

**MINUTES
CITY OF ORMOND BEACH
CITY COMMISSION
Ormond Beach Traffic Calming Program Workshop**

December 3, 2019

5:30 p.m.

City Commission Conference Room

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Bill Partington called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m.

Present were Mayor Bill Partington, Commissioners Dwight Selby, Troy Kent, Susan Persis, and Rob Littleton, City Manager Joyce Shanahan, Assistant City Manager Claire Whitley, City Attorney Randy Hayes, and City Engineer Shawn Finley.

Mayor Partington explained the purpose of the workshop was to discuss implementing a traffic calming program in the City of Ormond Beach. He clarified workshops were intended to allow the Commission to hold a discussion while still following the guidelines of the Sunshine Law, which prohibited members of the Commission from discussing business while outside of a public hearing.

Mr. Shawn Finley, City Engineer, stated that Ormond Beach citizens had requested a traffic calming program many times throughout the years. He noted a traffic calming program was presented to the Commission previously in 2008, but the current plan proposal being presented had a different perspective and approach than the prior time.

II. TRAFFIC CALMING OVERVIEW

Mr. Finley displayed a PowerPoint presentation explaining the details of the traffic calming program. He noted the spelling of “neighbourhood” on the first slide was intended to direct attention to traffic calming programs in European nations, and explained those nations were advanced in their use of traffic calming devices. He stated the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) was recognizing there were many users on the roads and that roadways needed to be accessible to all users.

Mr. Finley stated the presentation would be focused around answering four key questions:

- “Is a traffic calming program necessary?”
- “How do we introduce a traffic calming program?”
- “How do we define the process, timeline, and budget for a traffic calming program?”
- “What are the acceptable devices for calming traffic within the city?”

Mr. Finley listed the five “E’s” of safety: engineer, enforce, educate, encourage, and evaluate. He explained he referred to a sixth “E” as well: evolve. He noted how traffic calming had evolved over the years through advancements and new ideas.

Mr. Finley read the definition of traffic calming defined by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Institute of Traffic Engineers (ITE):

“The primary purpose of traffic calming is to support the livability and vitality of residential and commercial areas through improvements in non-motorist safety, mobility, and comfort. These objectives are typically achieved by reducing vehicle speeds or volumes on a single street or a street network. Traffic calming measures consist of horizontal, vertical, lane narrowing, roadside, and other features that use self-enforcing physical or psycho-perception means to produce desired effects.”

Mr. Finley expressed the importance of traffic calming being self-enforced, and noted using the correct traffic calming program would be working smarter, not harder.

Commissioner Selby questioned the reference to reducing vehicle speeds and volumes mentioned in the definition of traffic calming. He inquired if the goal of traffic calming was to reduce the volume of traffic on roadways, and if reducing the volume would simply divert it to another location; whereby, Mr. Finley noted the program diverted traffic to the correct locations made for higher traffic volumes and listed local roads that were designed to handle higher volumes of traffic in Ormond Beach.

Mr. Finley reviewed the various benefits and disadvantages of traffic calming. He listed each benefit and discussed each one in detail: speed reduction, collision reduction, increasing the safety of non-motorized users, reducing cut-through traffic, increasing quality of life, reducing the negative impacts of vehicles on the neighborhood and environment, and reducing dependence on police enforcement.

Mr. Finley noted the disadvantages to the program: a slight increase in emergency response time, increased costs, potential vehicle damage and pedestrian injury based on inappropriate driver behavior, increased maintenance, additional signage and lighting, resistance from some residents, and possible restrictions to property access. He noted the key focus staff wanted to identify when choosing what traffic calming program to implement in each area was to minimize the listed disadvantages.

Mr. Finley discussed what factors made roadways eligible for traffic calming and gave examples of local streets within the City of Ormond Beach that would be allowed to implement the program. He stated the street must be maintained by the City of Ormond Beach, must be designated as a local road or minor collector by the City of Ormond Beach, and must not be a primary emergency vehicle route.

Ms. Joyce Shanahan, City Manager, questioned if evacuation routes were eligible for traffic calming; whereby, Mr. Finley stated those roads were owned by the State of Florida and would not be eligible.

Mr. Finley reviewed the categories of traffic calming devices and defined each category: vertical devices, horizontal devices, and narrowing devices. He noted speed tables would be an example of a vertical device and explained that speed tables had evolved over time from the old-fashioned speed bumps. He noted that speed tables were designed for the vehicle to travel over at the appropriate speed without noticing the table. He then proceeded to provide examples of horizontal and narrowing devices as well.

III. TRAFFIC CALMING PROGRAM PROCESS

Mr. Finley reviewed the process that staff was recommending for the traffic calming program. He explained city staff would receive a request submitted by a resident and would then review the request and meet with the resident. He displayed an example of the traffic calming request form that residents would be given to fill out. He noted there were additional sheets included in the form that required residents to discuss the issue with their neighbors and return the form with the support of at least 65 percent of their neighborhood in order for the request to be considered. He noted the reasoning behind requiring 65 percent approval was to filter requests that were wanted by a majority of the neighborhood from those which had little support. He explained that after the form was submitted, the next step would be for staff to collect data. He reviewed an example traffic calming priority ranking form that would help staff evaluate each request. He noted the form would be judged through a ranking system with 100 points being the maximum priority a form could receive. He reviewed the maximum amount of points allowed for each category: 40 points maximum in traffic speed, 20 points maximum in the number of traffic crashes, 25 points maximum based on traffic volume, ten points maximum based on the number of schools within two miles of the area, and five points maximum if the area had did not have sidewalks and bike lanes.

Commissioner Persis discussed medians in the City of Ormond Beach and inquired how many accidents medians caused on average in the city; whereby, Mr. Finley stated he did not have a definite answer, but could contribute minor accidents to medians. He discussed the bulb-outs on the medians on Granada Boulevard and the accidents they created when they were first installed by FDOT. He noted the city would not want to install a median into an unsafe level, but instead would want to visually narrow the roadway while keeping the lane 16 feet wide for easy access for first responder vehicles.

Commissioner Littleton inquired what process the city currently had in place for traffic calming; whereby, Mr. Finley stated there was no process.

Mr. Finley explained implementing a process was important so that residents could have an opportunity for input and the city could have a process for deciding which requests to move forward with. He mentioned staff had received a high amount of residents requesting speed bumps installations within their neighborhoods. He explained that the city did not install speedbumps and were not able to offer any help to residents and neighborhoods who made those requests.

Ms. Shanahan questioned what constituted a neighborhood; whereby, Mr. Finley stated a neighborhood was defined as a central unit that operated together. He stated it could be a single road or parallel roads. He explained the definition was currently loose, and noted the city could define a definition moving forward so that staff could refer to it when determining who would be eligible for the program.

Ms. Shanahan stated if a resident approached the city with a concern, staff could hold a meeting and invite those residents to attend.

Commissioner Kent believed the city needed to be cautious when defining the word "neighborhood". He gave examples of businesses using cut-through streets in neighborhood areas that consisted of only one street. He noted FDOT had done some great things to help some of the city's major roads, but created an unintended

consequence of providing more traffic on neighborhood streets. He stated one street could be grossly effected by a traffic issue, while the next street over did not receive any impact at all; therefore, a neighborhood could consist of just one street.

Mr. Finley stated if the Commission directed staff to move forward in the suggested direction, he believed staff would be seeing various cases of traffic issues. He noted it would be surprising if a resident came in the first day with all the signatures needed to achieve the 65 percent neighborhood approval, therefore if a resident came to the city and asked for help, city staff would attempt to work with them to complete the form and achieve 65 percent approval.

Commissioner Kent explained the discussion on the traffic calming program was a healthy conversation. He stated there had been multiple times he was aware of where residents had requested speed bumps and had been denied since the city did not implement them. He noted he was glad the process was evolving.

Ms. Shanahan stated staff would reach out to Highland Avenue and Dix Avenue residents specifically since staff had already heard complaints from those residents living in that area. She noted they had already had a neighborhood meeting with the Highland Avenue and Dix Avenue residents and reiterated staff would reach out to them after receiving the Commission's input on moving forward with the program.

Mr. Finley stated the program would provide a beneficial way for staff to help residents with their concerns. He noted once the case report was approved, a feasibility study and concept plan would be implemented next, followed by staff holding a meeting with the neighborhood. He noted the conceptual plans would be an internal process that would then be brought to the residents for approval. He stated they would listen to the residents' input, then return it as a final product to see if the residents approved of the plan or were against it. He noted 65 percent support would be required for approval.

Mr. Finley noted the major change since the previous time the traffic calming program was brought before the Commission, was that staff would prepare plans and present the plan as a capital project. He listed the process for the proposed plan: requests would be received, the process would be followed, a plan and budget would be put together for each project, and all qualified forms would be included in the CIP, and the Commission could decide which projects to move forward with and request the funds for those projects. He noted the process may take a longer amount of time, but would allow the Commission to have input.

Commissioner Selby questioned if two votes would take place on each program or just one; whereby, Mr. Finley stated the item would receive one vote. He noted there would need to be support in the beginning and once 65 percent of the neighborhood approved, staff would move forward with looking into the project. He noted once the solution was established, it would be voted on by the residents requesting the program.

Commissioner Selby questioned what made a street ineligible; whereby, Mr. Finley explained ineligible roads were bigger roads, major collectors, and roads the city did not maintain.

Commissioner Selby, Ms. Shanahan, and Mr. Finley discussed the eligibility of local roads in the City of Ormond Beach.

Commissioner Selby requested a colored map that highlighted the streets that were not eligible for the traffic calming program.

Commissioner Persis questioned if staff could include traffic calming devices that were already located in the city on the requested map as well; whereby, Mr. Finley confirmed that was possible.

Mayor Partington noted he was in favor of the process being considered with the budget and having science involved. He approved of using disciplinary cautions of traffic engineering before the project was completed. He noted FDOT's work in Downtown Ormond Beach that helped slow traffic and helped pedestrians feel safer. He noted the science that FDOT put into the project worked well, and encouraged the city to use that same science and techniques. He noted his concern was that the Commission would lose final say, resulting in the residents losing final say; therefore, he approved of placing the item in the budget process so the Commission would get to approve the projects.

Mayor Partington questioned if the budget would be able to handle an overload of requests and how they would be addressed; whereby, Ms. Shanahan stated all the forms would be presented and then prioritized, noting only certain requests may proceed at one time. She stated staff would then draft a successful solution to the problem and collect votes from residents to receive their approval.

Mr. Finley stated if ten requests came through to the city and only five moved forward, it did not mean the other five would be dropped completely, but instead they would be kept on a list and reviewed once again at a later time. He stated staff wanted the Commission's involvement in the process, but did not want to overburden them with a high volume of requests; therefore, the process of going through the CIP would help alleviate that concern.

Mayor Partington noted staff should work with a scientific approach and then bring the item before the Commission after the science behind it was proven.

Mayor Partington inquired how neighborhoods in Europe were implementing better traffic programs and how the City of Ormond Beach could establish the best traffic calming process; whereby, Mr. Finley stated the city could try its best to catch up to speed and review additional traffic calming devices. Mr. Finley stated the city might receive an abundance of requests in the first year of the program, which may result in rollovers, but stated he believed the city would catch up over time.

Mayor Partington questioned if the Police Department would factor into the traffic calming program until the calming was officially in place; whereby, Mr. Finley noted the Police Department would be factored in both before and after implementing the program, and would help participate in the speed studies and traffic counts. Mr. Finley complimented the partnership between City Hall departments and the Ormond Beach Police Department.

Mayor Partington questioned if there would be a team or committee representing the program; whereby, Mr. Finley stated there would be a Traffic Calming Committee consisting of members from various departments.

Mayor Partington noted speeding issues that Ormond Beach had dealt with in the past near the Granada Bridge that were corrected through the former Commission's direction

of traffic calming programs implemented by FDOT. He noted the programs helped pedestrians feel more comfortable walking and helped drivers remain safe. He stated there would always be complaints against the traffic calming program and devices, even though science proved the devices work. He discussed the consistency of FDOT's continuing use of their traffic calming initiatives due to the positive effects they had on lowering the amount of accidents.

Ms. Shanahan stated what was implemented on the Granada Bridge was a self-enforcing mechanism that had residents slow down and helped alleviate the need for extra police patrol in the area.

Commissioner Selby stated he agreed the speed had decreased on Granada Boulevard, but noted due to no longer having parallel parking spaces, it made the sidewalks more dangerous for pedestrians to walk on. He stated if there were any barriers to help pedestrians feel more comfortable on the sidewalks in the downtown staff should consider implementing them.

Mr. Finley stated once the project was approved in the CIP it would be constructed; evaluated; and either finished, modified, or removed.

Mr. Finley reviewed the timeline for processing the traffic calming initiatives and noted it was an example of what would be used in future years, explaining there were current requests that would be accelerated. He noted requests would be accepted year round, but in order to be considered in the year requested, they would need to be submitted January through February. He listed the timeline for the program's process: a site data collection would take place February through March, a feasibility study would be performed March through April, a neighborhood meeting would be conducted by April, a ballot would be sent and votes would be received by May, the project would be included in the CIP budget in June, construction would take place in the second year, and finally, the traffic calming installation would be reviewed during the third year.

Mr. Finley listed allowable traffic calming devices and discussed each device in detail: lane striping, radar speed signs, speed tables, raised crosswalks, mini-roundabouts, chicane, median islands, bulb-outs, and visual calming which included murals and various painted crosswalks.

Mr. Finley reviewed case study examples and explained how staff would prioritize each scenario study based off the problematic issues presented on each one. He then noted the final scorings would be evaluated and the city would decide which cases would be recommended to implement traffic calming devices. He noted not all studies will have a perfect high score and the system took that situation into consideration.

IV. DISCUSSION

Mr. Finley listed the three major questions summing up the traffic calming program and asked for feedback from the Commission on each one:

- "Is the traffic calming program necessary?"
- "What should be the process, timeline, and budget for a traffic calming program?"
- "What are the acceptable devices for calming traffic within the City of Ormond Beach?"

Commissioner Selby stated he believed a traffic calming program was necessary and explained he approved of the proposed plan. He stated he appreciated the community involvement. He noted deciding the definition of a neighborhood was a tricky situation. He stated he had concerns for creating visual crosswalks due to there being too many variations of crosswalks and the potential confusion it may cause drivers. He believed staff needed to move more towards standardization so that drivers were aware of what each traffic calming device was.

Commissioner Kent believed the program was necessary and liked the process and timeline presented for the program. He noted there was no discussion on budgeting, but stated after reviewing the staff report it did not appear to be too expensive and he approved of the proposed costs. He believed the acceptable devices were the ones Mr. Finley had discussed.

Commissioner Persis stated she believed the traffic calming program was necessary and the timeline looked good, but cautioned that if the city adhered to a timeline there should be no special exceptions. She stated the traffic calming devices appeared to be acceptable, but noted concerns for bulb-outs due to potential accidents occurring during the evening hours when it became harder to see as a result. She agreed with Commissioner Selby's comments regarding being uniform so that members of the public were aware as to what each traffic calming device was.

Commissioner Littleton stated the traffic calming program was necessary, especially for bigger projects. He believed in the case of minor projects, such as added signage, the timeline should not take as long to complete as the plan proposed and should not have to go through the CIP process. He stated there could be potential problems if funding comes from other sources and made the process even longer. He noted he did not have issues with any of the presented traffic calming devices, but did not know the devices enough to state which ones were effective.

Mayor Partington believed traffic calming was a necessity. He noted he approved of the process overall and hoped to see the same process presented to the county and state on roads that the city did not maintain. He reiterated Commissioner Selby's comments regarding pedestrians feeling uncomfortable due to the traffic on Granada Boulevard and how science could be presented to the State of Florida on how to fix it. He explained regarding the timeline that he agreed with Commissioner Littleton's comments. He questioned if the Police Department could be involved in the interim while waiting for the program to be initiated or if speed signs could be installed. He inquired if there was an ability to expedite a project if the study received a significantly high score and recommended staff consider that option. He believed staff could manage the budget and noted he approved of any traffic calming devices that had been proven to work. He noted concerns for visual crosswalks, but noted he would be interested to see the data on how they worked. He stated he was encouraged overall and approved of the process.

Ms. Shanahan noted the item would be brought back before the Commission at a City Commission meeting for formal approval.

Commissioner Persis inquired if residents could amend their forms if there was an issue with them; whereby, Ms. Shanahan confirmed that was correct.

Mr. Finley thanked the Commission for their input and stated staff would try their best to come up with a result that would work for everyone. He noted the radar signs would best

be used as temporary fixes and staff could look into purchasing more. He stated he favored Mayor Partington's idea to evaluate the requests on county and state roads and present it to Volusia County or the State of Florida with data results.

Mayor Partington asked if staff forwarded emails they received from residents regarding roads that did not belong to the city to the appropriate facilities; whereby, Mr. Finley confirmed that was correct.

Ms. Shanahan noted the importance of providing science and residential feedback to the county and state to provide a solution for traffic issues on roads that the city did not maintain.

V. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:34 p.m.

Transcribed by: Cassidi Ritz