

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

OCTOBER 14, 2020

The Borough of West Reading Traffic & Infrastructure Committee met on Wednesday, October 14, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. via a Zoom meeting with the following persons present: Chairman Christopher Lincoln; Council Member Patrick Kaag; Public Works Director Dean Murray; Police Chief Stephen Powell; Mayor Andrew Kearney; Engineer Tom Unger; Borough Manager Nicholas Imbesi; and Borough Secretary Cynthia Madeira.

Visitors: Karen Livingood, Resident Maureen Hasty, Resident

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m.

Public Comment

There were no public comments.

Approval of Minutes

Motion made to approve the Traffic and Infrastructure Committee minutes of September 9, 2020 by Chief Powell and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried.**

Old Business

Parkview Road Pedestrian Bridge – Mr. Unger shared the following negotiated quote information for a prefabricated pedestrian bridge:

- Contech is a Costars authorized vendor, which would save approximately \$5,000 on expenses associated with plans, specifications and bidding. Two options for the Borough's consideration are:
 - Self-weathering steel with hardwood decking \$62,769
 - Self-weathering steel with Trex composite decking \$64,544
- CMI
 - Aluminum with composite decking \$60,938

Mr. Unger noted that the Contech bridge has a 4,000-pound weight load, and the CMI bridge has a 3,000-pound weight load. An estimated timeframe for shop drawing submittal was three to four weeks and fabrication of the bridge was ten to twelve weeks.

Further deficiency comments have been received on the joint permit application submitted to the Department of Environmental Protection which is also reviewed by the Army Corps of Engineers. A hydraulic study and environmental study have been requested; Mr. Unger is providing arguments that there are no proposed changes to the Wyomissing Creek in hopes that they find these two requirements irrelevant.

Specifications are currently being prepared for the bridge abutment modifications to install the prefabricated bridge. This portion of the project would require bidding. March of 2021 was noted as an estimated bridge installation timeframe.

Motion to recommend Borough Council to move forward with the Contech weathered steel prefabricated bridge with Trex composite decking by Mr. Murray and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried.**

The Villas at Narrow Public Sidewalk – Mr. Unger shared information gathered regarding sidewalk width as discussed during the September Borough Council meeting:

- PennDOT regulations require 5' wide sidewalks or 4' wide sidewalks if a 5' by 5' wide passing area is provided every 200'.
- Borough sidewalk regulations require a 5' wide sidewalk.
- The plans were approved with a 4' wide sidewalk detail.
- The latest section of homes was constructed with 3' wide sidewalks.

- ICC and Federal ADA regulations for accessible routes are not clear as to the application for sidewalks and further complicate the issue.

It was determined that driveway aprons would provide a 5' by 5' wide passing area and that the sidewalks would need to be widened to 4'. Mr. Unger and the Code Department Manager will discuss options with the developer to correct this issue.

Mr. Unger departed the meeting at 6:22 p.m.

Penn Avenue Infrastructure – Mr. Murray reported that the granite handicap ramp repairs have been completed. The PennDOT Penn Avenue paving project is nearing completion. Mr. Murray has created a list of items in need of attention such as the manhole covers and side street crosswalk painting. The overnight parking restrictions will be lifted once all striping has been completed.

The pedestrian crosswalk pole at the intersection of Penn Avenue and Fifth Avenue is damaged. It is unclear if this was caused by paving construction activity or a vehicle. Telco will be contacted to render the device operational.

Parking in Alleys – Mr. Murray indicated that alley widths are being obtained when time allows. Mr. Lincoln requested an area of measurements to be forwarded to him to add to the map.

Stop Sign Ordinance Updates – Staff members trained in stop sign studies will begin studying the two priority intersections in the near future. It was recommended to review the types of intersections that are in question as well as the guidelines for these types of studies.

Curb and Sidewalk Repair Policy – Mr. Lincoln indicated that as a component of the roadway, curb repairs should be incorporated into the costs of paving project improvements even though this would reduce the number of projects that could be completed each year. Sidewalk repairs however should remain the property owners' responsibility. In instances where Borough tree roots caused damage to sidewalk panels the Borough may want to share in these replacement costs.

Mr. Kaag shared information on his research of other municipal curb or sidewalk repair policies. The city of Ithaca New York was a good example with a formula that is used to assess the shared expenses against different types of property occupancies. However, Pennsylvania statutes do not allow for these types of annual occupancy assessments. A special curb tax may be an option. A proposed curb replacement policy will be shared with Borough Council next week for feedback prior to refining legality issues with the solicitor.

Five-Year Strategic Plan – Infrastructure implications of the Derck & Edson plan were discussed. Particularly the proposed modifications to Delaney Circle where the circle would be eliminated to create a public gathering area. Stop signs, two-way traffic and the elimination of Tulpehocken Avenue access from Penn Avenue may pose traffic delays along North Fifth Avenue to Penn Avenue. A modern, smaller footprint roundabout may be a better solution. The plan offers potential public/private parking facilities in the vicinity of Tulpehocken Avenue nearest to Penn Avenue. An option to create back-in angle parking along Penn Avenue for additional parking spaces was discussed. The width of Penn Avenue posed maneuvering concerns for this feature and resident feedback should be requested. Traffic studies would be needed prior to deciding on these types of traffic and infrastructure revisions.

Modifications to Second Avenue to promote circulation patterns and commercial/retail uses in this district were discussed. It was unknown as to why this roadway was converted to a one-way road. Prohibition of left turns from Penn Avenue should continue.

Traffic calming measures such as traffic tables, speed cushions, and speed humps on Cherry and Court Streets to increase pedestrian safety for the Mural Arts Walk were welcome ideas. It was noted that emergency

services normally do not utilize these roadways. There was concern that this type of installation would facilitate additional requests and Mr. Murray expressed concern regarding winter maintenance.

Ideas to expand the business district onto Reading Avenue by converting residential homes into mixed use properties was welcomed idea. The proposed trail from Buttonwood Street would need to be defined to fully understand this feature.

These discussions will be shared with the West Reading Community Revitalization Foundation through these minutes for further commenting.

New Business

Handicap Parking Spaces – Chief Powell shared five new requests for handicapped parking spaces. Two spaces were installed under an emergency declaration. Two requests are for blocks that do not currently have handicapped space designations, one of which is within the 300 block of Penn Avenue. The space currently located at the intersection of Fourth and Penn Avenue is no longer needed by the applicant. Chief Powell recommended moving this space near the bus stop in the 300 block as opposed to creating an additional space in that vicinity. The business owners in the vicinity of Fourth and Penn Avenue have requested that the handicapped space be removed. Committee members agreed to Chief Powell's recommendation.

Adjournment

Motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 7:19 p.m. by Chief Powell and seconded by Mr. Murray. **Motion carried.**

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Madeira
Borough Secretary