

Citizens Traffic Commission Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, July 11, 2023 • 5:00 PM • Conference Rooms 220/221 and via Zoom

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:04 PM.

2. Roll Call

MEMBERS AND STAFF PRESENT: Jeff McCard, James Flynn, Bill Everett, Rowland Myers, Assistant Township Manager Nick Valla, Police Chief Joseph Bartorilla, Captain Peter Feeney, Officer Jeffrey Wagner, Steve Gozur (Traffic Planning & Design).

MEMBERS AND STAFF ABSENT: Chris Haughey, Public Works Superintendent Eric Gartenmayer, Sergeant Mark McLeod.

RESIDENTS PRESENT: None.

3. Approval of Minutes

Members approve minutes of April 11, 2023, meeting by consensus.

4. Public Comment (Non-Agenda Items Only)

None.

5. Old Business

a. Prospect Avenue/Avenue E Stop Sign—Traffic Study

The Police Department opted to perform multiple details at this intersection. Only one citation was issued to a food delivery driver. No further action was recommended.

b. Stop Sign Request—Franklin/Country Lane (Millway Farms)

Pending traffic study.

c. Speeding in Old Mill Woods

The Police Department performed a traffic study which resulted in an average speed of 26 MPH. No further action was recommended.

d. Commercial Vehicle Parking Ordinance

Since the April meeting, Mr. Valla and Chief Bartorilla have been discussing this matter with the Township Solicitor. Though using gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) is a common practice in other municipalities' ordinances, this approach may unintentionally cause large trucks that are not used for commercial purposes to be in violation.

Chief Bartorilla is recommending language similar to the City of Philadelphia, which prohibits parking of any vehicle used for a commercial purpose between the hours of 6 PM and 6 AM. This definition allows police officers to exercise discretion when enforcing, and for commercial vehicles performing work during business hours to not be in violation. Chief Bartorilla added that the intent of this ordinance is not for police to patrol for violations, but rather respond to issues reported by residents.

A question was raised about issuing warnings before writing parking tickets. Chief Bartorilla stated the police would attempt to resolve violations amicably before resorting to issuing tickets. Chief Bartorilla recommended the fine for a commercial vehicle in violation of this ordinance be \$50.

Discussion occurred about adjusting other parking fines. Mr. Valla clarified that aside from the proposed commercial vehicle violation, there are two other categories of parking violations in Ordinance Chapter 470: general parking violations (currently \$15) and snow & ice parking violations (currently \$25). Most other municipalities in the region have fines between \$25 and \$50. The Police Department shared that it is common for residents to be unbothered by parking tickets, particularly for snow and ice violations, because the fine is so low. Consensus was to increase general parking violation fines to \$25, and snow & ice parking violations to \$50.

6. New Business

a. Madison Avenue/Langhorne Gables

Mr. Valla shared that PennDOT's contractor closed the bridge carrying Trenton Road over I-295 for maintenance. The closure began in early May. According to State Representative Hogan's staff, construction should be complete by the end of July. The posted detour takes traffic down to New Falls Road and into Bensalem Township. Local motorists who are familiar with the area have been reported as using Madison Avenue in Langhorne Gables as an alternative detour. Several requests for temporary solutions were made, but all would require an ordinance to be imposed, and another ordinance to be undone once construction ceased.

The Police Department performed a traffic study on Madison Avenue several days before and after the Trenton Road bridge closed. While volume did increase in the study, the study did not identify speeding as an issue.

Officer Wagner stated that he and other police officers have spent several hours on many days performing traffic details in Langhorne Gables since the bridge was closed. He stated that most of the violations being issued are for failure to stop at a stop sign. He added that during the last few months, additional signage warning motorists of potential fines were posted.

b. Ravine Avenue/Deer Drive

Mr. Valla stated he received a speeding complaint from a resident near Deer Drive (Ravine Avenue) and Eagle Road in the Idlewood neighborhood. It was noted that most anyone driving in this area is either a resident of the neighborhood or visiting a home.

The Police Department will conduct a traffic study and share the findings with the CTC.

c. Paxson Road (between Kilburn Road and Briggs Road)

Mr. Valla stated he received a speeding complaint from a resident on Paxson Road between Kilburn Road and Briggs Road. While cut-through traffic is potentially a concern, the planned PennDOT improvements to Langhorne-Yardley Road and Woodbourne Road should mitigate it. Mr. Valla noted that this road is narrower, curves, and often has cars parked on the street, making it difficult to reach a high rate of speed that would be in violation.

The Police Department will conduct a traffic study and share the findings with the CTC.

d. Motorcycle Noise

Mr. Valla stated he received a complaint from a resident of Red Rose Gate complaining of excessive noise from motorcycles in general, and on Bristol-Oxford Valley Road. The resident is asking for the Township's noise ordinance to be enforced against motorcycles that are loud. The resident also prepared an online petition which has generated 50 signatures. Mr. Valla concluded by pointing out the practical challenges of catching a passing motorcycle that may be exceeding the noise limit.

Captain Feeney agreed with the practical challenges identified and added that the police department can and does enforce illegal exhaust systems on motorcycles, but trying to catch any loud motorcycle is very challenging.

No further action was recommended.

e. Stop Sign Request – Zimmerman Lane/Tall Tree Lane

Mr. Valla stated the Public Works Department recently noted the lack of a stop sign on Tall Tree Lane as it intersects into Zimmerman Lane. Although motorists are supposed to stop at an intersection with a through road, adding a stop sign at this location would solve any ambiguity. He added that prior to the Access Woods development being built, Access Road (the precursor to Tall Tree Lane) did have a stop sign.

Consensus was in favor of recommending an ordinance to add this stop sign.

7. Other Business

a. Swift/Woodbourne/Lower Silver Lake Intersection Signalization

Mr. Everett inquired about the status of the signalization of this intersection. Mr. Gozur advised that the signal is expected to go live next week. Coordination with Newtown Township and the signal at the Newtown Bypass was discussed.

b. Road Resurfacing

Mr. Everett asked about the recent repaving of Ellis Road. Mr. Valla shared that PennDOT opted to use an “oil and chip” repaving method as opposed to the “milling and paving” typically performed, adding that this alternative is more cost-effective and expedient.

Mr. Everett also inquired about if PennDOT would be repaving the Newtown Bypass as parts were in disrepair. Mr. Valla agreed to inquire about this issue.

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:54 PM. The next meeting is scheduled for October 10, 2023.