Solar Powered Digital Speed Signs Coming to Archer Avenue: By Thomas S. Baliga



Due to the public stance our Civic Association took on eliminating speeding on the main thoroughfares that lie within and/or on our community's borders, I was invited by 23rd Ward Alderman Silvana Tabares to an on-site meeting at the corner of Archer and Kostner Avenues to review traffic regulation options for what has now turned into a dangerous intersection.

As a refresher, this intersection was the site of two catastrophic traffic fatalities within the last 14 months. First incident took place on April 16, 2020 where a 39 year-old man was killed after the speeding Pontiac Trans-Am he was driving eastbound on Archer was rammed by another vehicle. This collision in turn caused the Trans-Am to slide uncontrollably through the Kostner intersection, ultimately wrapping around a street light pole in the Gilewski Triangle. For those of you that can handle graphic videos, posted to YouTube is a record of this tragedy. The second incident happened on August 21, 2020 where an 83 year old man, riding his bicycle, was killed by a reckless driver. There have been other accidents of a non-fatal nature at this location; but these two jump out to ***command our attention.***



As previously mentioned, the Alderman knows our stance on this issue. However, the meeting came about because Alderman Tabares has been walking blocks in our neighborhood and is hearing first hand from residents, what we from our civic association have been saying all along, is a problem in our community. So we're glad individuals are finally speaking up.

Pictured here at the Archer/Kostner intersection are, from left to right: Thomas S. Baliga, AHCA President – Member John Marusarz, 23rd Ward Alderman Silvana Tabares, Lawrence McPhillips – Deputy Commissioner CDOT, and two Traffic Engineers. ***Photo by: Peter Pawinski***

People think it is so easy to put up traffic signs/lights; but after watching these professionals do their job, it becomes very apparent there is a lot more to be considered in terms of placement of such devices. Currently there are no Red Light or Speed Cameras available in the City. So the next best option to slow down traffic are the digital speed signs.

Each year every Alderman receives a Menu Budget, which they can allocate to capital improvements within their Ward such as sidewalk replacement, stop signs, street repaving, etc. For 2021 the Budget was $1.5 Million dollars, and since the dividing line between the 14th and 23rd Wards runs down the center of Archer Avenue, and Alderman Tabares was going to handle her side of the street, it made sense to have the same type of signs on both sides of Archer, so I invited the 14th Ward to join us for the on-site meeting. Unfortunately, representatives of the 14th Ward were unable to attend, but Alderman Tabares had a conversation with the 14th Ward and an agreement was struck whereby Alderman Tabares will pick up the cost for both sides of Archer Avenue.

These digital signs cost $11,000 each from the Menu Budget and will take 30 – 60 days to be installed. So we extend our thanks to Alderman Tabares for expending the $22,000 in funds to get this intersection fully covered. The signs the City will be installing do not have the capability to issue automated traffic citations. However, they will track data such as the time, number, and speed of vehicles coming through the intersection. This data will then provide quantifiable statistics that in-turn will be used to justify installation of Red Light and Speed Cameras as soon as such devices become available.