

**CITY OF NEWARK
Newark, Delaware**

**TRAFFIC COMMITTEE MEETING
April 25, 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, Rick Vitelli.

Absent: Susan Lamblack

Guests: Mark Luszcz, Assistant Chief Traffic Engineer, DelDOT
Matthew J. Buckley, Whitman, Requardt & Associates
Jean White, Newark resident
Steve Goetz, Dallas Avenue, Newark

**1. REQUEST TO REMOVE "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.**

This item was reviewed at the February Traffic Committee meeting and tabled it so that the traffic officers could monitor the intersection. Lt. Poley reported that it was monitored on two different occasions for an hour each time. There were 85 cars the first day and 173 the second day, and there were no issues observed. Lt. Poley said there were four accidents at or near the intersection between 2003 and 2007. She did know whether the accidents occurred because a vehicle stopped at the stop sign.

Mr. Lopata said it would make sense to remove the exemption for right-turning traffic so that all traffic stops. The new railroad station could be relocated to the end of South Chapel Street, and if that occurs, traffic going straight on South Chapel Street would increase significantly. Lt. Poley suggested that no change be made until such time as the area is more fully developed.

**MOTION BY ROY LOPATA, SECONDED BY RICK VITELLI, TO RE-EXAMINE
THE STOP SIGN AT THE INTERSECTION OF SOUTH CHAPEL AND EAST
PARK PLACE IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE POSSIBLE RELOCATION OF
THE NEWARK RAILROAD STATION.**

MOTION PASSED. VOTE: 9 TO 0.

Lt. Poley will contact the individual who made the request and advise him of the Traffic Committee's decision.

2. DELDOT DISCUSSION CONCERNING PEDESTRIAN ISSUES AT DELAWARE AVENUE AND SOUTH COLLEGE AVENUE.

Capt. Potts introduced Mark Luszczyk, Assistant Traffic Engineer for DelDOT's Traffic Section. Mr. Luszczyk said DelDOT was asked to look at several intersections in Newark and replace some pedestrian signal heads that were missing. He said that at the intersection of Delaware Avenue and South College Avenue, the correction turned into a much larger issue than just replacing the signal heads. Therefore, he wanted to present this information to the Traffic Committee since this project is slated for completion this summer. Mr. Luszczyk introduced Matthew Buckley of Whitman, Requardt and Associates to describe the issue and proposed correction.

Mr. Buckley handed out diagrams depicting the existing conditions and proposed conditions at this intersection. He said that initially there were two through traffic lanes on South College Avenue at the intersection of Delaware Avenue, and the right lane was subsequently converted to a right-turn only lane. The signal heads were installed with a green, right-turn arrow to indicate that vehicles turning right have the right of way. However, pedestrians also had a walk signal, which creates a conflict with the vehicular traffic. In order to correct the problem, DelDOT is recommending that the existing lane configuration be maintained, and the green, right-turn arrow be changed to a circular green signal. The circular green signal indicates that vehicles would have to yield to pedestrians in the crosswalk. Mr. Luszczyk said that the green arrow requires a separate pedestrian phase with no vehicles moving, which DelDOT considered but said it would create significant delays for motorists at an intersection where congestion is a problem. Mr. Buckley said a green arrow indicates the motorist has the exclusive right of way, and the green circular signal indicates that motorists have to yield to pedestrians in the crosswalk.

DelDOT is also recommending additional overhead lane use signs on South College Avenue as well as "hatching" on the roadway in the right lane on South College Avenue, north of the intersection, to prohibit vehicles in the right-turn lane from proceeding straight on South College Avenue. DelDOT did consider a bump out in place of the hatching but was concerned that it would impede bicycle traffic. There will be additional lane-use signs ahead of the intersection as well.

On the eastbound approach to the intersection, Mr. Buckley said additional roadway markings would be used to deter motorists from turning left onto South College from the right lane of Delaware Avenue when traffic backs up on Delaware Avenue.

Ms. Houck asked Mr. Buckley why traffic could not be permitted to travel straight or turn right from the right lane of South College Avenue, and he said that their studies indicated that there was significant weaving of traffic between Delaware Avenue and Main Street as vehicles attempt to enter the appropriate lane to turn

onto North College Avenue. Mr. Luszczy said that the hatching is recommended to encourage traffic in the right lane to turn right onto Delaware Avenue. He said that people are accustomed to seeing the green arrow, which sends the message that traffic must turn right. By removing that message, DelDOT wanted to reemphasize that the lane use did not change. Mr. Lopata said he was not sure the hatching is necessary, and Mr. Lapointe said it is an additional safety precaution.

Capt. Potts asked if DelDOT could install a sign overhead on South College Avenue at the intersection to indicate that turning traffic must yield to pedestrians in the crosswalk. Mr. Buckley looked in the sign book and found one that states, "Turning Traffic Must Yield to Pedestrians." Mr. Luszczy said he likes that idea and would incorporate it into the plan.

Mr. Luszczy said this project is being done as part of a state traffic improvement plan that starts on South College Avenue just south of the railroad overpass and continues north to Main Street. Pedestrian pole improvements will also occur to bring them into A.D.A. compliance. The pedestrian buttons are being removed at intersections where the pedestrian phase is on "recall," which means the pedestrian signal operates every cycle. However, intersections that do not have a recall phase for the pedestrian signal will have buttons. Mr. Buckley explained that because of A.D.A. requirements, the buttons have to be at a certain height and in the poles must be in close proximity to the roadway, which will require some poles to be moved. Mr. Luszczy said the project will be done this summer, but is unsure whether there will be road closures involved or just lane closures.

Capt. Potts thanked Mr. Luszczy and Mr. Buckley and they left the meeting.

3. REQUEST FOR STOP SIGN ON DALLAS AVENUE AND BEVERLY ROAD.

Capt. Potts introduced Steve Goetz who lives on Dallas Avenue to explain the request for this stop sign. Mr. Goetz said he is here as a representative of a number of residents on Dallas Avenue. He said that this intersection has no traffic controls, and most of the traffic travels eastbound on Chrysler to Dallas and makes a hard left turn onto Beverly Road. Mr. Goetz said the cars turning left drive as though the turn is just a bend in the road and move to the left side of Dallas Avenue to make the turn. He said motorists unfamiliar with the area do not see a stop sign so they just keep going unaware of other traffic in the area. Mr. Goetz said there are small children on the street now who were not present in the past, and he feels that traffic travels at a high rate of speed. He added that there are stop signs at virtually all other intersections in this neighborhood.

Mr. Parkins asked Mr. Goetz if he is requesting a two-way or three-way stop sign, and Mr. Goetz said he would like to see a three-way stop sign to slow traffic in all directions. He also said that there are two large dips that run right through this

intersection, which causes cars traveling at high speeds to bottom out. A “DIP” warning sign was installed several years ago.

MOTION BY ROY LOPATA, SECONDED BY RICK VITELLI, TO RECOMMEND INSTALLING A TWO-WAY STOP SIGN ON DALLAS AVENUE AT THE INTERSECTION OF BEVERLY ROAD.

MOTION PASSED. VOTYE: 9 TO 0.

Mr. Goetz said that a sign was installed at Apple and Dallas that reads Apple and Chrysler. Mr. Lapointe said that was a mistake, and the correct sign has been ordered. Mr. Goetz thanked the members and left the meeting.

4. REQUEST FOR A CROSSWALK ON ORCHARD AVENUE AT THE INTRSECTION OF KENT WAY.

Capt. Potts said that Council Member Athey made this request at the February Traffic Committee meeting. The item was tabled, and Lt. Poley was asked to conduct a speed survey. Lt. Poley reported that the traffic analyzer was placed on Orchard Road between March 12 and March 16, and the report indicated that nearly 82% of the vehicles are traveling at 30 mph or less. Another 14% are traveling between 30-35 mph, and the remaining 3.8% are traveling under 50 mph. The report concluded that there is no speeding issue on this street.

Capt. Potts said that Council Member Athey said that a resident requested a stop sign at this intersection in order to reduce speeding, but Council Member Athey asked that the Traffic Committee consider a crosswalk instead. Mr. Lapointe said he was not in favor of a crosswalk for the purpose of reducing speeding.

Mr. Gula asked for the volume of traffic, and Lt. Poley said the traffic counts revealed 110 vehicles per hour between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. Peak times were 10 a.m. and 12 noon. Between 7 p.m. and 10 p.m., the hourly rate dropped 10 vehicles per hour—80 @ 8 p.m., 67 AT 9 p.m. and 55 @ 10 p.m., and 20 per hour through midnight.

MOTION BY RICH LAPOINTE, SECONDED BY RICK VITELLI, THAT NO CROSSWALK BE RECOMMENDED AT THIS TIME AS A SPEED CONTROL MEASURE.

MOTION PASSED. VOTE: 9 TO 0.

5. DISCUSS TRAFFIC CALMING AD HOC COMMITTEE REPORT.

Mr. Lopata said he had some suggestions for revisions to the draft report of the Traffic Calming Ad Hoc Committee as follows:

- Item 1. d. Demonstration of community support states a minimum of four **households** on effected street can initiate a request. Mr. Lopata suggested that this be defined as **owner occupant and property owner if it is a rental property**.
- Mr. Lopata said he thinks the process is a little cumbersome and he suggested that the **Traffic Committee Reviews Request** and **Conceptual Design Development Process** be merged because it seems as though there are too many steps involved. Mr. Lapointe said that previously 51% of the stakeholders had to agree prior to initiating a project. He said with this process, four households could make a request, and if two of the three criteria (accident history, speed, and volume of traffic) were met, the residents would then provide the 51% needed to start the project. The members wanted to clarify at what point the request is placed on the Traffic Committee's agenda and agreed that once the appropriate city staff has determined that the criteria have been met and 51% of the stakeholders have agreed, the Traffic Committee would review it. It was suggested that the form be sent to the Chief of Police who would then initiate the process to determine whether the request meets the criteria.
- The third issue is that Main Street is listed under **Possible "pilot" and/or temporary projects**. Mr. Lopata said that Main Street is already done and should be removed from the list. The members agreed.

Capt. Potts said that he believes the threshold is too low. The procedure indicates that once 50% of the stakeholders agree to a traffic calming study, then only 51% of those responding have to approve the design to move forward. Capt. Potts said this could represent 25% of the residents in the study area, and he feels that threshold is too low.

Mr. Gula said that at some point all of the residents should know what is going to occur. In step 5 (Conceptual Design Approval Process), 50% of the stakeholders have to respond to a letter that describes the proposed traffic calming measure, and 67% of the responses have to be in favor of the design. Mr. Parkins pointed out that this is still only 34% of the stakeholders. Mr. Lopata suggested that the Traffic Committee recommend using the 51% and 67% but apply it to all of the property owners. Mr. Gula said he feels that at least 50% of the people directly affected by the traffic calming should have to be in favor of it.

Mr. Lapointe said that the issue seems to be that some streets have more renters than owner-occupied residences. This could prevent the owners on such a street from moving forward with a traffic-calming project. Mr. Gula said the process cannot be tailored for each street in the city because there are many neighborhoods with very few renters, and he does not like the idea that 25% of the residents can change the streetscape. Mr. Lopata said that a clause could be added to the report to stipulate that residents can appeal to City Council to lower the threshold.

(Mr. Lopata left the meeting at this time.)

Mr. Gula said he would want to see the report reworded to state that 51% of all of the stakeholders have to be in favor of the traffic calming and include a clause that allows an appeal to City Council, with a letter from the Traffic Committee explaining the need to lower the threshold.

Ms. Houck asked how the projects would be funded, and Mr. Lapointe said that the City could request transportation enhancement funds from WILMAPCO. Mr. Gula said that Newark does not receive much in the way of transportation enhancement funds, and he feels that the traffic calming measures have merit and are the kind of projects that should be funded. Mr. Lapointe said that when this process began several years ago, he supported the idea of the residents funding the traffic calming measures. Mr. Gula said if it is a transportation enhancement project, the residents could be responsible for 20% of the costs.

Capt. Potts suggested that further discussion be tabled until the May meeting, and in the meantime, the members should outline their suggestions and recommendations so the Traffic Committee's response can be formalized at that time.

(Lt. Poley left the meeting at this time.)

6. DISCUSS REMOVAL OF PARKING SPACES ADJACENT TO THE HAPPY HARRY'S CROSSWALK ON MAIN STREET.

Capt. Potts said that he received a request from the City Manager to remove parking spaces adjacent to the crosswalk in front of Happy Harry's on Main Street to improve the line of sight for pedestrians and motorists. He said that he checked the line of sight and there seems that there is at least one car length on each side of the street. Ms. Houck said she believes that the parking spaces were eliminated last year. Mr. Lapointe said that a car was parked at the yellow curb when he first looked at the crosswalk, but when the car left, there was adequate sight distance. Capt. Potts suggested waiting until the streetscape is completed to determine if there are any further problems, and he will advise the City Manager.

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

MOTION BY CAROL HOUCK, SECONDED BY TOM SCIULLI, TO ADJOURN.

MOTION PASSED. VOTE: 7 TO 0.

John J. Potts, Chairman