

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

APRIL 13, 2022

The Borough of West Reading Traffic & Infrastructure Committee met on Wednesday, April 13, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. at Borough Hall with the following persons present: Chairman Christopher Lincoln; Council Member Patrick Kaag; Officer-in-Charge Sergeant Ryan Phillips; Mayor Samantha Kaag; Public Works Crew Leader Kerry Grassley (via Zoom); Borough Manager Dean Murray; and Borough Secretary Cynthia Madeira.

Visitors:	Karen Livingood, Resident	James Rogers, Resident
	Nicholas Karetas, Police Officer (via Zoom)	Paige West, Visitor
	Maureen Hasty, Resident	John Turner, Business Owner
	Bethany Bower, Resident	Dale Miller, Resident

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

Public Comment

Mr. Rogers noted the following items: 1) The current placement of no parking signs along the north side of the 600 block of Court Street and recommended requesting permission from property owners to place signs along the south side of this block; 2) Vehicles parked within the 500 block of Grape Street. Mr. Lincoln reported that this would be discussed later in the agenda; 3) Mr. Rogers inquired as to the signs that have been covered in the 500 block of Chestnut Street restricting parking on the south side of the block between the hours of 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Mr. Murray reported that no one has come forward indicating a need for this restriction and should the amendment be adopted the signs will be removed; 4) It was recommended to add parking spaces to the south side of the 500 block of Chestnut Street from the Borough Hall driveway to the traffic light, and from Sixth Avenue to the hospital driveway entrance; 5) The history of the North Fifth Avenue intersection was shared as to a previous bus stop that restricted parking near Penn Avenue to the existing parking stalls and it was recommended to add spaces to the area currently marked in yellow as no parking.

Mrs. Livingood inquired as to the following items: 1) She referred to a budget discussion last year regarding a \$10,000 escrow that was established to maintain the pickleball court area and requested where that would be located within the budget. It was unclear as to whether this would be reflected within the budget, Mr. Murray offered to provide an answer at a later date; 2) Confirmation was requested to ensure the budgeted concrete repairs to the pavilion area are going to be addressed this year to prevent tripping hazards. Mr. Murray indicated that the new maintenance worker with a background in concrete would be able to perform these repairs in-house. Mrs. Livingood also inquired as to macadam repairs in the vicinity of the concession stand. Mr. Murray indicated these repairs are planned for this year; 3) Mrs. Livingood noted that Sycamore Road was not listed as a paving project this year in the newsletter. Mr. Murray indicated that the 200 block of Sycamore Road will be paved this year in conjunction with the Linden Lane paving project. The 300 and 400 blocks of Sycamore Road are planned to be budgeted and paved in the year 2023.

Mr. Miller inquired as to why the 200 block of Sunset Road has not yet been paved. Mr. Murray indicated that Linden Lane was a higher priority and that paving projects are planned each year based on the condition of the roadway and budgetary constraints. The most cost-effective method of paving repair was agreed to be milling with base repairs as needed and an overlay of asphalt. Mr. Lincoln noted that micro surfacing roadways such as Sunset Road and Oak Terrace that were paved roughly five-years ago would be a process that would prolong the life of the asphalt.

Mrs. Hasty inquired as to the following items: 1) She referred to a previous budget discussion that noted the added wear and tear caused to roadways by providing trash collection services three times per week and the limited amount of trash generated by her home per week. It was suggested to reduce the frequency of trash collection to save on trash collection and roadway repair expenses and possibly offer methods to recycle bulk

items to save on tipping fees. Mr. Lincoln indicated that this could be discussed further during budget season; 2) Mrs. Hasty inquired as to the new concrete maintenance worker addressing the lifted sidewalk panels caused by Borough trees. Mr. Murray noted that sidewalk repairs are the property owner's responsibility, however, there are plans to address ADA ramps and some of the worst tripping hazard sidewalks in-house.

Mr. Miller noted the trash hauler taking recyclable items on trash collection days and asked if we get paid for recyclable materials. It was noted that Public Works staff are monitoring this issue with the trash hauler and the need to educate the community to ensure that only recyclable items are being placed in the recycle bins. It was noted that the current trash hauler contract expires at the end of the year.

Mr. Rogers noted that in the past a trash hauler had only one trash vehicle loaded with the entire community's trash and the damage that vehicle caused to curbing. It was recommended to ensure that future trash haulers have two vehicles. On that note, Mr. Lincoln requested Public Works to review the curbing located at the approach to the concrete alley from Fifth Avenue (behind Sycamore Road) that appears to have been damaged by trash collection vehicles.

Ms. Bower shared her experience each morning crossing the traffic circle with her dog and the difficulty to avoid being hit by a car. She shared some suggestions on how to remedy the situation such as the addition of speed bumps, stop signs or traffic signals at these various intersections. Mr. Lincoln noted that this item is on the agenda for further discussion later this evening.

Approval of Minutes

Motion made to approve the Traffic and Infrastructure Committee minutes of March 9, 2022 by Mr. Murray and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried.**

Old Business

Penn Avenue Infrastructure – Mr. Grassley noted activity this month addressing graffiti and stickers along the Avenue. Two additional trash cans have been installed, and the refurbishing of trash cans continues. There are two trash cans that are being held in reserve should a need arise in the future. The bucket truck is scheduled to arrive soon and will help to address street light upgrades to LED bulbs to save on electricity.

Handicap Parking Policy – Borough Council requested this committee to review the reasons why the current Handicap Parking Space Policy designates spaces at the ends of the block prior to consenting to the installation of a space mid-block. Highlights of minutes dating back to 2008 from the Traffic Committee and Borough Council were provided that did not reveal a purpose for this limitation other than access to ADA ramps. The solicitor provided the following comments:

- The Borough should update its Handicap Parking Ordinance each time it creates a new, on-street, handicap accessible parking space so the same can be enforced.
- The ADA, however, does not require the Borough to designate the location or minimum number of on-street parking spaces within its jurisdiction as handicap accessible, nor set a deadline to process requests for their creation.

The solicitor indicated that the location and number of spaces per block should be approved as reasonable.

Mr. Lincoln noted that the ordinance is amended in April and October of each year with exceptions as needed. Handicap parking space designations at the ends of the blocks fulfills one type of need, however there are circumstances where distance may be a factor. The Handicap Parking Policy designating the number of spaces per block was thought to have been a total of four, two on each end, however, the current policy lists two spaces per block where parking is permitted on both sides of the street. Though the designation of end of block spaces offers consistency, the space is located in that particular area for a reason. The use or need of

these spaces are individual to the resident even though it is not an assigned space. The number of spaces assigned per block should be balanced based on the needs of residents within that block. An update to the policy was recommended to allow special consideration to the applicant and will be discussed further next month.

Motion to uphold the previous recommendation to designate a handicap parking space in close proximity to 446 Chestnut Street. Moved by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Ms. Kaag. **Motion carried.**

Alley Naming – Mr. Lincoln recapped previous discussions that resulted in a request for staff members to provide a list of names for the unnamed alleys that correlate to existing street names. The County Emergency Services Department provided their recommendation to install signage and to avoid the use of street names that are already in use in the County. Mr. Murray reviewed the new list of names that could be associated with adjacent street names. Mayor Kaag expressed her concern that the names would not correlate to first responders or to people whom are unfamiliar with the history of the Borough. Based on the amount of time devoted to this task and the inability to unanimously agree to alley names it was decided to present the current list of alley names to Borough Council to make a determination on how to proceed.

New Business

Grape Street Parking – The Borough Manager, Sergeant Phillips, and Fire Chief Moyer visited the 400 block of Grape Street to review parking regulations with regards to emergency vehicle access and maneuvering in and out of parking spaces. Vehicles have recently been parallel parking in front of garages while encroaching the alley, limiting access to the alley and maneuverability. It was recommended to add this block, with the exception of the three spaces closest to Fifth Avenue to the ordinance that prohibits parking at all times.

Review of § 430-21 Parking Prohibited at All Times – Aside from various measurement corrections, the following aspects were discussed:

- The addition of both sides of the alley between Oak Terrace and Pine Street from Third Avenue to Fifth Avenue.
- The adjustment to both sides of the alley between Sycamore Road and Playground Drive from Linden Lane to Playground Drive.
- The removal of the north side only of the alley between Sycamore Road and Playground Drive that is currently not signed.
- The addition of both sides of Cherry Street from Fifth Avenue to Eighth Avenue. The 400 block of Cherry Street was discussed, and based on the width of the roadway it was decided to not add this block to this section of ordinances at this time.
- The removal of the north side of Chestnut Street mid-block west of Fifth Avenue.
- Court Street, both sides will be revised to include the 600 and 700 blocks, or Tulpehocken Avenue to Eighth Avenue.
- The addition of both sides of the 400 block of Grape Street from a point to be measured beyond the three spaces east of Fifth Avenue to Fourth Avenue. The 500 block of Grape Street was not as much of a concern by the Fire Chief and would not be added to this section of ordinances at this time.
- The removal of the south side of Franklin Street near the old West Reading Fire Company location that is no longer needed.
- The designation of one space on the north side of the 500 block of Grape Street will be reviewed from the minutes of January 2013 to determine the purpose.
- The removal of the west side of Kent Way between Spruce Street and Wayne Avenue. It is currently signed as permit parking and street sweeping.

- Obold Street west side will be modified to restrict parking between Chestnut Street and Franklin Street.
- Parkside Drive North, north side will be modified to restrict parking from Museum Road to Seventh Avenue based on the new emergency entrance.
- Parkside Drive North, south side will be modified to retain the existing spaces west of Museum Road but to restrict parking from the emergency entrance to Park Road.
- Second Avenue, east side will be modified to delineate the driveway entrance.
- The Seventh Avenue east side will be reviewed in its entirety for accuracy by the Public Works Department to depict current conditions following the addition of the new "T" building.
- The designation of prohibited parking on the north side of Spruce Street from Seventh Avenue to Lakeview Drive will be removed.
- The duplication of the east side of Yarnell Street north of Chestnut Street will be removed.

Based on the information that needs to be gathered for this amendment and the upcoming holiday it was decided to bring the changes back to the May Traffic and Infrastructure Committee meeting for review prior to making a recommendation to Council.

Traffic Circle Study – Mr. Lincoln noted a number of safety concerns for the outdated traffic circle design and a desire to seek conceptual plans to address speed concerns and pedestrian crossing distances. Funds were not budgeted this year for this type of study; however, funds were budgeted to perform a Borough-wide permit parking study. From a safety perspective and timeline for potential shopping center renovations the traffic circle may be more of a priority this year. Long term upgrades to the traffic circle will be costly and time will be needed to fund these types of improvements. It was recommended to utilize traffic calming methods such as striping to make the circulation area smaller to slow traffic and to make pedestrian crossing areas shorter. Mayor Kaag expressed her opinion to first pursue the permit parking study to potentially generate funds from that program to fund a study and/or improvements to the traffic circle. Short-term safety improvements to the traffic circle could be implemented through guidance from the Borough Engineer and intersection studies with the assistance of LTAP to modify yield signs to stop signs in an effort to slow traffic. Sergeant Phillips recommended a permanent solution to this area based on the number of years fines have been issued in this vicinity. Sergeant Phillips urged everyone to write your Legislators to request passing a bill to allow local use of radar. It was decided to request Borough Council to explore funding for both traffic studies.

Mayor Kaag requested to move forward in presenting the alley names to Borough Council as presented to avoid any further delays.

Motion to recommend Council to adopt the alley names as presented. Moved by Mayor Kaag and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried.**

Motion to amend the agenda to include a discussion on a mini ramp at the park. Moved by Mr. Murray and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried.**

Skate Park – Mr. Kaag provided documentation to the committee on the proposed mini ramp memorial to be donated entirely by the Reading Skate Park Association. John Turner, founder of Reading Area Skate Park Association and owner of the Holistic Skate Shop on Penn Avenue for the last ten years shared his efforts in creating the not-for-profit association to improve skate park communities throughout the county. He attributed the proposal of a community mini ramp in West Reading to honor his friend Gianni Molinari who passed away last year. A single, small foot print ramp was proposed to be installed near the basketball courts. It was noted that Gianni's mom has been a part of this process and his father was a member of the Recreation Commission a number of years ago. Mr. Turner is currently exploring the plausibility of installing this feature within Borough parklands prior to going to the expense of creating renderings of this vision. Mr. Kaag noted

that the Planning Commission provided a list of concerns that are currently being addressed such as noise disturbances, safety and security, escrow agreement, City of Reading approval, and public outreach. Mr. Turner noted that the smooth concrete structure is a quieter surface and only one board can be ridden at a time which dampens the noise. A chain staked across the center of the ramp and the ability to turn off lighting at a designated time would prohibit after hour use. The installation of a fence could also be considered, and in an effort to create a successful program an escrow agreement could be established for this low maintenance skate park. Mr. Kaag indicated that this small feature would be a good introduction to this Olympic sport within the Borough. Mr. Grassley recommended communication with the City of Reading and to perform a PA 1 Call to determine underground utility line placement. This will be reviewed by Mr. Turner, Mr. Grassley, and Mr. Kaag for further consideration.

Adjournment

Motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 8:53 p.m. by Mayor Kaag and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried.**

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Madeira
Borough Secretary