

STATE OF TEXAS

COUNTY OF BRAZORIA

CITY OF LAKE JACKSON

BE IT KNOWN that the Traffic Commission of the City of Lake Jackson met on Tuesday, March 9, 2021 at 6:30 P.M. for regular session at 25 Oak Drive, Lake Jackson, Texas, in City Hall Council Chambers with the following in attendance:

Douglas Kincannon
Kevin Land
Michael Cloeter
Shannon Biar
Ravi Singhanian

Meagan Borth, Asst. City Manager
Sabrina England, PW Director
Sally Villarreal, Asst. City Secretary
James Cromeenes, LJPD

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mr. Kincannon led the pledge of allegiance.

SWEAR IN NEW MEMBERS

Ms. Villarreal administered the Oath of Office to Mr. Cloeter, Mr. Singhanian and Mr. Biar.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – October 13, 2020

Minutes were approved as presented.

VISITORS' COMMENTS

There were no visitor comments.

DISCUSS TRAFFIC CONTROL OPTIONS ON YAUPON STREET BY FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF LAKE JACKSON – MARK CHAMBLEE

Mark Chamblee –

Mr. Chamblee read the following presentation.

First Baptist Church of Lake Jackson is seeking solutions to slow down traffic during main operating hours to protect the hundreds of children, senior adults, special needs, and other church members that cross Yaupon Street multiple times each week of the year. We have had recent close calls that have heightened our efforts. From a community safety perspective, FBCLJ may have as many or more vulnerable people at risk crossing a major city street than any other local school or business.

We currently have three pedestrian crossways that are heavily used at three distinct times throughout every week of the year: (1) Sundays 8am-12:30pm, (2) Sundays 4:30pm-7:30pm, and (3) Wednesdays 4:30pm-8pm. Below is a list of options developed by our Facilities Lead Team. We ask that anyone or combination of options be considered. We welcome the opportunity to work together with city officials to develop a realistic, sustainable solution to this community safety concern:

1. Program existing school zone lights that extend throughout our campus on Yaupon to blink during key church hours listed above. In addition, add “church crossing” signage to the existing lights that communicate to citizens why the lights are flashing. It may take a while, but citizens will eventually get accustomed, especially if it is enforced. See example photos on next page.

2. Add two streetlights on Yaupon Street (see proposed locations indicated by red dots above and on the following pages). The area of the street directly in front of our gym is where most children cross, and it is nearly dark there in the evenings. Our facilities team agreed this should be done at a minimum, regardless of whether other options are also considered.
3. Add speed bumps in front of the 401 and 402 blocks of Yaupon to promote slowing traffic in front of the church. The downside to this option is that it would affect traffic 24/7 unnecessarily. However, we would welcome the consideration if it helped solve the safety issue.
4. Add flashing lights that are initiated by approaching cars similar to what is found in front of Brazoswood High School. This is a good option if altering existing school zone lights is found to be unreasonable.
5. We also request that city officials provide FBCLJ with rules on adding lighting structures to our buildings that aim toward the sidewalks and street. There are several existing lighting structures that have been used for years to light up our grounds and surrounding streets. This would be critical if additional streetlights were not approved.

Our church continues to look into its own practical solutions like crossing guards and stationary flags that attempt to caution drivers at key operating times. However, utilizing volunteers may lack consistency and sustainability. Thanks in advance for your consideration.

Mr. Chamblee suggested painting the 3 crosswalks to make them more visible.

Mr. Chamblee stated they are withdrawing the request to consider speed humps.

Mr. Kincannon suggested that the church buy their own streetlights so they can control their own illumination.

Mr. Land asked Mr. Chamblee to elaborate how Covid has affected the church. Mr. Chamblee stated since Covid the church has separated all the kids across the street for social distancing. What this means now is most of the parents will drop their kids off at the FBCLJ Gym and walk across one of the crosswalks. Depending on the age group, the children will join the parents at the church. So, the impact of Covid is that street crossings have increased.

Mr. Kincannon felt that the children should not be separated. Mr. Chamblee thought this would stay in effect even though the rules are changing for Covid safety. Not only for Covid reasons, but their church has grown, and the extra space is needed.

Mr. Land asked if the city has any other lights that are used to slow down traffic other than a school. It was noted that the city does not use any other lights to slow down traffic.

Ms. England stated she has spoken to Brad Eaves with Traffic Engineering Incorporated and a representative with TXDOT and neither are aware of a law that speaks to school lights being used for churches. Ms. England stated school flashing lights would not be enforceable if used to slow traffic down, at the church. Both engineers believed it is in violation of the spirit of the law.

Mr. Land mentioned the Traffic Calming Manual and said the Traffic Commission has criteria that must be met before action can be taken.

Ms. England said the school zone lights are only to be used for school zones, nothing else. She about the risks of people taking their eyes off the road. This is why there are laws regarding flashing lights and billboards.

Ms. Borth stated it would be beneficial to have staff look at it first. A Traffic Engineer would need to be hired to do a study and then it would go to Council.

Mr. Land believed there should be criteria. First is it legal and what is the criteria?

Vinay Singhania stated this church used to house a school. Had there never been a school there, the sidewalks and flashing lights would not be there. Another option is the church can buy signs and the city can put them up.

Lt. Cromeenes – LJPD

Brazospointe Church hires off duty officers that have lights on their trucks to help direct traffic. This could be something to consider. LJPD does not have the manpower to provide officers at each church every Sunday. Patrol officers can be hired off duty to help direct traffic.

Mr. Singhania asked if any officers could be used. Lt. Cromeenes said they could use any officer from any department. If school crossing signs are used for more than school crossing it will dilute the impact of actual school crossings.

Mr. Cloeter liked the idea of the church providing their own signs. Mr. Cloeter also asked about painting the crosswalks.

Mr. Chamblee stated they have a unique situation. He did not believe there is another facility in LJ that has this many people crossing.

Ms. England stated she would look into the cost of painting the current pucks that are on the road. Ms. England stated it would need thermal plastic. It is not easy getting a contractor to come to LJ for the little bit of work LJ has.

Mr. Chamblee made a comment about setting a precedence. The city was faced with an unprecedented situation a few years back. The city did a great job to thinking outside the box for that type of accident to never happen again. This is why they are here, to prevent something from happening.

Mr. Land stated firm criteria must be met. Every individual's situation is unique to them. The Traffic Commission gets requests for speed bumps, stop signs and yield signs quite often, but there must be criteria met to determine when it is necessary.

Mr. Land suggested reducing the number of crosswalks from three to one. This would help with the flow of traffic also.

Mr. Cloeter was not in support of using the flashing lights.

Ms. England informed Mr. Chamblee that she would have Mr. Walton reach out to him for options to light his building.

Mr. Biar clarified that they may be able to install their own lights in addition to the two streetlights that may be installed by CenterPoint. Mr. Chamblee will work with Ms. England.

Mr. Kincannon suggested that Mr. Chamblee take this matter to City Council.

Mr. Land stated the commission was not recommending a traffic study or making a recommendation to City Council.

Mr. Land asked if a crosswalk would be allowed other than at an intersection. Ms. England will get that information.

DISCUSS TRAFFIC CONTROL ON THAT WAY NEAR SHY POND

Ms. England went over the speed study at Shy Pond. The data that was collected did not show a problem with speeding on That Way.

Ms. England stated she will get with Chief of Police for extra patrol.

DISCUSS TRAFFIC CONTROL ON TULIP TRAIL

Ms. England explained that there have been complaints about the volume of traffic due to people trying to avoid the intersection on Anyway and Oyster Creek Drive.

The speed study data that was collected did not indicate there is a speeding problem. People are likely using Tulip Trail as a cut through, but currently there is not a solution.

Councilmember Singhania suggested putting a DO NOT BLOCK INTERSECTION sign on Any Way just like the one on Oyster Creek Drive. Councilmember Singhania thought this could help alleviate the intersection congestion.

Mr. Land agreed with Councilmember Singhania's suggestion.

On motion by Mr. Land second by Mr. Singhania with all present members voting "aye" the commission is recommending to City Council to paint hashmarks DO NOT BLOCK INTERSECTION from Any Way to Oyster Creek Drive as well as putting up a DO NOT BLOCK INTERSECTION sign on Any Way.

DISCUSS TRAFFIC CONTROL AT THE INTERSECTION OF BANYAN AND ALLWOOD

Moved this item to next meeting at Mr. Kincannon's request.

BOND ISSUE UPDATE

Ms. Borth passed out Bond Issue information and informed the Traffic Commission on the different propositions. She spoke about the allowed advertising.

Mr. Kincannon asked when the debt service impact would be eliminated.

Ms. Borth explained how the bonds are sold.

ACCIDENT REPORTS

Lt. Cromeenes went over the accident reports.

ITEMS OF COMMUNITY INTEREST

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 8:08 p.m.

These minutes read and approved this ____ day of _____, 2021.

Kevin Land, Vice Chair

Michael Cloeter, Secretary