



CITY OF WASILLA


290 E. HERNING AVE.

WASILLA, ALASKA 99654-7091

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INFORMATION MEMORANDUM NO. 97-23

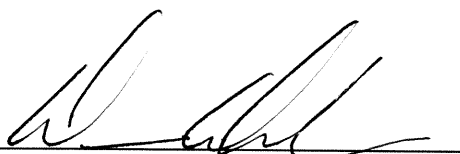
FROM: Duane Dvorak, City Planner 

DATE: May 7, 1997

SUBJECT: Melanie Avenue Closure Review

On Tuesday, May 07, 1997 the Wasilla Planning Commission considered the above referenced request and voted unanimously not to recommend closure of Melanie Avenue. The Commission reviewed the background information that was presented by Staff. This information is also attached to this memorandum for Council's consideration.

The Commission in it's discussion indicated that the alternatives available, such as, increased traffic speed enforcement, dust control measures, and traffic calming, would provide substantial relief from the dust and safety issues along this street. Without requiring the closure of Melanie Avenue and all the costs and inconveniences that would entail.



Duane Dvorak, City Planner



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PLANNING COMMISSION MEMORANDUM

NO. 97-10

From: Duane Dvorak, City Planner 

To: Wasilla Planning Commission

Date: May 5, 1997

Subject: Review of request to close Melanie Avenue between Success and Kimberly.
(Referred to Commission by the Wasilla City Council on April 14, 1997)

Background

A number of property owners on Melanie Avenue have submitted a petition request to form a paving LID for a portion of Melanie Avenue, from Lucus Road to a point between Kimberly Street and Success Drive. Some of these same property owners have also proposed closing Melanie Avenue to through traffic by blocking the road near the end of the planned paving project. As noted above, the issue of closing Melanie Avenue was referred by the City Council to the Planning Commission on April 14, 1997. This issue was also referred to the Police Department and Public Works Department as well. Reports from these departments is included with this memo for review.

Due to scheduling, it was not possible to review this issue at the Planning meeting April 15, 1997. Hence it was held until the next regular meeting on May 6, 1997. Staff has investigated the history of the subdivisions involved in order to provide some background information. Upper Wasilla Heights Subdivision, located west of Lucus Road, was platted on September 23, 1971. Northern Capital Estates was platted on June 14, 1974. Wasilla Acres was platted on April 4, 1975.

Platting and Dedications

The Wasilla Acres plat dedicated the bulk of Melanie and Vaunda Avenues and it was this subdivision, about 22 years ago, that created the relatively direct connection between Lucus Road and Church Road along Melanie Avenue. The only other connecting streets between Lucus and Church is Spruce Avenue on the north and the Parks Highway on the south.

Dedication of right-of-way for through access is a requirement of the Mat-Su Borough platting regulations (Section 16.20.060). When land owners develop their land, they are in competition with other land developers in the same area. If it were not required by the Borough to do otherwise, many developers would develop cul-de-sacs so that their road improvements could not be used to benefit another land owners or developers. If this system of development were allowed to prevail, it would be very hard to get around because dead end road would be the rule

rather than the exception. This would not be convenient for the public and it would be less efficient and more costly for road maintenance.

According to the Mat-Su Borough Platting Department, dedication of road right-of-way to the public carries with it certain expectations on the part of land owners in the area. Right-of-way is not usually vacated or closed without clear and thoughtful consideration. When these subdivisions were originally platted, they were approved on the basis that the access provided by the subdivision appeared to be adequate to support the expected development in the area.

City Street Classification

Melanie Avenue is classified as a Minor Collector Street. in the Wasilla Street Classification System (Resolution WR94-12). Minor Collector Street is defined in the Wasilla Municipal Code as follows:

14.10.030 Street Classifications. A minor collector street provides for movement from subdivisions and residential streets to major collector roads, arterial roads and highways. Minor collectors may also carry traffic from one neighborhood to another, or from one neighborhood to other areas of the community. Traffic volumes range from under 400 AADT to more than 2000 AADT. Although design speeds on flat terrain are 50 M.P.H., most collector traffic speeds are generally expected to be 25-35 M.P.H. Direct access to private property is acceptable when other access is not available, or should be limited to intervals that do not inhibit traffic flow and public safety.

Traffic on Melanie Avenue averaged about 880 trips per day when it was last measured by Public Works in 1993. Although it is not clear in the records, staff believes that these same figures were used by the planning consultant that assisted the City in revising its street classifications map. Closure of Melanie Avenue would require an amendment of the street classification map.

Encroachments and Encroachment Permits

Blocking Melanie Avenue without vacating a portion of the right-of-way would constitute an encroachment. Encroachments are allowed in the City right-of-way when permitted by the Mayor under the Authority granted by Section 14.08.020 (Permitted Encroachments) of the Wasilla Municipal Code.

14.08.020 Permitted Encroachments. An encroachment may be constructed, placed, changed or maintained across or along a city street or right-of-way only if permitted by City ordinance and a written permit has been issued by the Mayor or his designee. In determining whether to issue or deny a permit the Mayor may consider, as a minimum, the following facts.

- A. The collateral impact of the requested encroachment upon other individuals, City maintenance efforts, the public in general and safety.
- B. The overall beneficial or negative impacts on the use of the street or right-of-way by individuals or the public-at-large.
- C. The Mayor may require the applicant to obtain reviews and or approvals of construction designs or materials from other State or Local Government Agencies.

Most encroachment permits are requested by private parties when they have improvements that project into the right-of-way. Most encroachments do not block the entire roadway. If the City were to erect an encroachment in the right-of-way, without going through a process to vacate the unneeded portion of right-of-way, staff believes that the City should follow its own ordinances in this regard.

Right-of-way Requirements for Cul-de-sac

Developing a cul-de-sac on each end of Melanie Avenue would require additional right-of-way from the adjoining property owners. An adequate cul-de-sac for public safety vehicles and road maintenance equipment to turn around would need to measure 100 feet across, at minimum. Acquisition of additional right-of-way or public access easements could cost money if the adjoining property owner is not willing to give the land to the City voluntarily. A vacation of the unused portion of right-of-way could provide some land to trade for the land to be acquired for the cul-de-sac.

Land Use

There are 72 lots fronting on Melanie Avenue from Lucus Road to Recluse Circle. Of these lots, 45 are developed with residential or commercial structures. A thorough survey of the area was not completed by staff, however, it appears that the development along Melanie is generally consistent with the uses allowed in the development district. Staff notes that the multifamily dwellings along Melanie Avenue are nonconforming due to the change in zoning that occurred in August 1996. The RR—Rural Residential development district allows only single-family and duplex dwelling at a maximum density of 1 dwelling per 20,000 square feet. In addition, commercial uses are limited to 10,000 square feet total floor area. Under the previous zoning requirements for the former I—Intermediate district, there were no residential density requirements and commercial and light industrial floor areas were allowed to be 40 percent or more of the total lot area.

Road Maintenance

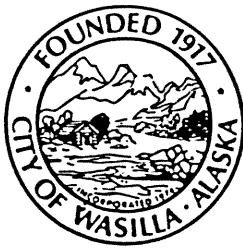
It appears that closing Melanie Avenue entirely could be an inconvenience for road maintenance and snow removal purposes. Road maintenance equipment would have to go blade up on Parks and Church to get to Mission Hills for a greater distance than they would if they come out on Mystery or Success as they currently do. They could go down Spruce to Lucus and then go

blade up along Church as an alternative, but it still increases the run where the City does not require maintenance.

Staff does not believe that closing Melanie is the long term answer for this area. There are a number projects in the works that could do a great deal to reduce traffic on Melanie and Vaunda Avenues. The proposed expansion of the nearby Bumpus Recreation Area (BRA) shows a future extension of Mystery Avenue to Lucus Road. This would reduce the traffic that is currently going up Melanie and Vaunda to enter the BRA. Then Mystery could become a minor collector, perhaps relegating Melanie to Local Road status. The other project involved Church Road paving. This would make it the more attractive way to go, perhaps siphoning off some of the traffic that is attracted to go down Melanie Avenue and Vaunda to escape the bad conditions on Church Road.

Traffic Calming

If some closure of Melanie is to be considered, staff recommends that the Commission and the residents of the area study the methods of traffic calming that are available to provide some long term relief from speeding traffic without having to close the entire street off. In addition, staff recommends that all affected property owners *and residents* be notified of the possible closure and be given a chance to comment on the proposed change. Roads are maintained for the benefit of the public and not just for the convenience of adjoining property owners. If this were the case the City would be made up of private roads, maintained (or not maintained) by neighborhood street associations, and the association could decide who to let onto its roads. Getting from one place to the other could become a real inconvenience. If Melanie Avenue is closed without sufficient reason it would only a matter of time until other neighborhoods would want to do the same thing. The Wasilla Comprehensive Plan supports the concept of a grid system of connecting streets so that transportation in and around the community is convenient, cost effective and energy efficient. Provided that the issues of dust and speed can be adequately addressed through other means such as those implemented by Wasilla Public Works, the Police Department, and through road design measures, this should remain the goal of choice.



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INFORMATION MEMORANDUM

NO. 97-16

From: Sgt. Craig Robinson, Police Department
John T. Felton, Public Works Director/City Engineer

Date: April 21, 1997

Subject: Melanie Avenue

Police; Vehicle Monitoring Report:

There have recently been several complaints voiced to the Police Department about speeding vehicles on Melanie Avenue. The complaints have indicated that speeding and reckless vehicles are a constant problem. In response to these issues the department instituted a selective radar enforcement program on the fifteenth of this month and continued it for one week. During that time period officer's spent a total of seven hours monitoring traffic with stationary radar. The results of the program are as follows;

Total vehicles monitored: 216
Speed 5 to 10 over limit: 11 warnings issued
Speed 10 to 15 over limit: 3 citations issued

Chief Fannon spoke with one of the complainants who described to him a pickup truck that was the most serious, constant violator. On the fifth day of the enforcement period that vehicle was observed going seven miles over the limit and stopped. Subsequent investigation revealed that the driver did not have a valid license as his Alaska license had been previously suspended for other violations.

The program will no longer be performed on a daily basis due to time and manpower constraints, however, periodic checks will be done to ensure continued compliance.

CR/da

Public Works; Dust Control:

The Council requested that the Public Works Department prepare a report on dust control measures that have been used on Melanie Avenue.

Historically, we have used calcium chloride and watering to control the dust. The limitations are that the calcium chloride does not hold up well under heavy traffic. The road is much smoother and people tend to speed once the treatment has been

accomplished. The faster speeds tend to deteriorate the surface at a faster rate. We still try to seal the road with calcium chloride as it does help control the dust. The other major effort is watering the road. This is usually a short term benefit and is costly to the City as we have to rent the water truck.

The Roads Department has put a great deal of effort into Melanie this spring. This is an unusual April and we are very early in our work. The road surface has been watered, rolled, and one ton of calcium chloride has been applied to the first 3/4 of a mile (Lucas to Kimberly). This work effort has cost approximately \$ 1,505.00.

There is an L.I.D. being formed in this area. I am in the process of obtaining the initial cost estimates for this project. As soon as the cost are presented, I will do a feasibility report and present it to Council for authorization to poll the L.I.D.

Streeter #mit

Set: 1st 8958

Machine Number: 25-05354 Route Number: Sta Number:
Set By: ZB Week Beginning: 5-27-92 Direction: EW Long Hose: 50
Pulled By: ZB Posted By: Quattro By: Short Hose:
Location Name: Meloni Ave

Church Road maintained
5-28-92

| MONTH | May | | | | | | | | |
|------------|---------|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|--------|--------|
| DATE | 5-27-92 | | | | | | | 6-1-92 | 6-4-92 |
| DAY | Wed | Thur | Fri | Sat | Sun | mon | tues | | |
| A.M. 12-1 | 8 | 20 | 11 | 17 | 20 | 6 | 13 | | |
| 1-2 | 9 | 11 | 12 | 7 | 11 | 4 | 3 | | |
| 2-3 | 8 | 7 | 8 | 6 | 6 | 0 | 21 | | |
| 3-4 | 5 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 6 | 4 | 21 | | |
| 4-5 | 6 | 6 | 13 | 7 | 3 | 4 | 10 | | |
| 5-6 | 12 | 6 | 7 | 4 | 6 | 1 | 7 | | |
| 6-7 | 65 | 13 | 3 | 8 | 18 | 24 | 24 | | |
| 7-8 | 31 | 43 | 13 | 5 | 37 | 37 | 29 | | |
| 8-9 | 38 | 48 | 24 | 4 | 41 | 51 | 34 | | |
| 9-10 | 36 | 52 | 30 | 24 | 32 | 39 | 41 | | |
| 10-11 | 26 | 41 | 57 | 22 | 60 | 38 | 31 | | |
| 11-12 | 22 | 18 | 53 | 82 | 62 | 53 | 71 | | |
| SUBTOTAL | 224 | 273 | 240 | 197 | 301 | 262 | 305 | 171 | |
| P.M. 12-13 | | 65 | 46 | 81 | 57 | 59 | 54 | 37 | |
| 13-14 | | 53 | 56 | 5 | 71 | 57 | 51 | 40 | |
| 14-15 | 18 | 74 | 85 | 72 | 40 | 93 | 66 | 71 | |
| 15-16 | 61 | 90 | 41 | 47 | 62 | 87 | 75 | 65 | |
| 16-17 | 66 | 76 | 85 | 75 | 37 | 66 | 86 | 52 | |
| 17-18 | 78 | 72 | 81 | 3 | 59 | 66 | 43 | 91 | |
| 18-19 | 36 | 78 | 48 | 60 | 55 | 66 | 13 | 89 | |
| 19-20 | 54 | 65 | 51 | 52 | 57 | 59 | 72 | 83 | |
| 20-21 | 39 | 85 | 73 | 57 | 56 | 55 | 69 | 65 | |
| 21-22 | 19 | 41 | 72 | 41 | 53 | 59 | 34 | 58 | |
| 22-23 | 29 | 49 | 49 | 31 | 21 | 31 | 49 | 53 | |
| 23-24 | 2 | 18 | 15 | 18 | 13 | 15 | 37 | 22 | |
| SUBTOTAL | 402 | 756 | 705 | 542 | 581 | 713 | 652 | 731 | |
| TOTAL | 631 | 1029 | 945 | 739 | 882 | 975 | 957 | 902 | |

line
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6/6

Daily ave Data 897

Per Day

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(3) The planning commission may withdraw approval of the district or of specific standards if it finds that the standards are inadequate or are not being adequately enforced by the city. (Ord. 94-071 (sub1), § 5 (part), 1994; Ord. 92-110, § 2, 1992; Ord. 88-190, § 2 (part), 1988)

16.20.050 REDUCTION OR WAIVER OF ROAD CONSTRUCTION.

(A) The platting board may waive or reduce the requirements for road construction under MSB 16.20.100, 16.20.120, and 16.20.140 for subdivision of land under A.S. 38.09, Homestead Act, provided each lot, tract, or parcel created is a nominal ten acres in size or larger.

(1) The platting board shall consider the following and make findings regarding the same in its decision to approve, deny, or reduce the requirements of MSB 16.20.100, 16.20.120 and 16.20.140:

- (a) whether the proposed subdivision is within the boundaries of an established road service area;
- (b) whether road construction would be practical, feasible, and economical;
- (c) whether the proposed subdivision has legal and physical access;
- (d) whether the proposed subdivision is accessed by a road listed in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough comprehensive development plan: transportation;
- (e) whether the proposed subdivision is located within the core area, which is defined as that area as shown on the official street and highways index map;
- (f) whether there are other subdivisions in the area;
- (g) whether there is access for the surrounding developed lands;
- (h) whether there are any major water bodies or extreme topographic features that make the construction of borough standard roads to this subdivision impossible;
- (i) whether there is a proposed method of financing future road construction;
- (j) whether there is a trail system that accesses or traverses the subdivision;

- (k) whether parking is required or needed;
- (l) public comments;
- (m) agency comments; and
- (n) borough comments.

(B) The platting board may waive or reduce the requirements for road construction under MSB 16.20.100, 16.20.120, and 16.20.140 for subdivision of land provided each lot, tract, or parcel created is a nominal ten acres in size or larger and the subdivision will create no more than four lots, tracts, or parcels.

(1) The platting board shall consider and make findings regarding the criteria specified in subsection (A)(1) of this section in its decision to approve, deny, or reduce the requirements of MSB 16.20.100, 16.20.120, and 16.20.140. (Ord. 92-110, § 3, 1992)

ARTICLE II. ROADS

16.20.060 DEDICATION TO PUBLIC.

(A) All roads shall be dedicated to the public, except as provided in subsection (D); provided, that a subdivider shall be required only to provide the designated right-of-way width within the subdivision, and one-half of the designated right-of-way width of the street on the exterior boundary of the subdivision, with the dedication secured from the adjacent property owner before final plat approval.

(B) When accepting a roadway dedication, the platting authority shall conduct a public hearing.

(C) Roads shall be dedicated for access to all lots within the subdivision and parcels of land adjacent to the subdivision. Dedications shall be sufficient to carry all traffic generated by the subdivision and to provide residential and collector rights-of-way for projected traffic through the subdivision. Dedications shall include any arterial and collector roads identified in the official streets and highways plan.

(D) Private roads may be allowed in subdivisions where there is no possibility or public necessity to provide for public through traffic if the roads meet borough standards, allow emergency