next door to him has a heart condition and asthma and has been thinking of getting a handicap sticker and she of course could go across the street and always be assured of a parking space there, so he's not sure this is going to solve the problem Mr. Kemp wishes to solve.

Mr. Kemp has observed a lot of people walking back there and he has never seen anybody in this block or two blocks away having to walk that distance as a result of parking out there. He thinks it adds emphasis that there are two people in the same residence that would use this and the fact that this lady Mr. Gallo is talking about, anybody with a handicap placard can use it, so he would say this would add emphasis to it. He would add about crossing the property line, if the Committee wants an affidavit from Mr. Falletta or whomever that they have no objection, he'd be glad to provide that. As far as providing an elevator, it's not just the cost, which would be exorbitant, but

there's really no logical place to put an elevator on that property that he can see. It's not a zero property line, but it is about 6' on either side, so there doesn't seem to be any practicality involved with that at all. The problem with the school is that there's ample parking over there by the field that's very rarely ever taken and if he were the City police and security people he would try to make an effort to make them use their own parking. He agrees that the parking situation around his residence is not good, but a good portion of that is as a result of the construction going on now that will be done in two to three months.

Mr. Huth made a motion to approve the staff recommendation which is not to approve the blue curb. The reasoning he's thinking of, although he thinks Mr. Kemp's made a good case on a couple of points, is that if they're not going to be using the blue curb for parking like in most cases in residential areas where the people with the placard actually put their car in that location for an extended period of time, and we're going to see some movement, is that the driveway apron approach would work and that's making him lean toward the staff recommendation.

Mr. Walton seconded the motion because he thinks the driveway will be open all the time so they can use it to load and unload. He's visited the site several times and each time parking was very tight and he couldn't find a place to park. He doesn't want to give up a parking spot when there may be a solution here that doesn't require that.

Mr. Raddatz asked if Mr. Huth's opinion would be different if there were 20' in front of the property and Mr. Huth said it would not.

The motion passed three to two with Mr. Crook, Mr. Huth and Mr. Walton voting aye, and Mr. Raddatz and Mr. Peña voting nay.

4. Report Regarding the Installation of the In-Road Flashing Crosswalk at the Intersection of Ocean Boulevard and Isabella Avenue – Mr. Johnson reported that the City had been looking at technology for installing flashing crosswalks. These have become popular traffic control devices in the County. There are several cities now that have installations and Coronado was looking at a wireless technology with solar power capabilities that was promising. Therefore, they wouldn't have to dig extensively into the roadway which you have to do with hardwired systems and do a lot of patching. Coronado was approached by a company called Spot Devices which had a product that fit the bill and gave the City good pricing. A trial installation at the intersection of Ocean and Isabella was chosen. The police had indicated that this was one of the heaviest used crosswalks along the beach. Last September the system was installed. The raised pavement markers (RPMs) in the roadway outlined the painted lines of the crosswalk and when you depress the pedestrian control button at either end of the crosswalk a flashing pattern begins, approximately one flash every two seconds, to indicate to drivers there's a pedestrian wanting to cross. On March 26, 2005 the City conducted a pedestrian survey, approximately six to seven months after the installation. Graphs of the results are provided in today's T.O.C. package. During the two-hour pedestrian count period 177 pedestrians crossed there, so there was pretty good usage. Only 12 of the 177 actually activated the lights, so it seems that although there is a lot of usage of the crosswalk itself a lot of the pedestrians aren't activating the flashing crosswalk. In Mr. Johnson's experience, being out there and speaking to pedestrians and asking them how they felt about this technology, most of them were unaware either that it was there or what it was supposed to do; albeit this uses lights to gain the attention of the driver, it would probably be more effective in a nighttime situation to grab drivers' attention or even to get a

pedestrian to see the usefulness of it at night versus day. The survey was done during the day and it could be that pedestrians don't see this as a useful tool when they're crossing the crosswalk. There were some other concerns as well. Because of the solar power and the wireless control it was felt that maintenance would be very low, but it was found that this was not necessarily the case. Because of the electronics in the RPMs they are somewhat raised; the maximum height of an RPM is 3/4" per the MUTCD and we found that our street sweeper, when not paying attention, the shoe on the rear end of the vehicle can damage the units, so several were replaced under warranty because we found out the street sweeper was hitting them. While staff still feels that lighted crosswalks are a tool that we will continue to follow, this particular product hasn't really met our needs. The staff recommendation is to continue to look at the technology and hopefully a company will come out with a better design that can withstand the maintenance activities that we have here, especially near the beach. The recommendation is to not install any additional lighted crosswalks but to continue to examine the technology as it evolves.

Mr. Peña said he has always questioned this type of technology. If this became very pervasive where say 90% of the crosswalks had these little flashing lights he thinks one unintended effect it would have is that we would be conditioning motorists to look for the flashing lights to slow down or stop, but when the flashing light is not there it gives you the indication that it's OK to keep traveling because a pedestrian is not interested in crossing right now even though they may be standing on the curb. He thinks it can be very confusing to motorists who have trouble as it is obeying signs to stop, yield, what have you. We confront that every meeting. He's uncomfortable with the technology that will literally give mixed signals to motorists. He's not really in favor of them.

Mr. Huth said he's not in favor of them, at least during the daytime they're ineffective and a maintenance headache. They don't always get knocked off by the street sweeper; there are other means by which they've been knocked off. The technology has promise, but he feels this particular type of equipment seems to have a real maintenance issue. He recommends continuing to look at the technology, but would like to scrap it at the current location.

Mr. Peña asked Mr. Johnson if he had any idea why people aren't using the device; is there a delay for example? Mr. Johnson said the people he spoke with just weren't aware of the function and didn't understand what the dots in the road were and how pressing a button would do something. There is no delay, however; it's instantaneous.

Mr. Walton said his observation is that when you press the button during the day you don't know if anything is happening or not; you can't see the lights. He thinks at nighttime it's very effective. He's very discouraged by the results of the survey with 12 people activating the lights. This tells him that they're not working as intended. He doesn't know if it's because people aren't familiar with them and don't know how to use them or if the City needs to do additional things to make people more aware. There are some where when you press the button a diode lights up on the other side of the street and you can see that it's activated. He doesn't know if that would help or if the City wants to invest a lot of time and money in trying to make them more effective.

Mr. Huth thought if there was a location in the business district where there is more nighttime activity it might be more beneficial. During the daytime it's not that noticeable unless you're looking right at it from a vehicle. Pedestrians are not

conditioned to use this during the day, mainly because it's really not needed during the day from their perspective.

Mr. Peña asked if this was Council or City Manager directed or is there a grant or some other special interest supporting these things that we need to look at or is it something that can be dealt with at a staff level? Mr. Johnson said that people were kind of excited about the initial installation of the new technology, but it was staff's intention to evaluate it first. Now that we've had a year to look at it we took a step back to see how successful it's been. Mr. Peña said if this just a study for a report to the City Council or City Manager he thinks the study can be moved along, but if it's an opportunity to take it out, is that a possible action? Mr. Walton said there was some interest from Council, but there wasn't direction to put them in. Engineering was interested in seeing how effective they were, using this as a demonstration project. There is nothing set in stone saying they have to remain. His personal preference is to continue with their use to see how they perform over the long haul. He's concerned about the abrasion on the solar panels to see if they last. The ones we have now are susceptible to street sweepers and other unknown causes. He doesn't think there's any harm in leaving the ones we have, but he wouldn't want to spend any more money on replacements; so far all of the replacements have been free. He moved the staff recommendation to not install any additional lighted crosswalks at this time, but to continue to study the technology. Mr. Huth seconded the motion and it passed four to one with Mr. Peña voting nay.

The meeting adjourned at 2:53 p.m.