

**Cuyahoga Falls City Council  
Minutes of the Public Affairs Committee**

**June 19, 2017**

**Members:** Vic Pallotta, Chair  
Adam Miller  
Jerry James

Mr. Pallotta called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m. All members were present.

**Legislation Discussed:**

Temp. Ord. B-45

**Discussion:**

**Temp. Ord. B-45**

An ordinance amending the Traffic Control File by providing for installation of various traffic control devices, and declaring an emergency.

Police Chief Davis stated that there is a total of three items from the Traffic Control Committee to be considered tonight. The first is a change on Front Street, near the Gorge Metro Park, from a four-lane road to a three-lane road and parallel parking from Hillcrest Drive to the southern corporation limits. This will include the walkway on the diagram. It will be constructed concurrently with the project. The second item is change of speed limit on Sand Run Road from 45 miles an hour to 35 miles an hour. Half the road is in Bath; half is in Cuyahoga Falls. Bath is 35 miles and Cuyahoga Falls is 45 miles an hour. Because it would be in line with what the state law reads, it made sense to set Ira Road at the same speed limit, 35 miles per hour. Mr. Pallotta asked if that was the section of Ira Road between Riverview Road and Akron-Peninsula Road. Mr. Tony Demasi, City Engineer, stated that, as they were reviewing the speed limits there, they noticed that Ira Road did not have any speed limit posted. There was nothing in the file, and 35 miles an hour was consistent

Ms. Lisa King, Director, Summit County Metro Parks, stated this is an overall plan that originated with discussions for the Gorge Terrace Master Plan. Coming out of that, bike lanes were considered, as well as using one lane for parallel parking along the frontage of the Gorge Metro Park. There won't be parking on the bridge, but parking on the City of Akron side, which they've approved, as well. This is to relieve the pressure on the park. During good days, they have experienced people, when they cannot find a spot, parallel parking within their parking lot, double parking and parking whenever they could find a spot; many times on private property. That happens in the main Gorge parking lot, as well as the Highbridge parking lot. Mr. Pallotta asked how many parallel parking spots will be added. Ms. King stated that there will be 57 additional parking spots from both lengths. Mr. Pallotta asked if that is going to disturb the bus stop there. Ms. King stated that they are adding a bus stop on the Cuyahoga Falls side. The bus stop on the Akron side will stay.

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Mrs. Pyke asked at what point Front Street would become two lanes and what happens where Second Street comes into Front Street. Ms. King stated that nothing will change there, because this conversion doesn't happen until Hillcrest. here is a whole section between Hillcrest Drive and Second Street which will remain untouched. The merge will happen before Hillcrest Drive. Mrs. Pyke asked where the merge of the two lanes takes place. Mr. Demasi stated that, coming down the hill, the right lane becomes a Right-Turn-Only lane at Hillcrest Drive. There will be signage 500 feet ahead that indicates that the right lane must turn right; left lane can continue straight. There will be additional signage when you get closer to Hillcrest Drive. There is not a merge condition. It will be two lanes where eventually the right lane becomes a Right-Turn-Only lane.

Mrs. Pyke asked if the City is still pursuing the Gorge Terrace plan. Mayor Walters stated that, as far as he knows, they are still looking for grant funding for that and they still have copies of the proposal. Mrs. Pyke asked when the last time an application for grant money was made. Mr. Demasi stated that he believes the last time an application was made as in 2013. Mrs. Pyke stated that she is not comfortable taking this 35-mile-per-hour road and putting parking on it, unless they are looking at the entire Front Street Plan, which would include the Gorge Terrace Plan. At least while they had two lanes going south, if there was a bicyclist, there was the other lane to merge over to avoid that bicyclist. She stated that she would like to see if they can get better coverage in the paper with this, so that they can hear what the public's views are. This affects everyone in the city who drives on that street. She stated that she agrees they need parking down there, but she would like to see that they found their parking within the park instead of going onto the street. She would like to wait until they have a comprehensive plan to change this to two lanes only, and that plan should include the Gorge Terrace Plan.

Mrs. Klinger stated that part of this plan is to add a sidewalk in an area where they don't have sidewalks today. She stated that she was not clear whether Mrs. Pyke is stating that she doesn't want to go forward with the sidewalks or go forward with any of the plan. Mrs. Pyke stated that she is in favor of the sidewalks. She is not in favor of the parking on the street. She would be in favor of removing this until the newspaper can cover it better and they could get public feedback. At that time, maybe they can revisit the Gorge Terrace Plan. Mrs. Klinger asked if this was an all-or-nothing proposal. Mr. Demasi stated that Metro Parks is offering to put in the sidewalk as part of this project. It is their project and they're here to ask authorization to proceed forward. He doesn't know if they would be willing to parcel it out. Ms. King stated that the sidewalk is to give those that are parking on the street somewhere to walk. The principal parking lane is ample enough to have a car door open and not extend into a drive lane. It's been engineered by the traffic engineers. Public safety is their first charge. The sidewalk was to support parallel parking. No one is walking there if there's not parallel parking. They were to go hand in hand and support one another.

Mr. Pallotta asked if there was room for a bike lane. Ms. King stated that the plan shows that it will be a two-lane bike lane or cycle track bike path, but that would be on the east side. They are not asking to do that now, but that would be in the far lane opposite parallel parking. Mr. Brillhart asked if there was a possibility of lowering the speed limit from 35 to 30. Mr. Demasi stated that

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they would have to go back to their traffic consultant. They can only change the speed limit in Cuyahoga Falls, not in Akron, but they can certainly consider that.

Mr. Colavecchio stated that the City has engineers and experts who look at things. What someone feels or what someone's opinion is doesn't trump science and engineering. He stated that to not let this ordinance come out of committee and go to Council, who he believes would pass it, is wrong. Mrs. Pyke stated that she would use the traffic light at Second Street and Chestnut Boulevard as an example. When they were told it would be safe to remove that light, Mayor Walters, herself and Mrs. Klinger were the only ones that voted against removing that light. Once that light was removed, there were nine serious accidents. It proved that Engineering and the Traffic Committee that said that that light was safe to remove were not correct. She stated that she was for holding this and letting the residents have a chance to explain how they feel. Ms. King stated that they do have the support from AMATS. This is one roadway that is on their Top 10 list for road diets because of the low usership. That is something they can't ignore. They have gotten approval from the City of Akron, Summit County and from Cuyahoga Falls. They are not going about this without thorough thought.

Ms. King asked if there was a process that they may have missed where the ward should have been updated and involved going forward. Mrs. Pyke stated that she would have liked to have been involved when the plans were first submitted to the Engineering Department. She did have the opportunity to speak to Mr. Demasi and the Chief of Police and the Street Commissioner, so she is not going into this blindly. She has a relative that lives on Forest Glen who had some major concerns. She had another person on Forest Glen that wanted to know if what they were proceeding with was the Gorge Terrace Plan. The public does not totally understand where this parking was going to be, because there hasn't been any information sent to the public yet. Ms. King stated that she would like to provide Mrs. Pyke with some plans when she meets with her constituents. Mr. Colavecchio stated that when Mrs. Pyke conducts her meetings with the public, he would like to attend. He would like to see what residents will be there and hear their input. Mrs. Pyke asked if he would like to go with her if she goes door to door. Mr. Colavecchio stated that he would. Mr. Iona stated that he has been down there when there is traffic all over and it's a mess with people parking in the grass. He thinks parking is needed. He asked if tabling this portion of the ordinance and revisiting it quickly is going to slow down the process tremendously. Ms. King stated that they would like to move forward as soon as they can. They've got it in this year's budget to do the sidewalk, as well as support for the striping. She stated that she would also be happy to go to back and meet with the City of Akron to see that the speed limit on their side is lowered. Mr. Brillhart requested a speed study to ascertain how fast cars are going right now. Chief Davis stated that they can do that. Mr. Pallotta stated that his understanding is there are 7,000 cars that go up and down the street. Mr. Demasi stated that it is 6,000, and anything less than 15,000 is a candidate for a road diet.

Mr. Pallotta stated that they will hold this portion of the ordinance. They will vote on changing the speed limits, and then approach the public to get a better feel of how they should proceed with that. It may not be during this committee hearing or next week's Council meeting, but subsequent to that.

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Mr. Pallotta moved to amend Temp. Ord. B-45 by omitting Line 26 through Line 29, second by Mr. Miller. Motion passed (2-1).

Mr. Miller moved to bring out Temp. Ord. B-45 (Amended dated 6-19-17) with a favorable recommendation, second by Mr. James. Motion passed (3-0).

The meeting adjourned at 6:56 p.m.