

Citizens Traffic Commission Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, July 9, 2024 • 6:30 PM • Municipal Center Rooms 220/221

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM.

2. Roll Call

MEMBERS AND STAFF PRESENT: Chris Haughey, Jeff McCard, Bill Everett, Rowland Myers, Assistant Township Manager Nick Valla, Public Works Director Eric Gartenmayer, Police Chief Joseph Bartorilla, Captain Peter Feeney, Sergeant Mark McLeod, Officer Jeffrey Wagner, Steve Gozur (Traffic Planning & Design).

MEMBERS AND STAFF ABSENT: James Flynn.

PUBLIC PRESENT: Linda Pascali, Karla Jones, Bob Feather.

3. Approval of Minutes

Members approve minutes of April 9, 2024, meeting by consensus.

4. Public Comment (Non-Agenda Items Only)

None.

5. Old Business

a. Activity Since Last Meeting – Highland Park Drive Parking Ordinance (#24-02)

Assistant Township Manager Nick Valla shared that shortly after the April CTC meeting, the Police and Public Works Departments reported an issue with accessing the tributary that runs through the Highland Park neighborhood from Highland Park Drive and recommended a parking ordinance. Mr. Valla shared that the issue was shared electronically with CTC members and brought to the Board of Supervisors due to the Supervisors' meeting schedule. The ordinance was enacted by the Supervisors last night.

Mr. Gartenmayer thanked the CTC for considering this issue as parked vehicles inhibit Public Works' ability to maintain the tributary and prevent flooding.

b. Lower Silver Lake Road at Banks Road – Stop Sign Request

Sergeant Mark McLeod reported that a study was performed and showed an 85th percentile of speed at 32 MPH. Sgt. McLeod noted that there is less traffic on this road since the signal was installed on Lower Silver Lake Road at Woodbourne Road last year. Captain Peter Feeney stated he does not recall any significant accidents at this intersection. He recommended no further action at this time. It was noted that this issue can be evaluated again in the future after the Wawa is constructed in Newtown if it is raised again.

c. Fulling Mill Road – Consider requesting PennDOT to conduct a study.

Officer Jeffrey Wagner shared that he has performed visual enforcement on this stretch of road to date. Mr. Valla reminded the CTC that as a state road, PennDOT must be prompted by the municipality to conduct a traffic study to determine if traffic calming is warranted. In April, the CTC looked to have the Police Department conduct a study first to see if it needed to rise to the state's level. The Police Department will conduct a study.

d. Summit Trace Neighborhood and Shopping Center

Mr. Valla reviewed the original concerns raised and the actions taken since the April meeting. He shared that an informal meeting was held involving the Police Department, Giant management, and shopping center management (Gigliotti) where issues related to truck traffic on Summit Trace Road were discussed. Mr. Valla noted that he has not heard of any further issues since this time. Officer Wagner noted that during his traffic enforcement details here, he has noticed fewer trucks on Summit Trace Road.

Officer Wagner also shared that he has performed several details in this neighborhood and has only issued two stop sign violations. He added that the speed trailer has been posted and will be posted again.

Director of Public Works Eric Gartenmayer shared that a small portion of Summit Trace Road near SR-413 will be repaved by staff later this summer.

Officer Wagner shared that a traffic study has not yet been performed as there is not an ideal area to pole-mount the study device. He recommended TPD, the Township Traffic Engineer, conduct the study.

Mr. Valla shared that some concerns specific to the traffic signal on SR-332 were shared with Newtown Township, who owns the signal. Mr. Valla did share that staff discussed painting a lane line on the neighborhood-side of the "box" at Doublewoods Road to indicate to drivers that there are two lanes of traffic.

Mr. Valla shared he spoke with another resident who requested the intersection of Summit Trace Road at Oakridge Drive (near the Giant) be made an all-way stop. He shared he also met with Karla Jones, Summit Trace resident, in attendance tonight, about some concerns.

Linda Pascali, Summit Trace resident, thanked everyone for their efforts.

Ms. Jones shared concerns she had about the Doublewoods Road intersection and the signalized intersection at SR-332, including concerns about lacking pedestrian connections and the confusing configuration of this roadway. She noted that the signalized intersection is the only area for drivers to make a right-handed turn on red lights onto SR-332 and the only painted crosswalks across SR-332. It was noted the intersection lacks "Hand-Man" pedestrian indicators.

The CTC shared with Ms. Jones that the signal is controlled by Newtown Township and any changes to it would need to be initiated by them. She shared that she intends to attend the Newtown Township Board of Supervisors meeting tomorrow.

The CTC discussed the issue of drivers using the shoulder between Doublewoods Road and SR-332 as a pseudo-right turn lane. It is not wide enough to be a dedicated right turn lane and is prone to flooding. They discussed adding chevron pavement markings and signage to better indicate to motorists that cars are not to drive on the shoulder. It was noted this change was instituted on SR-413 near Trenton Road and has been effective. The CTC discussed the idea of requesting Newtown Township add pavement markings on the shoulder as it would require a change to their traffic signal permit with PennDOT. Officer Wagner suggested PennDOT may need to evaluate the entire area to see if more significant redesigning is necessary.

6. New Business

a. Silver Lake Road – Traffic Calming

Mr. Valla shared that he heard requests from a few residents for traffic calming due to speed on Silver Lake Road between Village Road and Algate Road. Officer Wagner stated that he posted the speed trailer and interacted with some of the complainants. He noted the length of the road is too short to reach high speeds. He also performed a detail in the area and did not issue any stop sign violations for the stop sign at Algate Road. He suggested performing a study at a future date if the issue arises again. No further action was recommended.

b. Forsythia Drive East – Traffic Calming

Mr. Valla shared he received a request from a resident in Forsythia Gate for roadway striping on Forsythia Drive East like what was added to Snowball Gate a few years ago. The resident reported some speeding concerns, and reported unrelated concerns of cars not abiding by the traffic signal near the Senior Center on Trenton Road. Officer Wagner reported he monitored the signal near the Senior Center and did not report any issues. On Forsythia Drive East, he performed a study which resulted in the 85th percentile of speed was 27 MPH. He noted parked cars and the narrow road make speeding difficult on this road. No further action was recommended.

c. Business Route 1 (Near Team Toyota) – Consider requesting PennDOT to conduct a study.

Officer Wagner shared that he received complaints about cars and trucks from a nearby business parking near a driveway to Team Toyota's Service Center on US-1 Business (Business Route 1). It was noted that this has long occurred, but was recently raised as a visibility issue, particularly when cars are speeding on Business Route 1.

He was advised by Mr. Valla that there is an ordinance in place already prohibiting parking on the entirety of Business Route 1, but that signage does not currently exist. Discussion occurred about the legality of enforcing a Township ordinance on a state-maintained highway. Mr. Valla agreed to seek the advice of the Township Solicitor.

The Commission agreed that pursuant to advice of the Township Solicitor, signage indicating parking restrictions should be posted and enforced.

d. Tareyton – Traffic Calming

Mr. Valla shared he received a traffic calming request from a resident on Princeton Court, a cul-de-sac in Tareyton, on both his street and Tareyton Drive, one of the main streets into the neighborhood. The Commission agreed that Princeton Court is not long enough for cars to reach speeds necessary to warrant traffic calming. The Commission also agreed that the same was true for Tareyton Drive, especially given the curve in the road near the park. Officer Wagner stated he will increase his presence in the neighborhood and ticket abandoned vehicles, another routine issue in this neighborhood. No further action was recommended.

e. Woodbourne Road Brake Retarders

Mr. Valla shared that residents of the Orchard Crossing neighborhood, near Woodbourne Road and Langhorne-Yardley Road, requested a restriction on brake retarders. PennDOT conducted the study and recently reported back to the Township. PennDOT is allowing the Township to restrict brake retarders on Woodbourne Road between Langhorne-Yardley Road and New Falls Road, nearly its full length. Mr. Valla added that this must come in the form of a Township ordinance, enforceable by the Police Department.

The Police Department expressed support for this ordinance. Discussion occurred about whether or not a Township-wide restriction would be possible, as other communities such as Bristol Township have enacted one. Mr. Valla agreed to address the issue with the Township Solicitor and follow-up with the Commission at the next meeting.

f. Langhorne-Yardley Road PennDOT Improvement Project

Mr. Valla shared that PennDOT’s contractor, James D. Morrissey, has begun construction on Langhorne-Yardley Road between Bridgetown Pike and Woodbourne Road. He provided a summary of the planned construction and detour schedule.

7. Other Business

a. Highland Park Way

Bob Feather, Highland Park Way, apologized for missing Public Comment earlier in the meeting. He reported issues with speeding between the stop sign at Heartwood Road and the stop sign at Highland Park Place. The Police Department agreed to conduct a study of the area and report back to the Commission.

b. Speed Enforcement Trailers

Chief Bartorilla sought out feedback from the Commission as to if they would support recommending purchase of a second speed enforcement trailer as the Township is preparing for the 2025 Budget. The Commission agreed this would be a valuable addition. Chief Bartorilla stated that he can look into grants to support this purchase.

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 PM. The next meeting is scheduled for October 8, 2024.