

Honorable Council
City of Newark, Ohio
March 19, 2012

March 12, 2012, the Street Committee met in Council Chambers with the listed members in attendance:

Ed Houdeshell, Chair
Jeffrey M. Rath
Duke Frost
Carol A. Floyd

Shirley Stare
Rhonda Loomis
Doug Marmie

We wish to report:

1. Installation of a traffic signal at the intersection of Jackson Blvd. and North 21 Street was discussed.

Jason Keiff, 1101 Empire Drive, said there is a continuous flow of traffic at that intersection and it is very difficult to make a left turn there and many accidents have occurred at the site and he asked council to consider putting a traffic light there to help protect the safety of citizens.

Mr. Frost suggested using Moull Street.

Mr. Marmie said using Moull Street as a alternative is not quick, sometimes he has sat through three light changes waiting for the green turn signal. He'd like to see a traffic light there because it is a safety concern but the first requirement would be a traffic study, justification by the administration for the light and a source of payment found.

Brian Morehead, City Engineer, our street traffic engineer is working with Matt Hill to do some street studies out there and take a look at the possibility and warrants for putting a signal there. If the warrant says a signal is necessary then we have to come up with money for it. The trickier issue would then become what to do with Catalina that is offset from there; the most likely idea is that Catalina would have to be restricted to right in and right out traffic. We would need \$100,000 for one.

Mr. Rath questioned the same situation at North Terrace Avenue and West Main Street.

We'll have to look at that also replied Mr. Morehead. The last check was done last year when the drug store was going in there and a light was not warranted at that point. We've been working on looking at speed there.

Mr. Guthrie stated he has discussed the future of the King Road/Sharon Valley Road intersection with Service Director Rhodes and talk of a possible turn lane there. Is that intersection part of the study?

Not part of this study stated Mr. Morehead. There are some sight distance issues that could be helped there by removing some trees but they are on private property right now. Widening and having a right turn lane that would leave the left turn lane to sit there and not block the rest of traffic would also be helpful. Those would be the first two things to look at before any type of signal.

The lights are never in sync at Jackson Blvd. explained Mr. Marmie.

They're all on detectors from the side streets said Mr. Morehead but the signals all up 21st Street are all connected.

Mr. Frost asked if there is a time element when the study at Jackson would be completed.

Mr. Morehead said it could take up to two months, depending on how many interruptions there are.

If we do a study and results indicate a light is warranted, do we have to do it asked Mr. Marmie?

Mr. Ellington asked if a study was done on this a while back.

We did traffic counts to compare against the warrant probably five or six years ago replied Mr. Morehead; the volume from Jackson was nowhere close to warranting a signal.

You could never get a really good traffic count at the intersection of North 21st Street and Jackson because of the high percentage of people who just divert to Moul Street explained Mr. Guthrie.

Mr. Houdeshell makes those left turns often; most people go out there so slowly that is part of the problem. He agreed a study is needed because if it doesn't justify it we'll have to find the money for it somehow.

Ms. Stare asked if there is a lot of traffic on Jackson; before anything is done there should be a study done.

Mr. Morehead said they would finish the study and present it; they should get back to committee in several months.

Mr. Houdeshell stated no action would be taken until results of the traffic count are in.

2. Mr. Morehead discussed a proposal to vacate a portion of South 29th Street south of Steel Avenue dead-ending at the railroad tracks and the vacation of Meridian Alley running between Union Street and the State Route 79 north bound on-ramp from Grant Street.

He wants to change the process for vacating streets and/or alleys by taking comments from people internally to committee to decide whether to move forward with a resolution of intent to start the process. With a lot of these vacations some people request the petition but let the matter drop resulting in many wasted hours of engineering personnel. He hopes to streamline the process and reduce hours spent on projects that just aren't going anywhere.

Comments from police, fire, utilities department, which has some major concern with the utilities lines still underground we'd still need to retain an easement across the area which is written into the ordinance if we do vacate.

Ms. Stare said the majority of Meridian Street Alley was destroyed when the expressway was built; it hasn't been used as a thoroughfare for years and years. The one on 29th Street goes off Steel Avenue and basically looks like an entrance to the MPW Company. I personally can't see any problems with either one of those.

Stuart Moynihan has been working with MPW on this for a couple of months. The city would maintain an easement for servicing utilities located there. Their intention is to be able to expand their loading docks and are actually the property owners on the east and west sides so no other neighbors would be affected by the vacation.

Mrs. Floyd said her only opposition is the fire chief's comment that it would affect delivering EMS and fire service according to the Ohio Fire Code.

If they are improving loading space and improving their property, would that increase or decrease access to large vehicles to other areas of the building asked Mr. Rath?

Mr. Moynihan replied it would impact access of semis being able to back up to the actual building because they would have greater access. I don't know how a loading dock would affect access for a fire vehicle.

Mr. Rath said if they are increasing access to vehicles the size of semis then that isn't going to restrict the use of fire apparatus.

Mr. Moynihan stated MPW does intend to have large trucks reach the rear portion along the railroad tracks of that facility. They wouldn't be doing anything on purpose to impede large vehicle traffic.

Mrs. Loomis asked if it would possible for everyone to see the pictures that were distributed.

Lesla Best asked what happens to the land when a street or alley is vacated.

Typically the land is split down the middle of the adjacent property owners when adjacent property owners sell or transfer their property they can take that part into the legal description of their deed explained Mr. Morehead. We always keep utility easements on them for servicing whatever utilities are there.

Mr. Houdeshell stated these would be held until we get a report on what they actually want to do with them. We need to know what is actually going to be done there.

A loading dock is going to be constructed there said Mr. Moynihan. Is there more information you would like to receive?

Mrs. Floyd would like to see those pictures.

Mr. Morehead asked if the committee is in favor of producing a resolution of intent at this point? If so, we'll generate the legislation and move forward.

Mr. Marmie pointed out the fire chief has said it may impede problems with traffic. If he had said it would create a problem then I would be against this. In the past the chief has very explicitly stated when a vacation would cause problems. Unless he comes out against something I'm going to support it.

Mr. Rath stated the general consensus is that everyone approves.

Mr. Morehead explained Meridian Alley is located off Union Street and was an alley that was chopped off when State Route 79 went through. The actual alley ends right behind the Duke and Duchess station.

Fred McMannis, Englefield Oil, stated basically this alley runs behind the location and curves around so it comes it between the barber shop and residence next door which is owned by the same party. He is also in favor of vacating the alley. We would like, after vacation, to put a guardrail across the backside of the property to eliminate through traffic cutting through the back of the property and the barber shop next door.

