

Citizens Traffic Commission Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, January 12, 2021 • 7:00 PM • Virtual Meeting

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 PM.

2. Roll Call

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chris Haughey, Jeff McCard, Kristi Ann Morris, Sally Miller, Assistant Township Manager Nick Valla, Captain Peter Feeney, Sergeant Mark McLeod, Officer Michael Stum, Public Works Superintendent Eric Gartenmayer, Bill Zadrovicz (Traffic Planning & Design), Steve Gozur (Traffic Planning & Design).

MEMBERS ABSENT: Mathew Tharakan.

3. Reorganization

a. Appointment of Chair

- i. Kristi Ann Morris moved to nominate Chris Haughey as Chair, seconded by Jeff McCard; carried unanimously.

b. Appointment of Vice Chair

- i. Eric Gartenmayer moved to nominate Jeff McCard as Vice Chair, seconded by Kristi Ann Morris; carried unanimously.

c. Appointment of Secretary

- i. Jeff McCard moved to nominate Kristi Ann Morris as Secretary, seconded by Sally Miller; carried unanimously.

4. Approval of Minutes

Members approve minutes of October 14, 2020 meeting by consensus.

5. Old Business

a. Activity since last meeting

i. Stone Bridge Court study

The residents of Stone Bridge Court attended the October CTC meeting to express their concern about speeding on their street and their desire for a speedbump. Their primary claim was that delivery services such as Amazon were contributing factors to this issue. They also shared that drivers not familiar with the area mistakenly turn onto their street and use it as a turnaround point. At the end of October's CTC meeting, the Police Department agreed to conduct a traffic study.

The study was conducted for seven days from October 21 to October 27, 2020. During this time, 438 total vehicles drove through the study area, resulting in approximately 219 round trips. The 85th percentile for speed was 18 MPH, one of the lowest reported by the Middletown Township Police Department. Of the 438 trips, only five exceeded the 25 MPH speed limit. The highest recorded speed was 34 MPH, meaning no cars exceeded the legally enforceable speed on this road in one week's time. MTPD further shared that there is only approximately 250 feet of straight road, making it nearly impossible for a vehicle to reach an enforceable speed. Captain Feeney shared that the request of the residents to reduce the speed limit on the cul-de-sac would only result in more violations, and not a reduction in speeds, based upon his experience. Bill Zadrovicz of TPD shared that upon analysis of the data, there is no evidence of a turnaround issue or a volume issue on Stone Bridge Court.

Nick Valla shared that the residents were provided the findings of this study in early January. The residents had an attorney contact Mr. Valla to discuss the matter further. Both Mr. Valla and the Township Manager shared the process undertaken to investigate the residents' complaint. The attorney was advised that the study showed no evidence of a traffic issue and that the residents' next course of action would be to make a public comment to the Board of Supervisors. After dropping off yard signs to the residents, Mr. Valla shared he had not heard anything further from the residents.

All members were in agreement that no traffic issue existed on Stone Bridge Court that needed to be resolved.

b. Update on past projects & discussions

i. Traffic Analysis

Mr. Valla shared that he, the Township Manager, and the Police Department are working with Traffic Planning and Design (TPD) to review all major roads and corridors in the Township, and to look at long-term traffic issues in the Township. The goals of this effort are to (1) identify a punch list of issues that may be resolved in the short-term, (2) improve the flow of traffic on major corridors, (3) consider improvements to safety in school zones, (4) document long-term traffic issues for historical purposes to support future funding efforts, and (5) approximate costs for larger improvements so they may be prioritized in future budget years.

Mr. Haughy inquired about the status of improvements to be made on Langhorne-Yardley Road. Mr. Valla shared that Woodbourne Road is set to be realigned and widened at the Langhorne-Yardley Road intersection. The Bridgetown Pike intersection will be turned into a roundabout to improve the safety and flow of traffic. Construction is expected to begin in 2021 and last through 2023. Mr. Valla shared that the Township has financially contributed to this project which has helped to advance the timetable and investment from other entities on this project. The total scope of the project is approximately \$10.5 million, most coming from PennDOT.

6. New Business

a. Township Roads

i. Green Valley

Captain Feeney shared that a study was conducted in the fall in Green Valley. There were approximately three separate complaints lodged with the Police Department and with Mr. Valla, including a several page petition for several traffic calming measures. The findings of the traffic study found that approximately 209 vehicles made round trips each day. The 85th percentile of speed was 22 MPH. The study does not show evidence of a speeding issue.

Captain Feeney also shared that one of the requests of the residents was for a “Watch Children” sign to be posted a several points in the development. Eric Gartenmayer shared that he and his team would go out and install any as they saw fit.

ii. Upper Orchard Drive

Mr. Valla shared that a gentleman called in an issue in November about motorists speeding on Upper Orchard Drive. Upper Orchard Drive is the “ring road” of the development that connects to Frosty Hollow Road on both ends. The Drive makes a “W” shape, with an all-way stop near the crest of the W, at the intersection with Underwood Road. The resident’s concern was that on both straightaways of the Drive, particularly on the eastern side (parallel to Mill Creek and passing the park), are long and allow motorists to reach a high rate of speed.

The Police Department will conduct a traffic study and report back to the CTC.

iii. Highland Park Drive

Mr. Valla shared that a resident raised an issue of motorists using a portion of Highland Park Drive to bypass a segment of Veterans Highway. The resident also shared that the all-way stop on Highland Park Drive at Hollow Road is frequently rolled or ignored.

Other CTC members familiar with the area shared that another issue in this area is the use of Highland Park Drive to bypass the intersection of Veterans Highway at Trenton Road altogether. It was also noted that there are two one-way stop signs on Highland Park Drive likely aimed at deterring the speed of thru-traffic that may need to be reviewed.

The Police Department will conduct a traffic study and report back to the CTC.

7. Open Floor

a. Traffic Calming Policy

Mr. Valla shared that he is working with TPD to review the Township’s existing Traffic Calming Policy from 2003 to check for alignment opportunities with best practices and state guidelines. He also shared that since the CTC was created in 2018, he would be recommending changes to formally incorporate review by the CTC into the Traffic Calming process.

b. Pedestrian Signal near Middletown Community Park

Sally Miller asked about construction going on currently across the street from Middletown Community Park on Langhorne-Yardley Road. Mr. Valla shared that a grant-funded pedestrian crossing signal is being installed near the new Walnut Way development across from the park. He also shared that there is a plan to connect this new development with the Laurel Oaks development for pedestrian traffic who would utilize this signal.

c. School Signal near Walter Miller Elementary School

Officer Stum asked about who was responsible for speed limit signs near school zones. Mr. Zadrovicz shared that the Township is responsible. Mr. Gartenmayer shared that PennDOT must sign off on any alterations to the timing of these signs. Officer Stum shared that the school speed limit sign near Walter Mill Elementary School on Bristol-Oxford Valley Road is faded and is positioned far from the roadway and may be easily ignored by motorists.

Mr. Valla shared that improvements to school zones is one of the issues being considered in the Township-wide Traffic Analysis that is ongoing. He shared that Bensalem Township is implementing a variable system in school zones that Middletown may be considering.

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:13 PM. The next meeting is scheduled for April 13, 2021.