

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, October 12, 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:

Kevin Land, Chair	Milford John-Williams, Asst. to City Manager
Michael Cloeter, Vice Chair	Sabrina England, PW Director
Shannon Biar, Secretary	Anamaria Acuña, Interim Asst. City Secretary
Ravi Singhania	James Cromeenes, LJP
Doug Smith	
Andy Anderson	
Council Liaison – Matt Broaddus	

ABSENT- Larry Stanley

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mr. Land led the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – August 10, 2021

On motion by Mr. Cloeter second by Mr. Biar with all present members voting “aye”, the August minutes were approved.

VISITORS’ COMMENTS

Gary Hunter - 117 Mesquite

Mr. Hunter shared that he is a 15-year resident and loves all the small-town aspects of Lake Jackson. He’s noticed that the traffic from Houston leading into Lake Jackson is getting out of control. He mentioned he witnessed drag racing on 288 in broad day light. Mr. Hunter explained that two vehicles blocked off traffic so nobody could get around them, then they proceeded to race. He commented, “not only is it dangerous for the ones speeding but the community is affected by their potential actions as well.” He added the comment that they are obstructing traffic and changes need to be made.

Mr. Hunter also noted that when the speed limit is posted as 60 mph, the speeders will go about 73 mph because they know they won’t get in trouble if police officers are on the highway. He suggested having the speed limit lowered down to 55 mph on both HWY 288 and 332 to prevent such high speeds.

Mr. Hunter addressed his last few topics pertaining to his neighboring streets. He shared that every day there is a school bus that speeds between That Way and Bougainvillea Street, “well over 30 mph.” He stated that the bus driver needs to be fired and suggested that the speed limit in the residential needs to be posted as 20 mph. Adding to his surrounding neighborhood issues, Mr. Hunter shared that there should be something done about the noisy cars. Other than that, he’s here to discuss the speeding on Oleander, and requested that there should be police officers to monitor the area.

Thomas Normand – 702 Oleander

Mr. Normand stated that he can hear motorcycles driving through town at 2:00 A.M. and he’s certain that

they are using exhausts components to amplify the sounds. He agrees with Mr. Hunter that there should be something done to prevent the loud noises. Mr. Normand also stated that he can hear drag racing going on behind Buc-ee's. He also shared that he is here for the concerns on Oleander, and he has previously called the police about speeding on the street.

Sherry Hunter - 117 Mesquite

Mrs. Hunter shared that she goes swimming around 7:30 A.M. at the rec center in the morning and there is a school nearby (Rasco Middle School). She shared there are trucks dropping off kids driving about 30 mph in the parking lot, which she finds to be too fast for a parking area. A police officer was monitoring the parking lot for a day, but they still allowed parents to drop off their children there when the school is across the street. She insisted that a police officer needs to be there during the mornings to ensure they do not hit the elderly ladies before their swim meets.

Sally Fink – 918 Oleander

Ms. Fink announced that she came to the meeting to confirm that she has noticed speeding during the early evenings on Oleander Street when she is out walking her dog.

Mr. Land explained the process of having the Traffic Commission discuss any concerns brought today. He stated that the resident's will need to submit their issues to be placed on the agenda for them to be addressed at the next meeting. He also informed them that if there is ever an issue, they can submit any concerns on the City of Lake Jackson's website. He explained the concept of the open meetings act and how the traffic board members could not discuss the topics during the visitor's comment if they are not on the agenda. Mr. Land also stated that when they get to the Oleander topic later, the residents concerned about speeding can further voice their opinions.

DISCUSS AND CONSIDER REQUEST FOR THE NO PARKING SIGNS ON ROYAL OAKS AND Tanager BY BESS BRANNEN

Ms. England presented the topic, sharing that this request was from a resident who was not able to attend the meeting. She explained that Bess Brannen was completely upgraded. She explained the City of Lake Jackson created a different traffic pattern, added new signs per the engineering plans approved and submitted with the site plans of the new build of the school. The city hasn't included any additional signs but if the Traffic Board deems it fit, they can add more signs.

Catherine Schmidt - 415 Petunia St.

Ms. Schmidt stated that if the board members need more of a visual, she submitted videos that include the streets. She explained that parents do tend to park on neighboring streets to cross their kids. She shared that the school has separate pickup times for different grades and parents will go before pickup time because the walkers and bike riders get released sooner. She shared that when school first started the traffic was chaotic and the teachers advised parents not to park in the surrounding neighborhoods.

Mr. Land asked for clarification when specifically, the issue of parking near resident homes happens. Ms. Schmidt answered that it's more of a problem during pickup and there isn't an issue during the morning drop-offs.

The board members requested a visual representation of where the street was regarding the new build of the school. There was discussion of where the school was shifted in regards to the property and how Google Maps did not have an update.

Ms. England showed video footage submitted from the intersection of Dahlia and Anchusa at 3:45 P.M. The board members agreed that the video did not show that there was excessive parking but was more evident of the number of children crossing without an adult.

Mr. Land shared that the board members reviewed the school districts plan. The school board mentioned, they had a strategic plan in how they were going to handle drop-offs and pickups. The school's overall intent was that the cars would be on campus and that there would be no back up onto city streets. Mr. Broaddus stated that the same issue occurred for OM Roberts Elementary. He added that parents don't want to wait in the pick-up lanes, so they park across the street and have their kids walk to them. Regarding OM Roberts, the traffic commission agreed to add "no parking" signs across the street and parents had to all wait in the same lanes.

Mr. Cloeter asked where the current "no parking" signs are located. Ms. England displayed a map showing which streets have the signs. There are only signs on Arrow Wood and some on Anchusa. There was discussion from the board members stating that the signs were closer to the old location of where the school was located, but there are now cars parking around the new entrance.

Ms. England stated that they were not able to get any aerial drone footage, but they have requested it for these streets. Mr. Broaddus asked if it was difficult to acquire the footage. Ms. England stated the only reason they were not able to get the footage was because the storm this past month took priority. The board members suggested that Ms. England take the drone footage when there are cars camping out before the designated pickup times. Mrs. Schmidt added that she has witnessed parents park in the neighboring streets of the school as early as 3:20 P.M.

Mr. Land stated there could be conflict with the residents who may park on the street and suggested if the signs could be time restricted. Mr. Broaddus suggested adding this topic to the next agenda to give the resident another chance to address the "no parking" signs on the streets she is requesting.

Mr. Land asked if someone could explain the process and information about having signage approved and how long it would take for the sign to be installed. Ms. England explained that the traffic commission must approve it first. Then the topic gets sent to city council to which the councilmembers may require two readings before the approval. Ms. England explained that the process with council may take about a month. Once approved she will go purchase the sign, if it is custom, she will have to order the sign, but the installation is quicker than the overall approval process.

Mr. Land stated that the action will be to receive more data, which includes visual and drone footing to prove the parking in the streets requested. This topic will be added to the next agenda.

DISCUSS AND CONSIDER TRAFFIC CONTROL MEASURES AND THE PROPOSAL OF CROSSING GUARD ON DAHLIA AND ANCHUSA

Presented by Catherine Schmidt:

Mrs. Schmidt shared that there is a total of 20 children on the first, 12 houses of Petunia Street (where she resides) and many of those children attend the elementary school. She stated that the curb on Bluebonnet Park is not on school zone property and addressed that the corner is only a two way stop sign. She has taught her children to wait and lookout for traffic, but they know to wait on an adult to help cross them. Mrs. Schmidt further explained that there is a blind spot, so the kids do not know when it is "truly" safe to cross. She stated that she feels safer if there is another parent to cross the kids but is aware that each household leaves at different times so there are times where she must ensure her kids cross safely.

Mr. Land asked Mrs. Schmidt if she was aware where there are current crossing guards. Mrs. Schmidt stated that Royal Oak is the closest street with a crossing guard. She added that the school zone ends halfway on Royal Oaks and Dahlia.

When Mrs. Schmidt brought the concern to teachers and requested a cross guard on the intersection, they told her they could not monitor because it is not classified as a school zone. Mrs. Schmidt stated she's unsure why the school zone ends there but her guess would be because there is a house near the corner of the school.

There was discussion of why the kids had to travel a certain way down Anchusa. Mrs. Schmidt stated due to the entrance of the drop-off lanes to cross Anchusa her kids cross diagonally. Mr. Singhanian suggested possibly adding a four-way ~~street~~ stop at the intersection. Mrs. Schmidt responded by saying that this is only a concern during drop-off and pick-up hours during the school week. She stated that she thinks that would restrict traffic more than it needs to be. **Correction per Mr. Cloeter.**

Council liaison Matt Broaddus suggested auditing crossing guards to see how many children cross at their intersections and then the city can move them to busier intersections each year. Mr. Cloeter asked if there is an ordinance in place that prevents them from extending the school zone. Ms. England stated that if the board members want to change the school zone, it must be added in as an ordinance. Mr. Cloeter clarified that he is not against having a crossing guard but wanted the additional caution for the children.

On motion by Mr. Smith, second by Mr. Cloeter with all voting "aye" the request to approve the proposal of a crossing guard on Dahlia and Anchusa will be recommended to city council.

Mr. Land wanted to do separate motions to allow the proposal of extending the school zone.

On motion by Mr. Singhanian, second by Mr. Smith to extend the school zone near neighboring streets of the intersection of Dahlia and Anchusa. No vote was taken because Mr. Anderson motioned to table the topic of extending the school zone and possibly create signage instead. Mr. Land accepted and motioned to table the discussion and consideration of adding safety measures for the lack of a school zone on Dahlia and Anchusa for next month's agenda.

DISCUSS AND CONSIDER TRAFFIC CONTROL MEASURES AT THE 600 BLOCK OF OLEANDER

Request to discuss traffic control measures was submitted from Mr. Thomas Holland, but he was not present at the meeting.

Ms. England informed the commission that Oleander Street had a traffic count study created in June (2021) for the 1000 block of Oleander but there were no indications of speeding. The 600 block of Oleander Street had traffic counts from the beginning of September until October and again the statistics showed no actionable items of speeding.

Mr. Cloeter asked if the plant traffic has affected this street. He mentioned that Dow opened a gate near the street which could be causing the potential speeding reported. Ms. England stated she can find out what hours there are higher speeds and check to see if there is a pattern. She mentioned she spoke with Chief Kibodeaux, and he confirmed that they are monitoring both the 1000 block and the 600 block of Oleander.

The commission members reviewed the traffic counts and stated there were some high speeds recorded. Mr. Land commented that the highest speed was at 3:00 A.M. clocking in at 57 mph and the posted speed limit is 30 mph. Mr. Hunter stated that there is clear indication that there is speeding, and 57 mph is insanely dangerous in a neighborhood.

Mr. Normand agrees that there is speeding, and he can attest. Mr. Normand shared that he lives on the corner of Oleander. He commented stating that maybe people noticed that there was a counter nearby and they slowed down some, but he can still hear the throttle of their engines when they passed up the streets. He continued to explain that it is dangerous because Oleander is narrowed closer to the intersection by Oak Drive. Mr. Normand stated that he has called the police in the past to come check on the street.

Since the building of a bridge nearby over the canal there was an increase of car traffic. Mr. Normand also mentioned when the speed bumps were placed on Walnut, he noticed that the speeders shifted over to Oleander. He is aware that speed bumps cost to install them, and it might come with an additional cost for the upkeep, but he is in favor for placing speed bumps on Oleander to mitigate the speeding issue.

Mr. Broaddus explained that the biggest complaints about speed bumps is the noise issue. He explained that there is going to be noise issues due to slowing down and accelerating. He suggested if they do agree on that route to possibly place them further away from the resident house so that the noise isn't as noticeable.

Mr. Land asked Ms. England for a count of how many vehicles were speeding because he does agree that 57 mph is too fast. He knows sometimes it can be a few individuals and that can be corrected with policing the street. If it is more than 30-40 cars a day speeding then the commission can agree to discuss other ways to mitigate the speeding issue, but before they conclude, he wants that information first.

Mrs. Hunter stated that she does hear the throttle and she knows exactly who is revving their engines. She shared that she has noted down license plate numbers and everything. Mr. Normand also shared that he too has taken down the license plates, but the police have told him that they'll have to catch them in the act.

Mr. Hunter stated that he does notice that there are police patrolling Medical Drive, but when they open the Dow gate, he notices that there are cars bunching up at light going towards Oak Drive. He continued by adding that Dow workers will take the faster route, which so happens to be Oleander. His suggestion is to increase the policing but place them closer to Oleander. He doesn't want them to shift the policing on Medical Drive but have additional patrolling because then the speeders will catch on and shift to a different street.

Mr. Smith shared that the Dow gate should be closing within six to eight weeks because the bridge leading to the Sycamore gate entrance should be repaired by then. Mr. Normand stated that he doesn't think that the speeders are solely the Dow workers because there are residents that live on the street who are also speeding. Mr. Normand shared that he thinks when they reopen the gates there still will be speeders.

Mr. Land suggested that the resolution here is to have additional patrolling and possibly revisit if policing in the area is not helping.

ACCIDENT REPORTS

Lt. Cromeenes reported both August and September accident reports with the following:

- Total of 59 accidents each in August and September- which is an increase from last year for both months
- August 16, 2021, at 6:02 P.M. there was a major accident involving two individuals racing on North 288 HWY/ 2004
 - The motorcycle driver went to the hospital
 - The mustang driver went to jail

- Recent law change passed that increased the fines and offenses for racing on highways
 - The police department (P.D.) can now seize the vehicles involved
 - P.D. has not done so but will look at possibly doing this later if racing continues
 - Mr. Land requested if we could request back up for state highways
 - Lt. Cromeenes shared that they have done so in the past
 - When residents race, they usually have people staked out to inform the others when police officers are on the way
- Another major accident happened October 2, 2021, at 4:02 A.M. in the 300 block of 332
 - A female driver slammed into the rear of a male drunk driver that decided to park on the roadway
 - She had to be transported because she had a major cut that was bleeding out
 - The drunk driver stated that they had to stop to take a nap, but they realized he was drunk
 - The driver was then arrested for DWI
 - The passenger was arrested for a PUI
- A single car accident occurred on October 9, 2021
 - A female driver was traveling in a high rated speed and flipped her vehicle
 - Possibly alcohol related

Lt. Cromeenes shared that they go where they're needed but sometimes, he doesn't have enough manpower to properly monitor all the problem areas. He explained that due to recent transfers and others currently in training, there isn't enough members on his force. He shared that he has about half of what is typically required for each shift. Lt. Cromeenes stated that training will take about another month or longer.

Mr. Hunter shared that he has noticed that there is more damage to the guard railings recently.

ITEMS OF COMMUNITY INTEREST

- Mr. Cloeter asked if all traffic lights are back to normal from damages due to the past storm
- Ms. England shared that everything should be running again
 - The city has picked up all temporary traffic signs
 - The debris is still a working progress, but the contractor should be completed by the weekend; afterwards the city will be responsible for any heavy pickup
- Mr. Land asked for an update on the Magnolia Street topic from Ms. Sanchez
 - Ms. England stated that she has not answered or returned phone calls her
 - We have left messages and she has not tried to reach out to us
- Mr. Land shared that he would appreciate if the residence present could send us updates on Oleander, especially if speeding persists

ADJOURNMENT

Motioned by Mr. Singhania, second by Mr. Cloeter to adjourn and end the meeting. There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 8:03 P.M. These minutes read and approved this ____ day of _____, 2021.

Kevin Land, Chair

Shannon Biar, Secretary