

CITY OF NEWARK
Newark, Delaware

Traffic Committee Meeting
April 17, 2018
3:30 p.m.

Members Present: DC Mark Farrall, Tim Filasky, Marvin Howard, Tom Parkins, Dave Gula

Absent: Andrew Haines

Guests: Mayor Polly Sierer
Chip Kneavel, Delaware Department of Transportation
Stephen Rockwood, McCormick & Taylor
Lt. Dennis Aniunas, Newark Police Department
Sgt. Curtis Davis, Newark Police Department
Courtney Mulvanity, Parking Division
Mark Deshon, BikeNewark
Caitlin Olsen, University of Delaware
Josh Shannon, Newark Post
Steve Beard, Newark resident
James Burns, Newark resident
Eric Hanna, Newark resident
Helga Huntley, Newark resident
Jim Malone, Newark resident
JoAnn O'Reilly, Newark resident

1. Request for a handicap parking space in front of 61 New London Road.

DC Farrall said this request was received by Ms. Tianna Wood on behalf of her grandmother Annette Watson who lives at 61 New London Road. Ms. Wood states her grandmother is unable to walk up her driveway due to the steep incline. Ms. Wood said they have received citations for parking their vehicle in front of the house.

Mr. Howard said if this space was designated handicap parking anyone with a handicap placard could park there. Mr. Filasky asked if two cars could be parked between the curb cuts. Mr. Howard said he believes there is only space for one vehicle.

DC Farrall said if the handicap space was approved, it was suggested that the need for it to remain a handicap parking space would be reviewed on an annual basis.

Mr. Parkins asked if there are any other parking restrictions on this portion of the street. Mr. Mulvanity said currently there are no parking restrictions on this street.

Mr. Gula asked if this was approved and another vehicle parked in the handicap space what would be their alternative. Mr. Howard said the driver could park in the driveway.

Mr. Parkins said he feels it's a remote issue to think that another person with a handicap placard would park there.

No comments were received from the public.

Motion by Mr. Gula, seconded by Mr. Howard, to table the request for a future meeting that Ms. Wood and Ms. Watson could attend to provide further information regarding their request.

Motion passed: Unanimous

Vote: 5 to 0

2. Presentation from the Delaware Department of Transportation on the Safe Routes to School program proposal.

Mr. Kneavel said he would be presenting the concept plan for the Safe Routes to School program through DelDOT from Barksdale Road to Nottingham Road for Downes Elementary School. Mr. Kneavel said the original application from Downes Elementary School was received in 2016.

Mr. Kneavel said the Safe Routes to School program through DelDOT is designed to provide infrastructure improvements and education that would enable and encourage children to safely walk or bike to school.

Mr. Kneavel said a public workshop was held in the Fall of 2017, at which time various improvement options were reviewed and discussed. Mr. Kneavel said the concept plan presented today are the recommendations from the Safe Routes to School committee that was comprised of Downes School teachers and administrators, parents, representatives from City of Newark, BikeNewark and WILMAPCO.

Mr. Kneavel said currently parking exists on both sides of New Casho Mill Road. A parking time restriction was proposed from 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday on New Casho Mill Road. The time restriction was proposed to allow children to get to and from school during the non-rush hour.

Mr. Kneavel said the current concept is a bike lane with a 4' buffer and narrowing the travel lane from 12' to 11'. In terms of striping, the idea of part-time parking and part-time bike lane still needs to be worked through.

Mr. Rockwood said the current width of one side of road is 22' with 12' travel lane, 8' shoulder and a 2' gutter pan. Mr. Rockwood said if they considered minimums with a bike lane and parking lane it is possible to reduce down to a 10' travel lane. Mr. Rockwood said there is a possibility for a 10' travel lane, 5' bike lane and 7' parking lane for a total of 22'. This would need to be discussed with DelDOT regarding the possibility of reducing the travel lane down to 10' with a 30-mph road. By reducing to a minimum travel lane, this could cause an unsafe situation of a parked car opening their door into the bike lane.

Mr. Filasky asked if a two-way bike lane on one side of the street or a multi-modal path on one side and parking on the other side was considered. He also asked if extending the sidewalk to make a multi-modal and leaving parking on one side of the road was considered. Mr. Kneavel said this option hasn't been considered. Mr. Kneavel said the project budget is limited to \$125,000 for design and construction for the Safe Routes to School program. Mr. Filasky said this would only cover striping costs.

Mr. Rockwood said if they do something on one side of road from a design aspect they are limited to the existing typical cross section and crown of the road. Two bikes on one side of the road you must have a minimum of 10' and are required to have a 5' separation between the travel lane and a two-way shared use path. Within the scope of this project, they can't shift the crown or perform highway grading.

Mr. Parkins asked what time school starts. Ms. Hudson said she is a teacher at Downes Elementary School and is also on the wellness council. Ms. Hudson said some parents begin dropping off at 7:00 a.m. for before care, however the school doors open at 8:00 a.m. Ms. Hudson said the earliest drop off is around 7:30 a.m. Mr. Filasky asked when school lets out. Ms. Hudson said school lets out at 3:00 p.m. Mr. Parkins said if parking is restricted at 7:30 a.m. and the parked cars aren't moved until 7:45 a.m., where do the children go that are biking to school when they come upon a parked car. Mr. Rockwood said they would need to bike in the buffer or the sidewalk. Mr. Kneavel said he would encourage the children through the school to ride on the sidewalk.

DC Farrall said he is an avid bicyclist that rides very frequently with his daughter that is within the same age group of the children attending Downes Elementary School. DC Farrall said his concern is elementary children biking on this stretch of road that is very heavily trafficked, particularly, during the hours the children will be commuting to and from school. DC Farrall said as a parent, if his daughter would be riding to this school he would advise her to ride her bike on the sidewalk. DC Farrall also said if parking was restricted and there were parked cars this would pose a safety concern that a child may be potentially veering out into traffic to go around a parked car.

DC Farrall said another concern is that residents along this stretch of road have very short driveways. DC Farrall doesn't agree with removing parking without providing an alternative.

DC Farrall said the Traffic Committee's role is to hear traffic and parking related issues that would require the Traffic Committee to make a recommendation to city council for an ordinance change. DC Farrall said if this proposal was approved and the Traffic Committee's recommendation was to endorse the plan as presented it would need to go before city council for an ordinance change to remove parking and make parking restricted on Casho Mill Road. If the committee votes on an amendment that doesn't require an ordinance change, a memorandum would be sent to the City Manager for review and approval. The Traffic Committee's role is to act on items that would require an ordinance change.

Mr. Gula asked if the committee is reviewing the project as a whole or only the section between Church Road and Nottingham Road. DC Farrall said the committee is reviewing the entire project, however one portion of the project was focused on due to the parking issue.

A resident asked how many accidents involving children have there been on Casho Mill Road in the last thirty years. DC Farrall said the data wasn't available to answer this question.

Mr. Gula said having lived on this road he likes the idea of a buffered bike lane versus children having an entire shoulder to navigate. Mr. Gula said he likes the idea of children riding their bikes, however he wants to make sure it is safe. Mr. Gula said with the time restriction the down side is the bike lane won't be safe some of the time. Mr. Gula said as a parent he wouldn't be in favor of his children riding if they were in elementary school. Mr. Gula said he likes the idea of the pedestrian crossing and feels it is a great benefit for the community and the school. Mr. Gula said he is concerned about portions of the project and if there isn't a great solution he doesn't feel as though the problem is being solved.

Public Comment:

Mr. Burns said he lives at 12 Casho Mill Road. Mr. Burns said since he first heard of this proposal he has been monitoring how many cars are parked on daily on Casho Mill Road. On average there are 11-14 vehicles parked on the street at 5:00 a.m. When he arrives home from work there are 6-8 cars parked on this stretch of road in the early afternoon. On Casho Mill Road from Church Road to Barksdale Road there is a limited stretch of road with houses facing the road on the left side that have long driveways. The houses on Casho Mill Road have extremely short driveways. Mr. Burns said regarding safety, he watched children leaving Downes Elementary School and all were headed toward the Church Road intersection.

He noted not one child continued down Casho Mill Road toward Nottingham Road. Mr. Burns said there are no longer crossing guards at Nottingham Road.

Mr. Burns said if there aren't enough children using the stretch of road he questions the need to remove parking. Mr. Burns said Casho Mill Road is fine the way it is and would like to leave it that way.

Mr. Hanna said he lives at 5 New Casho Mill Road. Mr. Hanna shared an email from his neighbor Mr. Mannis that resides at 3 New Casho Mill Road. Mr. Hanna shared his neighbors' concerns. Mr. Mannis and his wife have 4 drivers, soon to be five drivers, in their household. Their one car driveway will not accommodate parking for all vehicles. This would create a financial burden to create a 4-car driveway that would cost approximately \$10,000. They have seen unsafe driving over the years, including most drivers not coming to a complete stop at Church Road and drivers attempting to beat the traffic light at Nottingham Road. In the right turn lane at Nottingham drivers ignore the painted lines and move to where the cars are parked on the right there by blocking driveways. Mr. Mannis almost had his door taken off by a school bus moving quickly to navigate into the right turn lane. The intersection of Nottingham Road and New Casho Mill Road is dangerous and there have been many accidents at this intersection. Mr. Mannis said the children don't belong on the street they belong on the sidewalk with a buffer of parked cars on the street. Mr. Mannis said this will only give drivers enough space to use Casho Mill Road as a four-lane road. Mr. Mannis said vehicles coming from Nottingham Road and whipping onto Casho Mill Road creates a dangerous situation with children on bikes only to find out when it's too late. Mr. Mannis would like to see children walk their bike along this stretch.

Mr. Hanna said there hasn't been a crossing guard at Nottingham Road for at least a year. Mr. Hanna said he wouldn't allow his children to bike to school and would recommend they use the sidewalk. Mr. Hanna said he would like to see more enforcement on Casho Mill Road.

Ms. O'Reilly said she doesn't feel it's safe for the children to be on the street. Ms. O'Reilly said with the proposed changes she would like to know the population of children that would actually ride their bikes along this stretch. Ms. O'Reilly said if she had children she would want them to ride on the sidewalk. Ms. O'Reilly asked if this is the only option or if there were other options currently being considered. Mr. Kneavel said this is the only option that they are moving forward with at this time.

DC Farrall said regarding the population if you make it safer you may get more children to bike to school. Ms. O'Reilly said in consideration for cost and impact to residents is the reason she would like to know the population of children that will bike to school. Mr. Kneavel said they are trying to balance out the safety and parking concern with limited funds.

Mr. Deshon said he agrees with Mr. Kneavel that they are working with the school to encourage children to bike to school. Mr. Deshon said he understands the issue with safety and is hoping everyone will be able to come to a compromise. Mr. Deshon doesn't agree riding on the sidewalk with the uneven pavement is a safe alternative. Mr. Deshon envisions a painted bicycle lane to the left of the parked cars and the right of the travel lane and would like to see the travel lanes narrowed as much as possible.

Ms. Huntley said she lives behind Downes Elementary School and bicycles very often with her children. Ms. Huntley said they bike on the stretch of Casho Mill Road that is being discussed. Ms. Huntley said she has her eight-year-old bike on the street. When her daughter bikes on the sidewalk she falls off due to the uneven pavement. Ms. Huntley said the point of the project is to accommodate cars and bikes by making it as safe as possible. Ms. Huntley said she feels some residents underutilize their driveway. Ms. Huntley likes the idea of the accommodation of the bike lane and parking lane with the buffer that will make the travel lane appear narrower with the hope to slow down traffic.

Mr. Malone said he lives at 4 New Casho Mill Road. Mr. Malone said he is unaware of any bike accidents on Casho Mill Road due to children riding bikes to school. Mr. Malone recommended installing signs at the beginning and end of this stretch of Casho Mill Road for children to walk their bikes until they get to the bike lane. Mr. Malone said this would save money, solve the parking issue and solve the safety issue. Mr. Malone said motorists ignore the "No turn on red" sign turning right onto Casho Mill Road from Nottingham Road. Mr. Malone said striped lines and signs will not change driver behavior. Mr. Malone said traffic enforcement isn't conducted on this stretch of road. Mr. Malone said many of the vehicles are out of state. Many drivers are using this road as a shortcut to get to I-95.

Mr. Filasky asked with the speed limit being 25 mph, would this give DelDOT more leeway on the minimums. Mr. Rockwood said the posted speed limit is 25 mph, however the design speed is more of the contributing factor at 30 mph. Mr. Rockwood said they would investigate this further.

Mr. Parkins asked if we have the speed data for Casho Mill Road. Sgt. Davis said the traffic classifier hasn't been run within the last year. Mr. Filasky asked if traffic counts or speed data have been performed. Sgt. Davis said no they haven't. In response to Mr. Malone, DC Farrall said 208 tickets were written on Casho Mill Road within the last year.

Mr. Parkins said he feels the current proposal provides a false sense of security for children riding their bikes. Mr. Parkins said his impression is we are sacrificing safety to save money. Mr. Parkins said in his opinion to do this right, we need to look at other alternatives even if it costs more money.

Mr. Filasky said if the committee decides to move forward without removing parking what would be the alternative for this section of the road. Mr. Kneavel said they would review other options for just this section and move forward with the other section of the road. Mr. Kneavel said they would like to know where they are headed from a design aspect for the whole project.

Mr. Gula made a motion, to endorse the project from the north entrance to Timbercreek Lane to Barksdale Road.

No 2nd to the motion.

DC Farrall suggested an alternative proposal. DC Farrall suggested a motion to support the proposal with the exception of removing any parking.

Motion by Mr. Gula, seconded by Mr. Parkins, to support the project as whole except for the removal of parking.

Motion Passed.

Vote: 4 to 1

DC Farrall said he will draft a memorandum to the Interim City Manager with the committee's decision.

3. Request to convert Amstel Avenue to one-way between Orchard Road and S. College Avenue with the addition of parking on the south side of Amstel Avenue and the removal of parking on S. College Avenue between Kent Way and Winslow Road.

Mr. Filasky said the only place for parking on S. College Avenue north of Park Place is near the University of Delaware Morris Library. Mr. Filasky said this presents an issue for bicyclists that need to travel out into the road or on the sidewalk in the area of the Morris Library.

Mr. Filasky said as part of the proposal to remove parking there has been an area identified on the south side of Amstel Avenue to add parking meters. Mr. Filasky said they have reached out to the University of Delaware as they own most of the property in the area.

Mr. Mulvanity said he is the parking field supervisor for the City of Newark. Mr. Mulvanity said this plan was proposed with the intent to add a bike lane on S. College Avenue in front of Morris Library to make it safer for bicyclists. Mr. Mulvanity said this would include the removal of 15 meters in front of Morris Library. Mr. Mulvanity said Lot 1 is very full during school hours. Mr. Mulvanity said previously the meters have been changed from 4-hour to 8-hour time limits. The parking division has seen an increase in occupancy and revenue within the campus district.

Mr. Mulvanity said the goal is to not lose parking but add parking within the district. Mr. Mulvanity said this would make Amstel Avenue one-way heading east toward S. College Avenue by installing 17-18 parking meters on the south side of Amstel Avenue. This will provide an additional 2-3 parking meters.

Mr. Filasky said a car that would've parked on S. College Avenue could make a left on Kent Way, if there is no parking on Kent Way you could continue onto Orchard Road making a right on Amstel Avenue to find a parking space.

Mr. Mulvanity said with the current parking on the street if a car opens their door they could hit a bicyclist in the travel lane.

DC Farrall asked Sgt. Davis if the Amstel Avenue proposal would cause any potential conflicts with traffic detours. Sgt. Davis said there are no issues regarding traffic detours.

Public Comment:

Ms. Olsen said the University of Delaware has several parking lots in the area and the concern is this may create traffic backups on Kent Way. Ms. Olsen said the other concern would be sending traffic into the surrounding neighborhood.

DC Farrall asked how many vehicles can park in from the parking lot on Amstel Avenue just east of Orchard Road. Ms. Olsen responded approximately 100.

Mr. Deshon said he was delighted to hear about this request. Mr. Deshon said he feels pedestrian advocates would agree they wouldn't want bicyclists on the sidewalk in this area. Mr. Deshon said as an advocacy group they are interested in creating safety along this corridor. With the STAR Campus and buildings along the main campus this corridor will be extremely critical in reducing the number of vehicles. Mr. Deshon said this is congruent with the BikeNewark's vision.

Ms. Huntley asked if there is a possibility of considering a contraflow lane for bikes on Amstel Avenue. Mr. Filasky said he doesn't believe there would be enough space with parking on both sides of the street. Mr. Filasky said the alternative is to take Kent Way and back up to Orchard Road. Ms. Huntley said she would be traveling from Smith Hall. Ms. Huntley said it would be a nice feature if possible.

Motion by Mr. Gula, seconded by Mr. Howard, to approval the proposal.

Motion passed: Unanimous

Vote: 5 to 0

Other Business:

Mr. Beard lives at 308 E. Park Place. Mr. Beard said they currently have permit parking on the opposite side of E. Park Place. Mr. Beard said he's not comfortable having his guests park there. Mr. Beard said there is a dog leg at the end of the block and vehicles make the turn and side swipe cars. Mr. Beard said on the single block of Haines Street there is no parking permitted on either side of the street.

Mr. Beard would like for his guests to park on Haines Street. Mr. Beard also said it would be a good place to park during a snow emergency. Mr. Beard said if parking was permitted on Haines Street you could essentially remove parking on one side of E. Park Place.

DC Farrall said that because this wasn't on the agenda the committee is unable to vote on this item today. DC Farrall said further research would be conducted and provided to Mr. Beard.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.



Mark Farrall, Chairman

Any supporting documents pertaining to this meeting will be held on file at the police department.