

**CITY OF MANHATTAN BEACH PARKING AND PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS COMMISSION  
MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING  
JULY 23, 2009**

**A. CALL TO ORDER**

The regular meeting of the Parking and Public Improvements Commission of the City of Manhattan Beach, California, was held on the 23<sup>rd</sup> day of July 2009, at the hour of 6:30 p.m., in the City Council Chambers of City Hall, 1400 Highland Avenue, in said City.

**B. ROLL CALL**

Present: Adami, Vigon, Stabile, Silverman. and Chairman Gross.  
Absent: None.  
Staff Present: Danna, Zandvliet, Lt. Harrod, Sgt. Mason.  
Clerk: Weeks.

**C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**03/26/09-1 June 25, 2009**

A motion was MADE and SECONDED (Adami/Stabile) to approve the Parking and Public Improvements Commission minutes of June 25, 2009 as written.

**D. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION**

None.

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At 6:32 p.m., there was a recess for the Commission to review substantial written material pertaining to Agenda Item No. 2 (Consider Installation of Stop Signs: Laurel Avenue at 17<sup>th</sup> Street and Laurel Avenue at 19<sup>th</sup> Street) distributed at the meeting. The meeting reconvened at 6:43 p.m.

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**E. GENERAL BUSINESS**

**07/23/09-2 Consider Installation of Stop Signs: Laurel Avenue at 17<sup>th</sup> Street and And Laurel Avenue at 19<sup>th</sup> Street**

Assistant Planner Danna introduced this item.

Traffic Engineer Zandvliet presented the staff report. He noted the following: that this item arose as part of the American Martyrs School Area Traffic Safety Study conducted last summer, which will be reviewed for the Commission's consideration later this year; that no traffic collisions at these intersections were recorded over the last 3 ¾ years; that removing parking at the intersections would create new problems down the street; and that sight distance at the

intersections is limited due to the tight radius, parking and landscaping. Mr. Zandvliet explained that special conditions at these intersections meet the State warrants for stop signs in all directions.

The Commission discussed the State warrants for stop signs in all directions; pedestrian and traffic volumes in the area; the idea of removing parking, which would create new problems down the street; and the idea of using either a crossing guard, flashing/stop light or temporary stop signs since there are no problems a majority of the day;

Traffic Engineer Zandvliet verified that a crossing guard could be used; that temporary stop signs cannot be used; and that a flashing/stop light would not be an appropriate measure, particularly in this small residential area. He pointed out that yield signs were utilized many years ago, but they have been found to be more problematic than effective; and that curbs, gutters and sidewalks could be installed, but they are very costly and many residents oppose this idea.

### **Audience Participation**

Chairman Gross invited public input at 7:05 p.m.

Traffic Engineer Zandvliet related staff's receipt of one communication in support of stop signs at Laurel Avenue and 17<sup>th</sup> Street and seven communications in support of stop signs at Laurel Avenue and 19<sup>th</sup> Street.

**Brian Cullen, 2004 Laurel Avenue**, stated his strong agreement with installing stop signs at 19<sup>th</sup> Street and Laurel Avenue, particularly due to the hill and the lack of curbs and gutters. He noted high traffic speeds in the area; his knowledge of eight traffic collisions at these locations; and his opinion that, should only two stop signs be installed, they should be in a north/south direction.

**Daniel Kurz, 1700 Laurel Avenue**, expressed his agreement with input provided by Mr. Cullen, noting that the existing stop signs at Laurel Avenue and 19<sup>th</sup> Street are in the wrong direction. Mr. Kurz pointed out that two schools in the area create a lot of vehicular and pedestrian traffic; that, when traveling north on Laurel Avenue and turning right onto 17<sup>th</sup> Street, a large wall restricts sight distance; and that there should not be more than one crossing guard at 17<sup>th</sup> Street and Laurel Avenue.

**Rosie Logan, 19<sup>th</sup> Street and Laurel Avenue**, voiced her agreement with four-way stop signs at both 17<sup>th</sup> Street and Laurel Avenue and 19<sup>th</sup> Street and Laurel Avenue.

Chairman Gross closed the public hearing at 7:15 p.m.

### **Commission Discussion**

Commissioner Adami commented on the importance of stop signs from a safety standpoint, especially with the many children in the area. He supported four-way stop signs at both 17<sup>th</sup> Street and Laurel Avenue and 19<sup>th</sup> Street and Laurel Avenue.

Commissioner Stabile observed that many intersections in the area have four-way stop signs and that the traffic collision report only includes reported accidents.

Commissioner Vigon entertained the idea of installing speed humps to slow traffic.

Commissioner Silverman related his feeling that the staff report was not as comprehensive as it could have been. He commented on the high amount of activity at the intersections the entire day, particularly with two schools in the area stated his support for stop signs in all directions at both 17<sup>th</sup> Street and Laurel Avenue and 19<sup>th</sup> Street and Laurel Avenue to protect the safety of children in the area.

Chairman Gross explained that the lack of opposition present at the meeting, along with the staff recommendation for four-way stop signs at both 17<sup>th</sup> Street and Laurel Avenue and 19<sup>th</sup> Street and Laurel Avenue, are very persuasive indicators that the stop signs should be approved.

Traffic Engineer Zandvliet explained why speed humps would not be acceptable.

**MOTION:** A motion was MADE and SECONDED (Adami/Stabile) to approve stop signs in all directions at the intersection of Laurel Avenue and 17<sup>th</sup> Street and the intersection of Laurel Avenue and 19<sup>th</sup> Street. The motion was passed by unanimous voice vote.

Traffic Engineer Zandvliet advised that the City Council is tentatively scheduled to consider a resolution to establish the stop signs as recommended on September 1, 2009, and that interested parties will be notified thereof.

Commissioner Stabile stated his preference that stop signs at 17<sup>th</sup> Street and Laurel Avenue would have been considered separately from those at 19<sup>th</sup> Street and Laurel Avenue.

Traffic Engineer Zandvliet explained why stop signs at both intersections were presented for the Commission's consideration together.

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At 7:25 p.m., there was a recess for the Commission to review correspondence distributed at the meeting with regard to Agenda Item No. 3 (Consider Installation of Stop Signs: Laurel Avenue at 27<sup>th</sup> Street). The meeting reconvened at 7:27 p.m.

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**03/26/09-3 Consider Installation of Stop Signs: Laurel Avenue and 27<sup>th</sup> Street**

This item was introduced by Assistant Planner Danna.

Traffic Engineer Zandvliet presented the staff report. He provided background information on traffic measures to improve visibility previously taken at this location. He explained that no traffic collisions at the intersection were reported over the last 3 ¾ years; that existing visibility issues at this intersection observed by staff, such as various overgrown landscaping and cars continually parked on the south side of the street, were not present when the intersection was last examined; that the landscaping in the City's right-of-way could be trimmed; that property owners are responsible for maintaining public parkways in front of their property; and that traffic volumes are too low to warrant stop signs in all directions, but they can be justified if visibility concerns cannot be remedied. Mr. Zandvliet related staff's recommendations to paint red curbs on both sides of 27<sup>th</sup> Street within 75 feet of the intersection at Laurel Avenue and direct staff to take actions to remove landscaping sight distance

restrictions on the northwest, northeast and southeast corners of the intersection at 27<sup>th</sup> Street and Laurel Avenue before the idea of installing stop signs in all directions is considered. He noted five communications relating mixed opinions about the recommendations.

The Commission questioned if there is a City ordinance that applies to restrictions on landscaping; whether the City monitors landscaping trimming; and some residents' lack of understanding as to the importance of trimming landscaping, specifically when it affects sight distance; and Code Enforcement's attention to landscaping issues about which the City is aware.

Traffic Engineer Zandvliet advised that a sight distance triangle prohibits landscaping in the range of view; but, further down the street, landscaping in the right-of-way can be addressed from a public safety/welfare standpoint. He clarified staff's recommendation to trim landscaping to improve visibility at the intersection and paint additional red curbs on both sides of 27<sup>th</sup> Street within 75 feet of the intersection at Laurel Avenue which, staff feels, should be done prior to considering the idea of installing stop signs.

### **Audience Participation**

Chairman Gross invited public input at 7:45 p.m.

**Howard Brown, 2610 Laurel Avenue**, commented on the poor visibility at the intersection of 27<sup>th</sup> Street and Laurel Avenue due to overgrown landscaping; the increased traffic volume in the area; the difficulty of exiting his driveway due to poor visibility resulting from parked cars; and his understanding of several traffic collisions in the area. It was Mr. Brown's opinion that red curbs on both sides of 27<sup>th</sup> Street within 75 feet of the intersection at Laurel Avenue would help, but anything less than that would not; and that four-way stop signs are the only solution.

**Jeff Walker, 2606 Laurel Avenue**, voiced his concern over the safety of children playing in the neighborhood. He pointed out that the sun impairs visibility in the afternoon and voiced his support of four-way stop signs.

**Pam Nimser, 2619 Laurel Avenue**, stated her support of stop signs. She contended that high traffic speeds are the biggest problem and that red curbs will not change the situation.

**Stan Kuminesky, 769 27<sup>th</sup> Street**, said that the high speed of traffic, and not visibility, is the issue; that the safety of children in the area is of the utmost importance; that visibility is poor when the sun sets; that red curbs will not improve the situation; that 27<sup>th</sup> Street becomes a thoroughfare when Pacific Coast Highway is closed for events; that he could support the installation of stop signs; and that there are four-way stop signs at the intersection of 31<sup>st</sup> Street and Laurel Avenue, which has much less traffic than 27<sup>th</sup> Street.

**Bill McGill, 2622 Laurel Avenue**, advised that he has trimmed back vegetation on his property in order to improve visibility; that parked cars block visibility; that stop signs do not control traffic speeds; and that there have been no accidents reported at the location over the past five years, nor has he witnessed an accident in 25 years. He asked that the cedar tree in his front yard remain; expressed concern over the noise and pollution that would result from cars stopping if stop signs are installed; and indicated that the red curbing in the area is not being enforced. Mr. McGill recommended that additional enforcement of traffic speeds be

provided; that a speed limit sign be posted on the north side of 27<sup>th</sup> Street by the telephone box; and that a "Watch Downhill Speeds" or "Children Playing" sign be posted up the hill.

**Richard Lewis, 2623 Laurel Avenue**, requested clarification on the length of the existing red curbing. He suggested the installation of one stop sign on the downhill slope to reduce traffic speeds and indicated that some of the recommendations made by staff are not a solution, but he could support extending the red curbing up to 60 feet of the intersection at Laurel Avenue.

Traffic Engineer Zandvliet advised against installing only one stop sign due to assumptions that might be made by drivers that traffic in all directions will stop.

Chairman Gross closed the public hearing at 8:17 p.m.

### **Commission Discussion**

Commissioner Adami emphasized the importance of improving the situation, especially for the safety of children, and he asked for input on ways to reduce traffic speeds. He related his understanding that many issues, such the safety of children, traffic speeds, noise and pollution, were not examined when this intersection was previously reviewed and suggested that the intersection be further examined in more detail. Mr. Adami stated his impression that, since the hedge has been trimmed, the visibility problem because of it has been resolved.

Commissioner Silverman voiced his concern over safety and he related his uncertainty that this, and some other issues, were adequately addressed in the staff report. He noted the momentum gained by the hill and the false sense of security that would be provided by only one stop sign. Commissioner Silverman related his viewpoint that improving visibility is not the complete answer and he entertained the idea of re-visiting this intersection after visibility is improved for a more comprehensive look with respect to safety and examining the four-way stop signs at the intersection of 31<sup>st</sup> Street and Laurel Avenue, especially since there is less traffic there than on 27<sup>th</sup> Street.

Commissioner Stabile said that this is a dangerous intersection, particularly while traveling north on Laurel Avenue and turning west going up the hill on 27<sup>th</sup> Street, and that the staff recommendations would adequately address the problems. He commented on visibility difficulties and felt that creating better sight lines through trimming of vegetation would not be more than a temporary fix; that extending the red curb would not improve sight lines since drivers do not seem to pay attention to them; and that the need for enforcement is a constant the Commission always hears, but it is not realistic to think that enforcement will be increased. Commissioner Stabile explained that, at this point, he is not persuaded that four-way stop signs are the answer, but he is leaning in this direction, and that there appears to be considerable conflict amongst residents about installing stop signs. He commented that other measures could be tried, but he does not have a lot of confidence that they would work.

Chairman Gross observed that the hedge at the intersection of 27<sup>th</sup> Street and Laurel Avenue appears to be trimmed often, but is higher than 30 inches, and that public opinion about installing stop signs appears to be mixed. He related his appreciation of input provided by the public, as well as Traffic Engineer Zandvliet's opinion that there is an issue at this intersection, and said that he would be inclined to try to improve visibility since doing so would do minimum harm and might do some good. Chairman Gross entertained the idea of the Commission approving the staff recommendation with direction to monitor the intersection very closely to see

if the measures taken are working and he introduced the idea of reducing the length of the red curbs to be up to 60 feet of the intersection of Laurel Avenue.

Commissioner Vigon commented on the multi-faceted nature of this issue, which goes from vague aspects like visibility to installing stop signs. He explained his inclination to approve the staff recommendation, with the stipulation that the idea of installing stop signs be examined and reviewed at a future meeting. Commissioner Vigon voiced his hope that any codes currently in effect to address landscaping and traffic safety will be enforced and he pointed out that traffic speeds were not addressed in the staff report.

Traffic Engineer Zandvliet clarified that this item was put on the agenda to address visibility problems which occurred after the intersection was examined before; that the level of the hedge depends on the slope of the street and, if the hedge is trimmed on a regular basis (as it is at this time), visibility would be acceptable; that speed limit signs could be posted; that the staff recommendations would improve visibility and make the intersection safer, thereby eliminating the need for stop signs; that staff will monitor the situation at this location; that the Commission could recommend additional police department enforcement in the area; that, should the Commission approve four-way stop signs, they could be reviewed in six months; and that the additional red curbing could be reduced to be up to 60 feet of the intersection at Laurel Avenue.

**MOTION:** A motion was MADE AND SECONDED (Vigon/Adami) to approve the staff recommendation as written, with the following modifications:

1. Paint red curb on both sides of 27<sup>th</sup> Street up to 60 feet of the intersection at Laurel Avenue;
2. Direct staff to take actions to remove landscaping sight distance restrictions on the northwest, northeast and southeast corners of the intersection at 27<sup>th</sup> Street and Laurel Avenue; and
3. Re-evaluate this issue with regard to traffic speeds and stop signs in six months.

The motion was passed by unanimous voice vote.

## **G. COMMISSION ITEMS**

### **07/23/09.4 Parking Meter Revenues and Traffic Violations Report**

Assistant Planner Danna explained that changes to the Police Department's software resulted in inaccurate information on the Parking Meter Revenues and Traffic Violations Report.

Commission discussion relative to the Parking Meter Revenues and Traffic Violations Report included: the effects of new parking signs and increases/decreases in the parking meter rates; the lack of financial information provided this month; whether members of the Downtown Business and Professional Association feel reducing the meter rates has improved their businesses; and the convenience that comes with the ability to feed parking meters with credit cards, as well as related transaction fees.



Assistant Planner Danna provided input about increases and decreases in parking meter rates and he assured the Commission that an effort will be made to include financial information in the Report each month. He noted problems with drivers having inadequate change to feed parking meters and related staff's plans to meet with companies who manufacture smart meters that accept credit cards.

**07/23/09.5 Commissioner Stabile Re Council Approval of Various Items**

Commissioner Stabile related his understanding that various items usually considered by the Parking and Public Improvements Commission were recently considered by the City Council without input from the Commission.

Assistant Planner Danna advised that the items cited by Commissioner Stabile arose through the City Manager's office.

Traffic Engineer Zandvliet explained that the items were presented directly from the North End Business Improvement District through the City Manager's office to the City Council and that, at some point, he would expect that the Commission will review them.

**07/23/09.6 Commissioner Stabile Re Walk Streets**

Commissioner Stabile questioned why walk streets are never swept.

Traffic Engineer Zandvliet related his understanding that property owners are required to maintain parkways and public streets adjacent to their property.

Chairman Gross noted that The Strand is swept and that the Council agreed to continue doing so, even in these difficult economic times.

Assistant Planner Danna voiced staff's intent to obtain further information about street sweeping procedures.

**07/23/09.7 Commissioner Silverman Re Private Parking at Post Office**

Commissioner Silverman asked why parking spaces at the Post Office on 15<sup>th</sup> Street are designated for the Chamber of Commerce.

Traffic Engineer Zandvliet explained that the Chamber of Commerce has had reserved parking spaces at the Post Office on 15<sup>th</sup> Street for many years.

**07/23/09.8 Commissioner Silverman Re Handicapped Parking Spaces on Manhattan Beach Boulevard**

Commissioner Silverman noted that handicapped parking spaces installed on Manhattan Beach Boulevard were not considered by the Parking and Public Improvements Commission.

Traffic Engineer Zandvliet advised that, if requests for handicapped parking spaces meet various requirements, they are installed.

**07/23/09.9 Chairman Gross and Staff Re White Striping in North Manhattan Beach**

At the request of Chairman Gross, Traffic Engineer Zandvliet explained that the white striping in North Manhattan Beach approved by the Commission and deleted by the Council could be considered if it is brought to the Commission, or during the review period.

**H. STAFF ITEMS**

**07/23/09.10 Staff Re Downtown Parking Signs**

Traffic Engineer Zandvliet informed the Commission that locations for the Downtown parking signs have been determined and that a mock-up of the signs will be mounted on a traffic signal pole.

Chairman Gross mentioned the difficulty of determining the locations for the signs.

**07/23/09.11 Staff Re**

Traffic Engineer Zandvliet advised that a report on the engineering speed and traffic volume study to set speed limits on connector and major streets throughout the City will be provided for the Commission's review in the near future. He clarified that this report must be updated every five, seven or ten years, depending on the conditions.

**I. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m.