

**CITY OF NEWARK
Newark, Delaware**

**TRAFFIC COMMITTEE MEETING
February 20, 2007
3:30 p.m.**

Members Present: Capt. John Potts, Lt. Susan Poley, Tom Sciulli, Rich Lapointe, Tom Parkins, Roy Lopata, Carol Houck, Dave Gula

Absent: Susan Lamblack, Rick Vitelli

Guests: Heather Dunigan, Newark Traffic Calming Ad Hoc Committee
Jean White, Newark resident
Wendy Bellion, Newark resident
David Athey, Newark City Council member

1. NEWARK TRAFFIC CALMING AD HOC COMMITTEE REPORT

Capt. John Potts introduced Heather Dunigan of the Newark Traffic Calming Ad Hoc Committee. Ms. Dunigan presented the members with a copy of the committee's draft report. She stated that this committee was established as a result of a January 2006 City Council workshop on pedestrian and transportation safety issues to follow up on the Old Newark Traffic Calming Plan that was done several years ago. The committee was asked to expand the study area to include the entire city and to also expand the "tool kit" of traffic calming since the initial study focused on the traditional engineering traffic calming measures. The committee was charged with the following:

- Updating and expanding the traffic calming measures "tool kit"
- Simplification of the project initiation process
- Updating the project eligibility selection process
- Expansion of the project location area
- Possible "pilot" and/or temporary projects
- Related traffic calming issues and concerns.

Ms. Dunigan said that in addition to the measures outlined in the Old Newark Traffic Calming Plan, this committee expanded the tools to include traffic safety enforcement technology, pedestrian and bicyclist safety measures, better signing and striping, and low cost traffic calming options. The committee made the following recommendations:

- Expanding the use of red light cameras throughout the city

- Introduce the use of radar speed cameras, which would require legislation by the Delaware General Assembly
- Explore the use of in-street pedestrian crossing signs, in-road warning lights and other measures to improve visibility of mid-block crosswalks
- Consider the use of brightly-colored orange flags at crosswalks near elementary schools
- Explore the use of pedestrian countdown signals, which are more of a safety measure rather than traffic calming
- Consider “bicycle boulevards” to help different types of transportation interact and create improved visibility for cyclists and allow
- Retrofit intersections to reduce curb radii, which would reduce crossing distances for pedestrians and also slow vehicles
- Replace four-way stop signs with mini traffic circles on low volume local streets
- Expand the use of lane striping and bicycle lane striping to visually narrow roadways and paint “speed legends” to make drivers more aware of speed limits.

Ms. Dunigan explained that the committee wanted to simplify the project initiation process. Rather than requiring a survey of all the residents in a study area, the committee is recommending that a minimum of four households on the affected street would be required to initiate the process. The “traffic calming request” form was expanded to include type of problem, potential solutions and demonstration of community support. The criteria for traffic calming eligibility would remain basically the same (volume, speed and crashes), and the study area would have to meet two of the three criteria. The Traffic Committee would help determine the study area during the review process.

Once it has been determined that an area meets the criteria for traffic calming, the next step would be for the City to send a letter to the “stakeholders” (residents, renters, and property owners within the study area) to describe the traffic calming process and provide the results of the speed, volume, and crash analysis. To proceed to the design process, at least 50% of the stakeholders must respond, and 51% of those responding must approve moving forward. Ms. Dunigan explained that one response per household would be allowed.

The Traffic Committee would then establish a committee comprised of city employees and residents in the study area to determine the issues and develop a design to resolve the concerns. The project should consider budget, maintenance, and emergency response issues. DeIDOT would be involved with any traffic calming on state-maintained roads.

The preferred design would be sent to the stakeholders along with a ballot. Fifty percent of the ballots must be returned, and at least 67% of the responses must be in favor of the design.

City Council also directed the committee to consider temporary and/or “pilot” projects, and the committee recommended the following locations mainly because they are state roads, which would allow the use of DelDOT expertise and possible funding, and also because they are in highly-visible areas:

- Elkton Road near Amstel Avenue
- West and East Park Place
- Main Street
- South College Avenue
- Cleveland Avenue

The Ad Hoc Newark Traffic Calming Committee is recommending that the City move forward with traffic calming and that it be done in coordination with Aetna Hose Hook and Ladder and the City’s Department of Public Works so unintended consequences do not occur.

Ms. Dunigan concluded by explaining that the report also includes crash maps to depict the locations of bicycle and pedestrian crashes throughout the City.

Capt. Potts thanked Ms. Dunigan. Mr. Lopata suggested the members be given an opportunity to review the report and be prepared to discuss it at a future meeting.

MOTION BY ROY LOPATA, SECONDED BY DAVID GULA, TO ACCEPT THE NEWARK TRAFFIC CALMING AD HOC COMMITTEE (DRAFT) REPORT.

MOTION PASSED. VOTE: 8 TO 0.

Mr. Lopata said it is an excellent report and thanked those who volunteered to serve on the committee. Council Member Athey thanked Ms. Dunigan for taking on this task. Ms. Dunigan left the meeting at this time.

2. REQUEST TO DESIGNATE THE 400 BLOCK OF TOWNSEND ROAD, BETWEEN MANNS AVENUE AND RITTER LANE, AS A SPECIAL RESIDENTIAL PARKING DISTRICT.

Capt. Potts said that the residents of the 400 block of Townsend Road have submitted a petition requesting that portion of Townsend be designated as a special residential parking district. He circulated the petition among the members and indicated that 80% of the residents in the affected area have signed the petition. Mr. Lopata said that the recent change in parking regulations on Manns Avenue has more than likely prompted this request.

MOTION BY ROY LOPATA, SECONDED BY LT. POLEY, TO RECOMMEND TO THE CITY MANAGER THAT TOWNSEND ROAD, BETWEEN MANNS

AVENUE AND RITTER LANE, BE DESIGNATED AS A SPECIAL RESIDENTIAL PARKING DISTRICT.

MOTION PASSED. VOTE: 8 TO 0.

3. REQUEST TO REMOVE THE “EXCEPT FOR RIGHT TURNS” EXEMPTION POSTED ON THE STOP SIGN ON SOUTH CHAPEL STREET AT EAST PARK PLACE THEREBY REQUIRING ALL TRAFFIC ON SOUTH CHAPEL STREET TO COME TO A COMPLETE STOP.

Lt. Susan Poley stated that this complaint came to her from an individual who works at a business located on South Chapel Street, just beyond the stop sign. She researched the accident history and advised that there were four accidents in the last three years; however, only two were actually at the intersection. Mr. Lapointe said that vehicles have to very nearly come to a complete stop in order to make the right turn, and he asked what initiated the request. Lt. Poley said that the individual making the request stated that he has to come to a complete stop because he is going straight on South Chapel Street and frequently is very nearly rear-ended because the expectation is that most traffic is making the right turn and therefore not coming to a complete stop.

Mr. Lopata said that removing the exception would be a form of traffic calming. He suggested that someone monitor the intersection for a period of time to determine the traffic patterns. She indicated that the only people affected by the complete stop are those who work in the two buildings on the other side of the intersection. All other traffic makes the right turn. She asked if additional development is planned for beyond the two existing buildings, and Mr. Lopata indicated that at some time in the future buses will be going to the end of South Chapel Street and turning around. Lt. Poley said if this is the case, it might be beneficial to take a hard look at removing the exemption. She will direct a traffic officer to monitor the traffic at this intersection and will provide this information to the Traffic Committee.

Capt. Potts tabled this item for further discussion at the next Traffic Committee meeting.

4. REQUEST FOR A PEDESTRIAN CROSSWALK ON SOUTH COLLEGE AVENUE AT SUNSET ROAD.

Capt. Potts said that Council Member David Athey asked that the Traffic Committee consider a pedestrian crosswalk on South College Avenue at Sunset Road. Council Member Athey said that Wendy Bellion actually made the request, and asked that she be permitted to speak to the issue.

Ms. Bellion introduced herself and stated that she lives on West Park Place and works at the University. She often walks to work and noticed that there is no

crosswalk between Park Place and Kent Way, which is a distance of three-tenths of a mile. She feels this is a significant distance to walk without having an opportunity to cross the street. A number of her neighbors also make this walk every day, and students who live in the vicinity of Elkton Road cross in this vicinity when leaving campus.

Ms. Bellion stated that one event that prompted her to make this request was witnessing an accident last year that critically injured a pedestrian at Sunset and South College. Ms. Bellion recently suggested to Council Member Athey that a crosswalk be put in place on South College at either Winslow or Sunset. After email discussions with other residents in the area, she said that Winslow might be the better location because the University's brick wall ends there, and it is also at the entrance to the University library with a wide driveway into a parking lot. Ms. Bellion said it is a major area where pedestrians make the transition from the campus into the residential area to the west.

Ms. Bellion said she believes that a painted crosswalk with signage would be adequate, and signalization would not be necessary. Council Member Athey said as a point of clarification that the exit from the library does not align perfectly with Winslow Road. To align the crosswalk with the break in the wall does not exactly create a mid-block crosswalk, but it would be his preference that it aligns with the break in the wall as opposed to aligning it with either Winslow or Sunset. He feels that the crosswalk would be a good visual for drivers and also serve as a traffic calming measure. He understands that South College is a DeIDOT road and the decision would be theirs.

Lt. Poley said DeIDOT is not inclined to do mid-block crosswalks and turned down a request for one on Nottingham Road for this reason. Mr. Gula added that DeIDOT also prefers to have signals at all crosswalks. Mr. Lopata said he would be more inclined to recommend the crosswalk at the intersection of Winslow, even though it does not align perfectly with the break in the brick wall, and believes there is a better chance for DeIDOT approval at this location. He said the biggest argument in favor of the crosswalk is the distance between the crosswalks at Park Place and Kent Way. The members agreed to request that DeIDOT consider a crosswalk on South College Avenue at Winslow Road.

Tom Parkins asked if this would be another "free for all" crosswalk that would back up traffic. Mr. Gula said there are a few academic offices in this area, and he does not believe the volume of pedestrian traffic at this location is comparable to other areas near campus facilities.

MOTION BY DAVID GULA, SECONDED BY ROY LOPATA, TO PETITION DELDOT TO INSTALL A STOP SIGN ON SOUTH COLLEGE AVENUE AT THE INTERSECTION OF WINSLOW ROAD.

MOTION PASSED. VOTE: 8 TO 0.

5. PARKING METER ON AMSTEL AVENUE

Lt. Poley indicated that a parking enforcement officer has advised her that there is a parking meter on Amstel Avenue at the driveway entrance to the parking garage that interferes with the line of sight for vehicles pulling from the driveway. Mr. Lapointe will check the line of sight to determine if the meter should be removed.

6. ORCHARD ROAD CROSSWALK

Council Member Athey said that during the email discussions with residents about the crosswalk on South College, one resident asked that a stop sign be installed on Orchard Road at Kent Way to reduce speeding. Council Member Athey suggested a crosswalk on Orchard Road rather than a stop sign. Capt. Potts said that he would request a speed survey and accident history and place this on a future Traffic Committee agenda for further discussion.

There being no further business, Capt. Potts asked for a motion to adjourn.

MOTION BY ROY LOPATA, SECONDED BY TOM SCIULLI, TO ADJOURN.

MOTION PASSED. VOTE: 8 TO 0.

John J. Potts, Chairman