

February 27, 1964

Pursuant to a call by the Mayor the City Council of the City of Idaho Falls met in Special Session in the Council Chambers of the City Building on the 27th day of February, 1964, at 7:30 P.M. for the purpose of conferring with a P.T.A. group, relative to traffic safety around the schools, as well as another business which might properly be presented. There were present at said Meeting: Mayor S. Eddie Pedersen: Councilmen Keller, Leahy, Page, Parish, Freeman. Absent, Councilman Nelson. Also present: Roy C. Barnes, City Clerk; Arthur Smith, City Attorney; Don Lloyd, Public Works Director; Ethan Axtmann, Traffic Engineer; Dan Wilson, Acting Police Chief.

In his opening remarks the Mayor then thanked those present for appearing and for their interest in working with the City toward improving safety around the schools. He regretfully announced that this was planned as a joint meeting with the City Council and the School Board but that no representatives from the organization were present. The Mayor, speaking in behalf of the City Council, recognized the need for public safety and traffic engineering to attain that end. He recognized further, that law enforcement and the condition of City streets were factors. However, he said the problem was even more involved and that it would require education channeled through the School District, the classroom, the family and the individual. He said it would be unwise and futile to look back in an attempt to determine blame on such facets as poor school locations etc. Instead, there should be a joint, united effort to look ahead and work objectively toward a satisfactory solution.

Mrs. Kenneth Harvey, Chairman of the Bel Aire Parent Teachers Association Safety Committee, appeared before the Council representing herself and other members also present, to explain the many problems existing at the corner of Garfield and Royal, adjacent to the Bel Aire School. School buses line up on one side of the street, cars on the other, thus blocking pedestrian vision. There is no sidewalk on the school side of the street. Water often covers part of the street at this location. A fence is needed to control foot traffic. The Mayor again expressed regret that the School Board was not present, as some of these problems were their responsibility.

Mr. George Freund, Chairman of the Safety Committee, School District #91, appeared before the Council and presented a four point program for joint consideration by the School Board and the City Council, as follows: Adult crossing guards, school boy patrol school sponsored safety program, joint City-School district safety conscious program.

Mr. Ethan Axtmann, Traffic Engineer, appeared and outlined the City's plans, past, present and future, toward increased safety around the schools. He said painted crosswalks had proven more effective than a program to alert and educate the children. He said that school boy patrols are as effective as adult crossing guards, that traffic signals provide a false sense of security and presented statistics, taken from forty impartially selected school crossings in Detroit to prove these points. He suggested that retired policemen might be used for training students. Children must be taught respect for curbs vs. streets. Speed bumps, according to Axtmann, have certain disadvantages from the standpoint of construction and maintenance. Children should be taught at an early age the hazards of traveling to and from school, concluded Axtmann.

Howard Cohne, Chairman of the Idaho Falls High School Safety Committee, appeared before the Council, endorsing the school boy patrol system. He said National Traffic Safety Groups recognize it as an effective medium and offered the services of high school students in instructing the school boy participants. He felt 35 miles per hour speed limits were too fast.

Mr. Joe Laird, State Highway Engineer, appeared and endorsed the school boy patrol system, also Axtmann's theory regarding the false security of the traffic light.

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Mr. Dan Wilson, Acting Police Chief, appeared and said the problem was threefold, involving engineering, education and enforcement. He concurred with the theory that the traffic light offers a false sense of security and tempts children, as well as adults, to cross in the middle of the block. He reminded those present that Garfield Street is not an isolated trouble area but that there are as many as there are schools.

Public Works Director Lloyd pointed out that a joint agreement exists between the City and the School District for construction of a sidewalk from Hemlock Circle to the Bel Aire School which should be accomplished in 1964. Mr. Jerry Jacobson, Bel Aire principal, registered a reminder that said walk is proposed where water collects and that a sidewalk in this location would not be beneficial unless built above the anticipated water line. Lloyd continued by saying that the water was at one time channeled into a dry well before the street was paved but this cannot be re-opened. He said a temporary solution would be to pump it into a diked pond on the Bel Aire school property. Mrs. Parry Fryslie appeared and objected to this. Lloyd said a permanent solution would be to construct a storm sewer to Crow Creek or a canal but that this would probably have to be financed by a Local Improvement District. Mr. Fryslie asked what would happen if the school district protested the district. The City Attorney explained that the City could not force this action by a lien on their property but that, in the past, they have been very cooperative by voluntarily paying their share which was the equivalent of an assessment.

Mr. Aubrey Dodd, President of Bel Aire P.T.A., appeared and asked why sidewalks weren't constructed when the school was built. The Mayor reminded that this was the responsibility of the school district. He then asked about the Dale Despain planning and was told that his program would recommend corrective proposals for such deficiencies. Mr. Dodd said that, even though there were a sidewalk, children would now be walking in the street, due to heavy snow drifts. Mr. Tom Abercrombie appeared and said that in some cities, including the one from which he had recently moved, it was the resident's responsibility to clear the sidewalk of snow.

Mr. Kenneth Harvey appeared, recognizing that there were other safety problem areas in the City, but urged that the most critical spots, such as Garfield, be corrected first. Mrs. Harvey urged that patrolmen concentrate on school areas during the periods of heavy traffic. Councilman Leahy said this was not a practical solution, due to the fact that there were only about one half as many patrolmen on day duty as there are schools. Councilman Leahy, proposed the creation of a Citizens Safety Committee under the auspices of the National Safety Council. Mr. Freund concurred and said this could probably be organized through the P.T.A. Council.

Mrs. Darrell Reeder appeared and proposed that directional traffic signs be installed beyond the crest of the Garfield Street hill. A representative from the Clair E. Gale P.T.A. proposed more cross walks. These suggestions were referred to the Traffic Engineer.

Mr. Harold Bush, Principal of Whittier School, appeared and again reminded the group that the safety hazards are City-wide and are not limited to Bel Aire School. He said the majority of accidents do not occur at crosswalks. Safety talks are often presented in the schools with apparent negligible success. He proposed that a complete and thorough study be made of all safety hazards.

There was general discussion pertaining to the West Broadway School crossing. It was generally agreed that there is too much pedestrian crossing at other places than that so designated and protected by an adult crossing guard, thus posing one more safety hazard.

In the absence of further discussion, the Mayor assured the group that the over-all problem would receive serious Council consideration.

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The Mayor appointed Mr. Brent Davis as Acting Director of the Electrical Division, effective March 1st, 1964. It was moved by Leahy, seconded by Keller, that this appointment be confirmed. Roll call as follows: Ayes, 6; No, None; carried.

Mr. Richard Siggard, Consulting Electrical Engineer with Arotec Engineering, Salt Lake City, appeared before the Council, and presented several projects, either completed or in the process of completion, by his firm. These projects, in each instance, represented renovation of electrical distributive systems to provide for future growth. Included in this presentation was a 138 KV switchyard connection transformation facility for the City of Provo, Utah. He then introduced the following representative from Westinghouse Electric Supply; Robert Lewis, local distributor, Donald Jans, Sales Engineer, Joseph Fackrell, District Engineer, who acted as spokesman in a presentation, revealing his company's recommendations for design of this City's renovated electrical distribution system expansion. He said the first consideration should be that of determining how the City will grow, including new applications, new products, new industry, population expansion. He warned to beware on non-recurring load growths and natural limitations such as water and space. He said the rapid growth of Idaho Falls might be classified as a step function, not likely to re-occur to the same degree. By diagram he then gave a technical demonstration of the Delta vs. the Wye System, how and why it becomes advantageous to convert from one to the other to provide for normal growth. He said his company has a computer system for determining voltage needs and that about two months would be required to accumulate data. At the Mayor's request, Mr. Fackrell agreed to submit a proposal, outlining the services his company would perform for the City and costs of same.

Councilman Leahy then inquired from Mr. Siggard relative to the status of his license to do business as a Consulting Engineer in the State of Idaho. Siggard explained that he, personally, was so licensed, that his company was not, that he personally possessed substantially more assets than does his corporation, that were he to be selected as the City's Electrical Consulting Engineer, he would personally sign the contract. Councilman Leahy said the City's primary problem is one of proper voltage selection and that, at the moment, the many conflicting conclusions are confusing. Siggard said professional ethics would prohibit his proceeding further with an evaluation unless or until he was actually under contract as the City's Consultant.

No action was taken. The Mayor and Council agreed to take the foregoing information and proceedings under advisement.

There being no further business, it was moved by Councilman Leahy, seconded by Page, that the Meeting adjourn. Carried.

ATTEST: s/ Roy C. Barnes
CITY CLERK

s/ S. Eddie Pedersen
MAYOR
