

**BOROUGH OF WEST READING  
TRAFFIC & INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE**

**MARCH 11, 2020**

The Borough of West Reading Traffic & Infrastructure Committee met on Wednesday, March 11, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. at Borough Hall, with the following persons present: Chairman Christopher Lincoln; Council Member Patrick Kaag; Public Works Director Dean Murray; Sergeant Ryan Phillips; Mayor Andrew Kearney; Borough Manager Nicholas Imbesi; and Borough Secretary Cynthia Madeira.

**Visitors:** Karen Livingood, Resident  
Tina McDonough, Resident  
Pedro Vivar, Resident  
Melissa Lash, Resident  
Sandra Lash, Resident  
Gail Knauer, Resident  
Jack Henry, Resident  
Dale Miller, Resident  
Philip Putt, Resident  
Cindy Lou Mock, Resident  
Christopher Kantner, Resident  
David Rohrer, Resident  
Terry Siggins, Resident

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

**Public Comment**

Terry Siggins stated that he contacted a number of residents along Pine Street and Sycamore Road to discuss the recent Borough notification of either recommended or required pre-paving curb repairs and requested to follow up with comments after all visitors have had an opportunity to share their concerns.

Jack Henry announced that he joined this meeting in an effort to educate himself on curb repairs to find a path to making corrections.

Sandra Lash stated that the recommended letter to repair curbing was informative and requested an explanation as to why some residents have received free curb repairs in the past. It was noted that the Elm Street program received grant funding to revitalize sidewalk and curbing within older residential areas that border the central business district.

Mr. Lincoln provided an overview of the planned 2020 paving projects on Pine Street and Sycamore Road and as part of that process the Borough Engineer visited these areas to mark the deficient curbing that requires replacement. Letters were mailed to property owners that are required to replace curbing. In addition to this, the Borough mailed letters to the rest of the residents along these streets stating that since this project is coming through if you wanted to make repairs to curbing, now would be the time to do so. Mr. Imbesi provided further clarification between the letter that was signed by him and a letter that Mr. Siggins' provided to neighboring property owners. The official letter from the Borough, signed by the Borough Manager is what is required to be repaired to meet the minimum eighty percent or more structurally sound criteria as stipulated in the Borough Ordinance.

Cindy Lou Mock noted receipt of a letter recommending repairs to her curbing and shared her concerns that if she does not make repairs at this time, when she decides to relocate, the property transfer inspection would require her to make repairs at that time. Ms. Mock stated that she did not damage her sidewalk or curbing and that this is a public pathway and suggested an alternate method to deal with repairs for uniformity purposes.

Philip Putt stated that he agrees with Mr. Siggins' letter and noted sidewalk damage caused by Borough tree roots. Mr. Putt expressed concern regarding the large Sycamore branch hanging above his home that he is not allowed to trim. Mr. Murray stated that this tree was recently trimmed of dead wood and the inability to remove more than 25% of the tree to avoid causing the tree to decline in health. Mr. Putt recommended a fifty-fifty sidewalk replacement program for damage caused by Borough tree roots and that the Borough should be 100% responsible for curbing.

Dale Miller recommended widening Sycamore Road similar to Sunset Road since this has become a main thoroughfare now that the Parkview Road Bridge has been removed.

Christopher Kantner requested clarification as to the eighty percent requirement. The engineer interpreted the ordinance that if eighty percent of the six-inch thick curb profile section has deteriorated it is required to be replaced. It was noted that a number of drain cuts in the curb are no longer tied to rain leaders and could potentially be removed.

Mr. Lincoln noted that roadways are usually paved every twenty years and now would be a good time to repair the curbing since the curbing is twelve inches below grade with a six-inch reveal. Mr. Murray shared the inability to make openings to streets within five years following a repaving project.

Ms. Mock requested a quote on repairs that would be performed by a Borough contractor. It was noted that a contractor quoted \$90 per linear foot; however, grouping projects together could reduce this cost. Ms. Mock recommended for uniformity and walkability purposes that an alternate program, such as a new tax category be created that would be less onerous on property owners. Mr. Lincoln stated this could be considered for future projects, however this would not be in place prior to the 2020 paving projects. Mr. Lincoln also noted that public projects exceeding a certain amount of money would be required to be placed out for bid, which incurs the state prevailing wage, increasing the overall cost of the project. It may be best for neighbors to communicate with each other to hire a single contractor at a lower rate.

Tina McDonough recommended requesting quotes from multiple contractors based on her experience during a recent curb replacement project.

Mr. Murray shared an estimated cost of \$167,000 to replace all curbing along Sycamore Road.

Jack Henry requested clarification for budgeting purposes as to the section of curbing that he is recommended to replace. Mr. Imbesi stated the area between white markings is the area that is deteriorating and in need of repair.

Karen Livingood thanked the committee for the open dialogue to allow residents to voice their opinions and recommended visitors to attend committee meetings for transparency purposes. Mrs. Livingood inquired as to who was notified of the curb repairs for rental properties in the area. Mr. Imbesi stated that the property owners have been notified.

David Rohrer reported that he recently met with Mr. Imbesi and thanked him for his time to answer questions and shared his concerns regarding snow emergency routes such as Pine Street. Mr. Rohrer recommended a fifty-fifty share of curb replacements along snow emergency routes. Also, to maintain community walkability, it was recommended to share the cost of sidewalk replacements and his willingness to contribute towards a maintenance type program. Mr. Imbesi stated that a legal opinion has been requested as to assessing a maintenance type program within the state of Pennsylvania. Mr. Siggins recommended building into the road tax a millage for curb replacement. To bring this into perspective, Mr. Imbesi reported that the lower housing assessments within the Borough would only

yield \$147,000 at a one-mil increase, which would not cover the cost to replace curbing along Sycamore Road.

Determination of snow routes was questioned and it was noted that Sycamore Road is a secondary snow emergency route. It was suggested to revise the primary route to Sycamore Road due to emergency vehicle use.

Mr. Miller asked if the concrete gutter or lenals would be removed from Sycamore Road during this paving project. It was noted that the engineer informed us that a geotextile fabric would be used to bridge the gap at the seam between the concrete and the asphalt to deter cracking in this area.

Mr. Siggins expressed frustration with past practices where the ordinance regulations were not followed uniformly. Mr. Lincoln stated that a new approach is being taken now to follow the regulations, and a comprehensive look at financing options along with legal advice is being pursued. Residents are encouraged to stay involved with these types of discussions during committee meetings.

Mr. Rohrer expressed concern regarding safety issues at a school bus stop in the vicinity of Pine Street and Third Avenue. This school bus stop services a large area of elementary aged students within the Borough where a number of parents and children congregate at an intersection where most motorists fail to obey the stop sign. Sergeant Phillips stated that he would ensure a police presence was onsite during the 8:15am and 3:30pm timeframes provided that officers are not on another call. It was suggested to install additional stop signs in this vicinity as an added safety measure. Mr. Lincoln stated that traffic studies are required and certain thresholds must be met to install stop signs. The three certified staff members that can perform these studies should be completing studies in the near future. Also, it was recommended to contact the school district to possibly alter the school bus stop to a safer location.

### **Approval of Minutes**

Motion made to approve the Traffic and Infrastructure Committee minutes of December 11, 2019 and February 12, 2020 by Mr. Murray and seconded by Mr. Kearney. **Motion carried.**

### **Old Business**

**Penn Avenue Parking** – Mr. Lincoln noted January's paid parking revenue that totaled \$4,000, with half of the proceeds being provided to the owner of the parking lot. Mr. Imbesi stated that the App generated an increase in revenue during the month of February totaling \$2,048 and the cash proceeds have not yet cleared the bank. Also, a SIM card needed to be replaced in one of the kiosks. Mr. Lincoln noted the Main Street Manager's ambition to implement additional paid parking within alternate lots around the Borough, such as the Gage Personnel lot. However, if this were to take place in the near future, usage of paid parking within these additional lots would have to be operated solely through the App since it would take time to provide additional staffing and equipment.

**Parkview Road Pedestrian Bridge** – Mr. Imbesi stated that UGI had additional questions that required communication from the engineer and there was a lapse in time in providing this response. Now that answers have been provided to UGI we hope the project can move forward. Mr. Miller asked if it was necessary to install a pedestrian bridge. Mr. Lincoln indicated that for the purpose of connectivity to the trails, parklands and disc golf course and interest shown by residents there is a desire to install this type of bridge.

**Penn Avenue Infrastructure** – Mr. Murray noted a meeting scheduled next week with PennDOT to discuss the upcoming paving project. Also, costs are being reviewed in association with repainting the Penn Avenue railroad bridge to budget this improvement during the 2021 calendar year. Mr. Lincoln

inquired as to progress on trashcan refurbishing and Mr. Murray indicated that two-thirds of the cans have been refurbished. Mr. Lincoln requested the area around the bypass interchange be visited in the near future to remove the winter buildup of cinders.

**Museum Road & Parkside Drive North/Sycamore Road** – Following a number of complaints received from residents regarding delays at this intersection Telco was requested to review this signal and found that this traffic signal is operating as permitted. Revisions to this traffic signal would require a traffic study. The estimated cost to perform a traffic count, count analysis, redesign and permitting is \$6,000 to \$12,000, which would need to be budgeted. Another option would be to request PennDOT to perform a study through their LTAP program for cost savings.

Motion to recommend Council to direct staff to inquire with PennDOT through their LTAP program to look at a revised signal timing design at Museum Road and Parkside Drive North/Sycamore Road by Mayor Kearney and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried.**

**Technology Infrastructure** – The ongoing issues with the current IT provider were discussed. Sergeant Phillips stated that there seems to be a lack of communication between the local Fraser office and the third-party North Carolina office. It was recommended to have the solicitor review the five-year contract, of which two years remain to determine whether or not they are providing the services they are supposed to be providing. Sergeant Phillips requested that when and if there is a time to look for a new IT company that the Police Department be involved in the decision process to ensure compatibility with County programs.

Mr. Miller applauded Chief Powell for the recent police presence along Sunset Road and noted that the radar speed sign has not yet been moved to Sunset Road and Ann Street. Sergeant Phillips stated that the radar speed sign is being repaired and recommended that residents write their legislators to request passing a bill to allow municipal police to use radar to enforce speed limits.

Mayor Kearney noted a resident complaint he received regarding parking within the Sycamore and Sunset Road alley that prohibits the trash hauler from accessing the area. Mr. Imbesi stated that the trash hauler is communicating with the Police Department when cars are parked illegally and tickets are being issued. It was recommended to post no parking on one side of the alley to prevent cars from parking on both sides of the narrow roadway.

## **Adjournment**

Motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 7:50 p.m. by Mayor Kearney and seconded by Mr. Murray. **Motion carried.**

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Madeira  
Borough Secretary