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School zone speed limit discussed

By Randy Essex

The Lincoln City Council, the mayor and sponsors of a bill to establish a 25 mph speed limit around Lincoln elementary schools were invited to a meeting Thursday with state senators.

Charging that the city has not been responsive to their pleas for the reduced speed limits, supporters of LB395 asked the Legislature's Public Works Committee to assume responsibility for safety of school children.

Passage of the bill, sponsored by Lincoln Sen. Dave Landis and Don Wesely, would amount to a mandate from the state to the city of Lincoln.

The city would be required to post speed limit signs and flashing yellow lights on arterial streets adjacent to elementary schools where the speed limit is 35 mph.

City Transportation Director Tom Butcher told the committee that posting signs and lights would cost the city \$60,000 at the expense of existing safety programs.

Butcher told the senators the city made an intensive study on the subject and decided the existing plan is the better of the two.

Safety signals proposed

Butcher said pedestrian safety signals are a more feasible means of providing safety, given financial resources. He said the study revealed accidents involving pedestrians would not be reduced by the lower speed limit.

Landis said the city has a hostility toward the idea, and said that surfaced during Butcher's testimony.

Lincoln Sen. Steve Fowler, testifying in support of the bill, said citizens have exhausted their avenues at a local level to reduce the limit, so were forced to turn to the state.

Newman Grove Sen. Thomas Kennedy told Fowler he could not believe that the city council would not listen to the concerns of Lincoln senators, and offered his support to them in persuading the council to lower the limit.

Kennedy later suggested that the mayor, council and supporters of the bill have a meeting with the Public Works Committee to see if the problem could not be solved without state legislation.

"Supreme Court"

Kennedy, along with Lincoln Sen. Chris Beutler and Farnam Sen. Tom Vickers expressed concern over the idea of the Legislature overruling the city.

Beutler, who said he will support the bill, said it bo-

thered him that the Legislature was being called on as a "supreme court" to settle a difference of opinion.

Landis, however, argued that the senators have a constitutional obligation to provide for the safety of children all over the state.

He said the city has been lucky there has only been one accident in the last two years involving a school child crossing an arterial street next to his school.

The lack of accidents is the result of parents who take time out to guard school crossings and make sure their children cross streets safely, Landis added.

Parents and school officials were out in force for the hearing, numbering more than 50 when Landis asked supporters of the bill to stand.

Play "dodge-em"

PTA representatives from the state and from several elementary schools in the city told the committee they have exhausted avenues at the local level and 35 mph is too fast to let traffic travel past grade schools.

The section of the bill sponsored by Wesely met with less objection, and was supported by Butcher.

Wesely, asking whether the Legislature would protect the pedestrian or let the "car continue to be king of the road," proposed that cars be required to stop whenever a pedestrian steps off the curb into a crosswalk.

He said arrogance on the part of drivers makes it impossible for pedestrians to cross some streets safely.

Present law says a driver must yield to pedestrians if the pedestrian is on the driver's half of the street, or if the pedestrian is close enough to that half of the street to create a possible hazard.

"This amounts to the pedestrian playing 'dodge-em,'" Wesely said.

Butcher said the transportation department considers the idea a positive step toward pedestrian safety. Butcher emphasized that he was not testifying for the city, which has not taken a stand on LB395, but for his department.

Thieves strike apartment

UNL police are continuing their investigation of a burglary that occurred sometime Wednesday in a student's apartment near East Campus.

Thieves broke into Cynthia Swanson's apartment, 3400 Starr St., and took a television and stereo valued at \$800.

Entry was gained to the apartment by removing the molding around a backdoor window and unlocking the door. The theft was reported about 8:30 p.m. Wednesday.

Support your local distinguished prof

Nominees for the Distinguished Teacher Awards will be selected around March 1 by committees on all UNL colleges from recommendations said Delivee Wright of the Teaching and Learning Center.

The awards for "excellence in teaching performance in the undergraduate program by senior staff" are sponsored by the Amoco Foundation. The University of Nebraska Foundation sponsors another award, and the Sorensen family sponsors the Annis Cahikin Sorensen Award in the humanities.

Faculty may be nominated for the awards by students, peers, departments or alumni. Nomination letters include a nominee's personal qualities, teaching methods, student evaluations, new courses, teaching innovations and special efforts.

These letters, as well as other pertinent data, are taken into consideration by each college's selection committee,

comprised of students and faculty. They select a maximum of four nominees in humanities, social sciences, science and technology.

The recommendations for the final selection are forwarded to Ned Hedges, vice chancellor of academic affairs, and Larry Andrews, associate dean of graduate studies, who make the final selections with the help of a sub-committee of both faculty and students. The five chosen must be approved by Chancellor Roy Young.

An announcement was made in November to open nominations. Student Advisory Boards were asked to communicate that the nominations were open, and announcements were to be made in classes.

The nominations are to be submitted before March 1. Distinguished Teachers will be presented at the Honors Convocation Friday, April 27. Honored faculty will receive \$1,000.


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