

**Crossroads Special Business District Advisory Commission
MEETING MINUTES**

APPROVED

MEETING DATE: Wednesday, June 13, 2018
LOCATION: City Hall
CALLED TO ORDER: 8:04 AM
MEETING ADJOURNED: 8:54 AM
NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, July 12, 2018

NAME	PRESENT	ABSENT
Bob Springer, Chair	X	
Heidi Butts-Wiegand	X	
Christi Johanningmeyer		X
Joshua Tonnies	X	
Kelly Ruesing	X	
Alison Kinderfather	X	
Vacancy		
David Franklin, Council Liaison	X	
Mara Perry, Staff Liaison	X	

Also in attendance:

Lynne Daugherty – Baker Resident
Tom Block – Baker Resident
Dana (Cricket) Vandover – Baker Resident
Walt Schuster – Baker Resident/S. Gray Business Property Owner
Sue Clifford – Kenilworth Resident
Bill Mund – Kenilworth Resident
Nancy Mund – Kenilworth Resident
Todd Rehg – Director of Public Works, City of Webster Groves
Fran Sudekum – Administrative Support

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion to approve the May minutes was made by Joshua Tonnies, seconded by Heidi Butts-Wiegand and unanimously approved.

BAKER AVENUE CHANGE

- To make the Baker/Gore/Big Bend intersection safer and work with the changes St. Louis County is making to Big Bend Boulevard, the Crossroads Business District is proposing to make Baker Avenue from Gore Avenue to Gray Avenue a one-way westbound street.
- As a result of making the street one-way, some additional parking could be added to the south side of Baker.

BAKER AVENUE CHANGE BACKGROUND

- Mara Perry shared a “draft for discussion purposes only” map of the proposed changes.
- Baker and Gore Avenues are controlled by the City of Webster Groves.
- All aspects of Big Bend Boulevard are controlled by St. Louis County; that includes all types of signage and parking restrictions.

- The three-way intersection of Big Bend Boulevard, Gore Avenue, and Baker Avenue has many safety, sight distance, and traffic flow issues and concerns.
- St. Louis County has plans to continue their one-lane each way with a “suicide” center turn lane project on Big Bend which currently ends at Gray Avenue eastward to Elm Avenue. The Big Bend/Gore/Baker intersection would be affected by their project. Their changes would not address the safety issues caused by the limited sight distance of eastbound Baker drivers trying to enter Big Bend.
- The Crossroads Special Business District has applied for a federal Surface Transportation Program Block Grant (STP) to provide funding for a Streetscape Project covering the two-block area from Gore to Elm to improve the sidewalks, change the configuration of the roadway, add some bumpouts to aid in pedestrian circulation, add possibly 10 to 15 on-street 2 to 3 hour customer-parking spots (see Note #1). Overall, the project will improve safety, traffic flows, and aesthetics which will help maintain a healthy vibrant business district. (A map of the entire business district can be found on the City’s website.) (*Note #1: 10 to 15 spaces is a rough guesstimate as engineering statistics have not yet been completed.*)
- The District is working with St. Louis County to ensure changes the County makes to Big Bend have a positive impact on the District and are in concert with the District’s Streetscape Project.
- St. Louis County supports the District’s Streetscape Project, as does Hixson Middle School whose walking students use the very busy and dangerous intersection at Big Bend and Elm Avenue.
- The Crossroads Special Business District Commission invited property owners within 300 feet of Baker Avenue between Gore and Gray Avenues to their regular monthly meeting in June (see Note #2) to share follow-up information and provide an additional opportunity for property owners to give input. Expanding the invitation letters to 300 feet added the residents on the north side of Kenilworth. (*Note #2: Regular Commission monthly meetings are open to all, but are not formal public hearings.*)

BAKER AVENUE FOLLOW-UP INFORMATION

- One-Way Simulation Test
 - Borrowed equipment from Trailnet to run a simulation test is only for one-day use, so Todd Rehg, Director of Webster Groves Public Works, has worked out ways his department would run the test.
 - Temporary concrete barricades would be put in place along with one-way and do not enter identification signs and re-route signs directing eastbound drivers to Big Bend.
 - Traffic counts will be run on both Baker and Kenilworth Avenues during the test.
 - The test would run for one week.
 - Waiting until September to run the test will capture school-related traffic that has settled into a routine.
- Average Daily Traffic Counts
 - Baker (Gore to Gray): Westbound = 777 and Eastbound = 599
 - Kenilworth (Gore to Gray): Westbound = 109 and Eastbound = 138
 - Westbound Big Bend before Edgar Road = 8,900 and after = 8,000
 - Westbound Big Bend before Elm Avenue = 9,327 and after = 5,663
 - Westbound Big Bend before Rockhill = 6,841 and after = 4,600
- Traffic Accidents – 21 crashes over the last 12 years

VISITOR COMMENTS

- Lynne Daugherty, Baker Resident – Ms. Daugherty likes the changes and thinks it's a "long-needed change, we've lived here since 2005 and yes, you take your life in your hands going east on Baker trying to get on to Big Bend." She is concerned however, about the parking added to the south side of Baker in conjunction with the change. Adding parked cars would not allow her enough space to get in and out of her driveway which is on the north side of Baker.
- Tom Block, Baker Resident – Mr. Block lives right at the Baker/Gore/Big Bend intersection (on the north side of Baker). He has lived there for 50 years. Originally, his property held a Big Bend address which was changed to a Baker address when changes were made to Big Bend to accommodate putting in Highway 44. Mr. Block is also concerned about not being able to get out of his driveway if additional parking is added to the south side of Baker. He feels that businesses should provide their employee's parking and doesn't want to see any additional parking added to Baker. He does not want to see any changes made at the intersection other than adding additional signage for speed and a stop sign; he was unaware that St. Louis County controls all signage on Big Bend and that you cannot put a stop sign on Big Bend in such close proximity to a railroad crossing.
- Dana (Cricket) Vandover, Baker Resident – Ms. Vandover has lived on Baker for 47 years and thinks making Baker one-way is "awesome" and has been waiting for that a long time. The intersection is not safe and very confusing to drivers in all directions.
- Walt Schuster, Baker Resident/S. Gray Business Property Owner – Mr. Schuster is concerned patrons of the business at the corner of Baker and Gray will not want to go around to access the existing parking on the south side of Baker at Gray; they would have to access it from Gore instead of Gray.
- Sue Clifford, Kenilworth Resident – Ms. Clifford is concerned about increased traffic on Kenilworth, but she is also very concerned with the current amount of all-day employee parking from Art of Entertainment and Digital Strike happening on Kenilworth starting right at the Gore intersection. The parked cars block sight distance at the intersection of Kenilworth and Gore.
- Bill Mund, Kenilworth Resident – Mr. Mund is concerned the change will increase the amount of traffic on Kenilworth and create a safety issue as a result. He also feels commercial parking shouldn't be added to Baker. He was unaware that the south side of Baker from Gore to Gray is zoned commercial not residential. The north side of Baker along that strip is zoned residential.
- Nancy Mund, Kenilworth Resident – Ms. Mund is also concerned with the all-day employee parking on Kenilworth. Employees are parking all the way to the corner and it's extremely difficult to see around the parked cars when exiting.

PARKING CLARIFICATION:

Baker Parking

- Proper access and turning space in and out of residents' driveways on Baker will not be impeded and the design work (which has not yet been done) of any additional parking on Baker would reflect that.
- The design work will be looking at and verifying ownership of the current right of way the City owns as well as potentially adding to that with property currently owned by the railroad.
- The current right of way is not accurately depicted on the "draft for discussion purposes only" map.
- The south side of Baker Avenue where parking would be added is currently zoned as commercial property. An extremely rough estimate of possible parking spaces could be 20 spaces.

Kenilworth Parking

- Additional parking available for employees on Baker will help alleviate all-day employee parking on Kenilworth.
- If residents want to pursue resident-only parking on their street, they would accomplish thru the Police Department and the Traffic Advisory Commission. The police are involved as they are the ones that must enforce the restriction.
- There is currently a general City ordinance in place that restricts parking within a certain number of feet of an intersection, so signs to that effect could be put up on Kenilworth at Gore to help address parking too close to the intersection and causing sight issues.
- Digital Strike is in the process of adding parking for their employees on their property.
- Art of Entertaining does not own any of the property surrounding them in order to add additional on-site parking for their employees. The property to their south is owned by the railroad and the property to their east is owned by their business neighbor who owns the building and the lot and uses it for their customers and employees.

ADJOURNED

- Commission Chair Bob Springer ensured each visitor had an opportunity to give input. As time for the meeting ran out and the quorum was lost; he thanked all for their input and closed out the meeting. Anyone wishing to provide additional input is invited to send a letter or email message to Mara Perry.
- Meeting adjourned at 8:54 AM.

NEXT MEETING

- The next meeting will be held on Thursday, July 12, 2018 at 8:00 AM – City Hall.