

CITY OF NEWARK
Newark, Delaware

TRAFFIC COMMITTEE MEETING

March 20, 2012

5:00 p.m.

Members Present: Chief Paul Tiernan, Charlie Zusag, M/Cpl. Paul Keld, Rich Lapointe, Tom Parkins

Absent: Dave Gula
Marvin Howard

Guests: Heather Mantz, Delaware Department of Transportation
Tom Meyer, Delaware Department of Transportation
Rick Armitage, University of Delaware
Mark Brainard, Jr., University of Delaware
Erik Schramm, University of Delaware

1. REVIEW AND DISCUSS DATA OBTAINED FROM THE RADAR SPEED SIGN THAT WAS PLACED ON BEVERLY ROAD.

Chief Tiernan said this item was requested from Tom Battagliese a Newark resident through Councilmember Dave Athey. Mr. Battagliese presented this request at the Traffic Committee meeting held on December 20, 2011. Chief Tiernan said during the meeting the committee voted to install the radar speed sign on Beverly Road to find out if there is excessive speeding.

M/Cpl. Keld said radar speed signs were placed in both the northbound and southbound directions. M/Cpl. Keld said in the southbound direction there was a total of 1,231 cars. Of this total with exception of 4 cars all were traveling 40 mph or less. Charlie Zusag said the speed limit on this road is 25 mph. M/Cpl. Keld said 114 cars out of 1,231 total were traveling 31-40 mph (just over 90% of the cars were traveling 30 mph or less). The average speed is 22.6 mph and the 85% percentile speed is 29 mph. In the northbound direction there were a total of 2,030 cars. Of this total, 93% of those cars were traveling 30 mph or less, 135 cars were traveling 31-40 mph, 9 cars were traveling 41-50 mph and 1 car was traveling 51-60 mph. The average speed is 20.5 mph and the 85% percentile speed is 28 mph. M/Cpl. Keld said the signs were set up with the displays turned off to prevent skewed results.

Tom Parkins felt the data seemed reasonable. Chief Tiernan said the 85% percentile speeds in both directions is less than 5 mph over the speed limit.

MOTION BY TOM PARKINS, SECONDED BY PAUL KELD, TO DENY THE REQUEST FOR A FOUR WAY STOP AT BEVERLY ROAD AND MANNS AVENUE.

MOTION PASSED. VOTE: 5 TO 0.

2. REQUEST FOR A THREE-WAY INTERSECTION AT N. COUNTRY CLUB AND STAMFORD DRIVES.

Charlie Zusag asked if the request was for a three way stop at this intersection. Alicia Cash confirmed that was correct. Chief Tiernan said this item was requested by Rich Lapointe. Alicia Cash said it requested by a resident that lives at 322 Stamford Drive through Rich Lapointe.

Rich Lapointe said as part of the traffic calming study a couple of chokers will be installed on the east side of Stamford Drive. Charlie Zusag said they would be temporarily installed adjacent to the intersection.

Charlie Zusag recommended postponing this item until after the choke points are installed.

MOTION BY RICH LAPOINTE, SECONDED CHARLIE ZUSAG, TO DENY THE REQUEST FOR A THREE WAY STOP AT THE INTERSECTION OF N. COUNTRY CLUB AND STAMFORD DRIVES.

MOTION PASSED. VOTE: 5 TO 0

3. DELDOT REQUEST TO CHANGE THE SPEED LIMIT ON MARROWS ROAD TO 25 MPH.

Tom Meyer said the agenda item is not entirely correct. Tom Meyer further clarified that DelDOT is not recommending to make the speed limit 25 mph for the entire length but rather is proposing a new speed zone north of Old Newark Road.

Tom Meyer said DelDOT conducted research and determined the resolutions on Marrows Road were very old. There was a 25 mph zone from Rt. 4 to Old Newark Road and a 35 mph zone from a point on Old Newark Road to a point close to the railroad tracks. Tom Meyer said there was a 45 mph zone on file from the railroad tracks to Ogletown Road.

Tom Meyer said the resolutions were not consistent with the current signage or with the speed limits as specified in the City of Newark Municipal Code. It was then DelDOT decided to conduct a speed limit study. As part of this study, DelDOT measured the 85th percentile speeds and the average speeds. Tom Meyer said at the railroad overpass on Marrows Road and also the unsignalized intersection behind College Square, the results showed the 85th percentile speeds were greater than 40 mph. Tom Meyer said the unsignalized intersection behind College Square the 85th percentile speed was 44 mph and the average speed was 39 mph. At the railroad overpass the 85th percentile speed was 42 mph and the average speed was 38 mph.

Tom Meyer said based upon DelDOT's guidelines and their procedure for setting speed limits in speed zones, they recommended changing the speed limit to 40 mph instead of 35 mph from Old Newark Road to Ogletown Road. Tom Meyer said DelDOT is proposing two speed zones from Rt. 4 to Rt. 273. The lower speed zone would be 25 mph from Chestnut Hill Road to Old Newark Road and 40 mph from Old Newark Road to Ogletown Road.

Charlie Zusag asked which portion of the road was in the city limits. Councilmember Clifton said the southbound lane on the other side of the bridge begins the city limit to Ogletown Road.

Tom Parkins asked if there has been an increase in accidents from the new Wawa. Tom Meyer said the latest accident was on February 7, 2012 at White Chapel Drive. Tom Meyer said the new Wawa was carefully reviewed in the planning process to make sure the turning movements in and out were restricted.

Charlie Zusag asked how the state would handle the speed zone that is in city limits. Tom Meyer said for state maintained roads he understands the agreement between the state and the municipality to be a joint jurisdiction. Both entities would need to agree.

Tom Parkins said if the speed is increased southbound to 40 mph asked if there would be an increase in speeding in the 25 mph zone. Tom Meyer said there is an adaptive speed element when traveling from a higher speed zone to a lower speed zone. Tom Meyer said research studies show that posting a speed limit sign has little effect of the speed drivers select. Charlie Zusag said the dynamics of the road with the school zone help to reduce speeding.

MOTION BY CHARLIE ZUSAG, SECONDED TOM PARKINS, TO INCREASE THE SPEED LIMIT ON MARROWS ROAD FROM 35 MPH TO 40 MPH FROM OLD NEWARK ROAD TO OGLETOWN ROAD.

MOTION PASSED. VOTE: 5 TO 0

4. REQUEST TO REPLACE THE STOP SIGN IN THE CENTER MEDIAN ON SUBURBAN DRIVE WITH A "LEFT TURN LANE – TRAFFIC YIELD TO ONCOMING TRAFFIC" SIGN.

This item was requested by Rich Lapointe. Chief Tiernan said at the last meeting Lt. Stanko said the stop sign had been covered up. Rich Lapointe said he believes the stop sign has been removed. Charlie Zusag said oncoming traffic exiting the Home Depot has a stop sign and traffic turning left does not. Rich Lapointe said motorists may not yield and may not stop. Charlie Zusag said the oncoming traffic has to stop and does not understand why the left turn lane has to yield to the oncoming traffic that has to stop.

Tom Meyer said this is currently a three way stop intersection. Tom Meyer said according to Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) in this type of configuration would suggest black on yellow plates placed under the stop signs. Upon exiting Home Depot the plate would read, "Oncoming Traffic Does Not Stop" and on the side street exiting Suburban Plaza would read "Traffic from Left Does Not Stop" and exiting WSFS would say "Traffic from Right Does Not Stop". Charlie Zusag felt this was a more logical suggestion. Tom Meyer said the inbound traffic turning left into WSFS would not require a stop sign.

Councilmember Clifton said he feels this is extremely confusing. Tom Meyer said he felt a two-way stop would be an alternative recommendation by removing the stop sign exiting Home Depot. Councilmember Clifton said he felt this would be less confusing. Charlie Zusag also agreed.

Rich Lapointe pointed out that there are two lanes of traffic in both directions. Charlie Zusag said earlier on this day, he was exiting Suburban Plaza and there were three or four cars entering the shopping center. One problem he encountered was he was unable to see the oncoming traffic in the straight lane due to cars turning right into the shopping center. Tom Meyer agreed there is a poor sight distance when exiting Suburban Plaza to the left.

MOTION BY CHARLIE ZUSAG, SECONDED BY RICH LAPOINTE, TO SEND A LETTER TO THE PROPERTY OWNER RECOMMENDING THE PLATES BE INSTALLED UNDER THE STOP SIGNS EXITING ACME AND EXITING WSFS.

MOTION PASSED. VOTE: 5 TO 0

OLD BUSINESS:

Discuss DeIDOT's response letter for the request of a pedestrian hybrid beacon signal or crosswalk treatment on S. College Avenue at Winslow Road.

Tom Meyer said DeIDOT has received requests in the past for a crosswalk on S. College Avenue at Winslow Road. The most recent request was to install a HAWK signal at this location. Tom Meyer said DeIDOT performed traffic and pedestrian counts at this location which did not meet the warrants for a pedestrian hybrid beacon. However, based upon the volume of pedestrians DeIDOT recommends installing crosswalks both north and south of the intersection with pedestrian warning signs.

Rich Lapointe asked why DeIDOT is recommending two separate crosswalks instead of only one crosswalk. Tom Meyer said these are considered quasi mid block crosswalks and understands with the new development on Elkton Road is going to create more pedestrian traffic. The other reason is pedestrians crossing the road to get from the library to Winslow Road would naturally cross on the south side. Charlie Zusag asked why a crosswalk on Winslow Road has not been considered. Tom Meyer said he would look into this.

Charlie Zusag asked how much it would cost. Rich Lapointe said it would cost approximately \$1,500 per handicap ramp for a total of \$6,000 or more.

Charlie Zusag asked for clarification to the sketch in relation to where the bike lane and sidewalk currently exist. Tom Meyer said he would need to have someone check the sketch. Rick Armitage said there are grass strips between the sidewalk and the curb on the east side and on the northwest side the sidewalk is much wider in front of the Admissions Building. Rick Armitage also said there are Class A bike lanes on either side of the road.

Rich Lapointe asked Tom Meyer if the reason the city is responsible for the curb cuts and ramps is because this project is not a high priority for DeIDOT. Tom Meyer said the town agreement is normally the state is responsible for face of curb to face of curb and the municipalities are responsible from face of curb out. Rich Lapointe said he believes the state is responsible for the curb ramps. Tom Meyer said he would have to look into this.

Rich Lapointe said there is a similar situation that on Cleveland Avenue by Herman's Meat Market. Rich Lapointe said DeIDOT approved relocating the crosswalk to Cleveland Avenue at Kershaw Street and DeIDOT responded that it is not a high priority so the city could install the curb ramps or wait until DeIDOT gets around to it. Tom Meyer said when DeIDOT does a pavement rehab project on a state maintained road, if curb returns are installed at intersections it is their responsibility as part of the project. Tom Meyer said if the city wishes to have this work completed sooner it falls back on the municipality.

Tom Parkins asked if pedestrians cross more heavily north or south of the Winslow Road intersection. The reason cars may have to stop at both crosswalks. Tom Parkins suggested one crosswalk on S. College Avenue and one crosswalk on Winslow Road. Tom Parkins said with both crosswalks on S. College Avenue it is similar to the crosswalks on Delaware Avenue. Tom Meyer said he would have to take a look at the aerials. Tom Meyer said vehicles yield to the point of stopping if pedestrians have entered the crosswalk and pedestrians are only to enter the crosswalk if they are not stepping in front of a vehicle. Charlie Zusag said there needs to be a sign facing the pedestrian that reads, "Wait until Traffic Clears Before Entering the Crosswalk". Tom Meyer said he feels the "Yield to Pedestrians" signage has helped. Tom Meyer said DelDOT will rethink their initial crosswalk recommendation in light of the cost for the curb ramps, pedestrian patterns and the bus stop and they would send another letter.

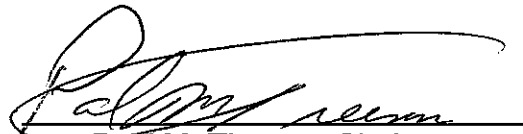
Rick Armitage introduced Erik Schramm and Mark Brainard, Jr. that will be working in Government Affairs for the University of Delaware.

Charlie Zusag said there is a yield sign on the telephone pole in front of Porter Chevrolet on the right as you turn right from Kirkwood Highway onto Cleveland Avenue that the state was asked to remove. Tom Meyer said he would look into this.

There being no further business, Chief Tiernan called for a motion to adjourn.

MOTION BY CHARLIE ZUSAG, SECONDED BY RICH LAPOINTE, TO ADJOURN.

MOTION PASSED. VOTE: 5 TO 0.



Paul M. Tiernan, Chairman