

Citizens Traffic Commission Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, April 13, 2021 • 7:00 PM • Virtual Meeting

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:09 PM.

2. Roll Call

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: Jeff McCard, Sally Miller, Mathew Tharakan, Sergeant Mark McLeod.

3. Approval of Minutes

Members approve minutes of January 12, 2021 meeting by consensus.

4. Old Business

a. Activity since last meeting

i. Upper Orchard Drive

The Police Department conducted a traffic study on Upper Orchard Drive. The study found that there was speeding on the road, but not to an enforceable level. The 85th percentile of speed was 34 miles per hour (MPH). Of the 1,556 cars that were monitored in the seven-day period, one was going 61-65 MPH, and three were going 51-55 MPH.

Captain Feeney is recommending the best course of action would be an increased police presence in the area. He also suggested the electronic speed sign could be moved to this area as a possible public awareness measure.

Assistant Township Manager Valla suggested using the proximity of Upper Orchard Park as a way to increase signage. Superintendent Gartenmayer confirmed that they intend to paint a crosswalk from the park across Upper Orchard Drive to the rest of the development. Mr. Gartenmayer added that he will review the existing signage in the area and add any “watch children” and speed limit signs that might be useful.

No traffic calming actions were recommended.

ii. Highland Park Drive

The Police Department conducted a speed study on Highland Park Drive near the intersection of Hawk Road. The complaint received was primarily about cut-through traffic in the neighborhood. In one week, approximately 8,500 cars were monitored. The 85th percentile of speed was 29 MPH, below the legally-enforceable threshold. Of the 8,500 cars, the top speed reached was 42 MPH by nine vehicles.

The cut-through issue in Highland Park has been known since the development was built, due to its connection to the four major roads surrounding it. Aside from significantly disruptive measures such as creating one-way entrances and exits, there are no apparent solutions that would not adversely affect the residents of the neighborhood.

No traffic calming actions were recommended.

b. Update on past projects & discussions

i. Township-wide Traffic Analysis

Mr. Valla shared at the last meeting that the Board of Supervisors charged staff to work with Traffic Planning & Design (TPD) to develop a Township-wide study of traffic issues to be addressed to better prioritize future projects. The resulting study was presented to the Board of Supervisors on March 1st. The study document was distributed to the Traffic Commission prior to this meeting. Most items in the study are maintenance-related.

Mr. Valla stated that the primary issue that will need to be advised by the Traffic Commission is the issue of adding stop signs at some intersections in residential developments. This issue is most prevalent in the Levittown section of the Township. More specifically, the issue is that there are many instances where an intersecting residential road connects to a thru-traffic connector road and stop signs are not currently posted. The Pennsylvania Motor Vehicle Code states that traffic on the through road has the right of way, meaning traffic at connecting roads should be stopping regardless. TPD is recommending that stop signs be added at residential roads connecting to through roads where none exist to reduce potential confusion to motorists.

Captain Feeney shared that the present lack of stop signs is not a significant cause of vehicle accidents, but that they would be a useful reminder to motorists.

Mr. Gartenmayer shared that assessing all residential intersections and implementing any necessary stop signs would be a significant project to take on. He suggested that they be addressed gradually on a schedule compatible to the Road Improvement Program to maximize staff efficiency and cost reduction.

Mr. Valla added that any and all stop signs are required by ordinance, and that any new stop signs would need to go through the typical process for adding stop signs. He agreed that a phased approach would work to implement this change.

5. New Business

a. Township Roads

i. Summit Avenue (Penncrest)

Mr. Valla shared that he received a complaint from a resident in Penncrest on Summit Avenue complaining of cut-through traffic from motorists using the neighborhood to avoid the Winchester Avenue/Pine Street (SR 413) intersection. The resident shared that the issue was reported and investigated approximately nine years ago and found to be an issue that did not require mitigation.

Captain Feeney shared that a study was performed on Summit Avenue, with a resulting 85th percentile of speed at 29 MPH. He shared that the 85th percentile was 27 MPH and 30 MPH for each direction of traffic. He added that a total of 1,340 cars travelled the area during the seven-day study period, 570 in one direction and 770 in another direction.

No traffic calming actions were recommended.

ii. Quincy Hollow (Queen Lily Road and Quarry Road)

Mr. Valla shared that he received multiple complaints from residents about speeding and cut-through traffic on two residential roads in the Quincy Hollow neighborhood that front New Falls Road: Queen Lily and Quarry Roads. One resident cited having her parked vehicle hit twice on the street.

Captain Feeney stated that the Police Department can conduct a study in the neighborhood. He asked Mr. Valla to follow up with the residents to see if there is a particular time of day that these issues are worse than others.

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

iii. Grove Avenue (at Durham Road) No Parking

Mr. Valla received an inquiry from a resident with property at the intersection of Grove Avenue and Durham Road about creating a no parking zone along at least a portion of Grove Avenue. The resident reported an issue of someone parking the area, walking to another area to presumably become intoxicated or high, and then returning to the vehicle to sleep overnight. He claims that the issue was reported to the Police Department, but that nothing could be done about the vehicle as it was allowed to legally park there. Mr. Valla added that Grove Avenue in the Oaklihurst neighborhood is a very narrow street.

Captain Feeney stated that it would be better to know if this was an issue happening on a regular basis or just once. He added that an issue that is happening once or on an irregular basis may not justify going to the length and extent of creating a no parking zone. The CTC generally agreed with Captain Feeney. Mr. Valla stated he would follow up with the resident.

iv. Traffic Calming Policy

Mr. Valla is recommending that the Traffic Calming Policy be reviewed and amended to solidify the Citizens Traffic Commissions' role in the traffic calming process. TPD has reviewed the policy and he is going to work with the staff to get any additional recommendations addressed and worked into a draft for review at the July CTC meeting. Mr. Valla asked the CTC to review the current policy for any feedback about additional changes. He stated that there was no intention of changing the democratic process prescribed by the policy, but rather to focus on better aligning with the state's guidelines.

6. Open Floor

a. Roadway Striping in Snowball Gate

Chris Haughey asked about the status of painting bike lanes and roadway striping in Snowball Gate. Mr. Gartenmayer shared that the Township struggled to find a qualified bidder to complete the roadway striping alone, so it was being put out to bid with the Township's annual road repaving bid, which is expected to be awarded by the Board of Supervisors on April 19th.

b. Chick-Fil-A Development at Langhorne Square

Mr. Haughey asked about the status of the Chick-Fil-A proposed to go in at the Langhorne Square shopping center along Business Route 1. Mr. Valla shared that the land development was heard last week again by the Planning Commission and was tabled for further discussion. The primary concern expressed by the Planning Commission is the increase of traffic and backups the Chick-Fil-A might cause. Mr. Haughey added some additional concern about traffic backing up in the parking lot at the drive-thru.

c. Langhorne-Newtown Road (SR 413) at Newtown Bypass (SR 332)

Officer Michael Stum recently received a complaint from a resident having difficulty crossing Newtown Bypass heading north on SR 413 in the early morning hours. Mr. Gartenmayer stated that he received similar concerns recently and confirmed that the system is working correctly. Kristi Ann Morris stated she also experienced this backup. Bill Zadrovicz stated that he could look at the intersection to see if the adaptive signal timing system needed to be adjusted.

d. S. Flowers Mill at Maple Avenue/Route 1

Mr. Haughey asked about the traffic signals on Maple Avenue at S. Flowers Mill and the Route 1 onramps and how they were synchronized. Captain Feeney confirmed that when making a left-hand turn from S. Flowers Mill onto Maple Avenue, the two signals are timed in sync, and have been for some time. Mr. Haughey said he heard of an accident in the area recently. Captain Feeney said that accidents caused by the signal are rare, but that some motorists assume they can make it through both lights before they change. Mr. Haughey also noted that the roadway striping guiding the left-hand turns was faded.

7. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:32 PM. The next meeting is scheduled for July 13, 2021.