

STATE OF TEXAS

COUNTIES OF POTTER AND RANDALL

ON the 16th day of October, 2013, the Amarillo Traffic Commission met at 1:30 p.m. in regular session in the City Commission Chambers on the third floor of City Hall at 509 S.E. 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

Traffic Commissioners present were D. J. Stubben, Frank Nelson, Dean Downey, Charlie Graham, Mark Nair, and Barbara Richardson. Members Craig Gualtiere, Walt Kelley, and Steve Rogers were absent. Staff members present were Jerry Bird, Traffic Engineer, David Szmagalski, Traffic Operations Technician, Lt. Ken Albright, Amarillo Police Department, Michael Rice, Director of Public Works, and Judy Alexander, Recording Secretary.

Commissioner Downey led the Pledge of Allegiance, and Commissioner Nelson gave the invocation.

Commissioner Stubben established a quorum and called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. She welcomed Barbara Richardson, who was recently appointed to the Traffic Commission. The following items of business were conducted:

1. **Approval of the September 18, 2013, Minutes:**

Commissioner Downey made a motion to approve the minutes of the September 18, 2013, meeting. Commissioner Nelson seconded the motion, and motion carried unanimously.

2. **Program:**

Jerry Bird, Traffic Engineer, introduced himself and gave a history of his educational and professional background. He received a Bachelor's degree in civil engineering from University of Nevada at Reno and a master's degree in civil engineering with an emphasis on traffic and transportation from Arizona State University. He is a Professional Engineer (PE) licensed in four states: Nevada, Arizona, Texas, and Utah, and holds a license as a Professional Traffic Operations Engineer (PTOE). He said he had worked as a design consultant engineer for 32 years before moving to Amarillo in February 2012 to begin work as the Traffic Engineer. In his work as a design consultant, he was responsible for traffic impact analyses and roadway design, which included lane design, bridges, interchanges, commuter bypasses, signals, and signing. He presented a power point presentation of some of the major freeway projects he had designed in Nevada and Utah. He said he considered it his job to support the members of the commission in their decision-making process and to be able to maintain a defensible position. He introduced Marcus Norris, City Attorney, for his presentation.

Mr. Norris said he had been asked to speak to all the city boards and commissions in the new fiscal year, which began on October 1. He stated one of the purposes is to help define the roles in the relationship between city boards and city staff. He used the analogy of "Traffic Management 101: The Waltz Approach." He described the basics of the dance: the partners, the board and staff, and the steps, different but complimentary. He said the board should take the lead and be responsible for recommending policy and the staff should follow their lead with data, expertise, and feedback. He stated the Traffic Commission is an advisory board appointed by the City Commission to study issues and

suggest solutions and the professional staff is hired by the City Manager to follow through. In other words, the advisory board considers "Will we?" and the professional staff considers "How will we?" The board may consider traffic patterns and changes, and the engineering staff will proceed, using standards from the Municipal Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), Federal Highway Administration, and TxDOT. He said there are often limitations on traffic projects: (1) the physical limits of the site and (2) fiscal limits available for the project. He suggested some of the tools that the board possibly could use were surveys, public opinion polls, public hearings, and research from other cities. The engineering staff would most likely use surveys, measurement tools, software, signals, signs, and paint striping. He stated that traffic design should follow traffic policy. He said that facts are facts, and the staff cannot alter the facts to "fit" the policy. He stated the board should recognize that staff may have had prior experience on similar issues. He said that some divergence between the board and staff is normal and should not be a concern.

Mr. Bird gave a brief overview of the MUTCD, the national uniform code for traffic control. He said that engineering staff determines a design speed for a roadway based on the maximum safe speed under ideal conditions. He stated that speed studies are taken before a speed limit is set or changed, and speed limits are set within five miles of the 85% percentile speed. It is assumed that 85% of drivers will use a safe and prudent speed and 15% of drivers will exceed that speed. He said that artificially lowering a speed limit will not make drivers go slower; it only serves to lower compliance.

Commissioner Nair asked how to deal with the media when contacted about traffic issues. Mr. Norris stated that the media should contact Sonya Gross, the Community Relations Coordinator, to set up an appointment with a member of the staff or board.

Commissioner Nelson inquired how he should handle a complaint from an acquaintance about traffic issues. Mr. Norris suggested the best way to handle it would be to ask the complainant to contact the Traffic Engineering Department. If a complainant is not satisfied on the outcome, he may contact Michael Rice, Director of Public Works, or Jarrett Atkinson, City Manager.

Commissioner Stubben requested members submit their Texas Open Meetings Act certificate to the Traffic Engineering Department, if they had not already done so, to be in compliance with the Open Meetings Act.

3. **Public Forum:**  
Commissioner Stubben asked if anyone would care to speak on any traffic issue. No one came forward to speak.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:44 p.m.



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D.J. Stubben, Chairman