

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

JUNE 8, 2022

The Borough of West Reading Traffic & Infrastructure Committee met on Wednesday, June 8, 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; Sergeant Wayne Holben; Mayor Samantha Kaag; Public Works Director Kerry Grassley; Borough Manager Dean Murray; and Borough Secretary Cynthia Madeira.

Visitors:	Karen Livingood, Resident (via Zoom)	James Rogers, Resident
	Maureen Hasty, Resident	Michael Witmyer, Resident
	Jessica Gonzalez, Visitor (via Zoom)	

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 p.m.

Public Comment

Mr. Rogers noted the following items: 1) It was recommended similar to the flashing red warnings of new stop intersections on Cashmere Way, Tulpehocken Avenue and Walnut Street, that a new stop intersection be established at Reading Avenue and Delaney Circle to slow traffic approaching the school crossing guard area behind Rite-Aid; 2) It was reported that the pedestrian crossing signal located at the intersection of Reading Avenue and Eighth Avenue only operates in one direction. Mr. Lincoln reported that this signal is outdated and is in need of upgrades across the board. ARLE grant opportunities will be reviewed to offset the expenses associated in upgrading this traffic signal.

Approval of Minutes

Motion made to approve the Traffic and Infrastructure Committee minutes of April 13, 2022 by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Mr. Grassley. **Motion carried.**

Old Business

Penn Avenue Infrastructure – Mr. Grassley reported that slip lining of the sanitary sewer line along the 500 block of Penn Avenue last month was delayed in order to repair a collapsed section of the line. The collapse near Fifth Avenue was repaired yesterday by an outside contractor, and the repairs to the Seventh Avenue area were completed by the Public Works. The slip lining project has been rescheduled to tomorrow night.

Mr. Grassley noted plans to wash all trash and recycling cans along Penn Avenue prior to the Art on the Avenue event, and to repair the handicap ramp at Fifth and Penn Avenues. Also, curbing repairs are planned along Penn Avenue next week.

Mr. Grassley spoke with a business owner in the 500 block of Penn Avenue to address complaints of overflowing public trash cans. An additional trash can will be provided by the business owner and emptied into their dumpster as necessary to prevent an overflow of trash.

Mayor Kaag confirmed rumors of a homeless man eating from a trash can in front of Willow Creek Brewing. Ideas to deter this activity were discussed noting that the man has been deemed mentally fit per agency protocols. Family Promise of Berks County will be alerted to this activity.

Handicap Parking Policy – The existing policy and 2019 proposed policy changes, as well as the City of Reading policy were reviewed, noting that the City of Reading policy is similar with the exception of designating a space to a specific person. It was noted that the existing policy does not dictate space designations at the ends of the blocks and that reasonable efforts should be made to place an approved handicapped parking space within reasonable distance to the applicant's residence. Traffic committee minutes from the 1996 – 1997 timeframe when the current policy had been enacted have not yet been located.

Sergeant Phillips noted the current chain of command where the application is submitted to the Police Department Secretary and then provided to the Chief of Police for review of the site. It was noted that the two prior Chiefs of Police were surprised to be the initiator of this process to Council. The City of Reading designates their Zoning Administrator and Public Works Director as the reviewing bodies to determine if the criteria has been met to warrant the installation of a handicapped parking space. It was thought that the Borough's Parking Enforcement Officers or Public Works Director could perform the administrative portion of collecting and reviewing applications to present to Borough Council for final consideration.

Identification of the handicapped space designations within the ordinance were thought to be more easily identifiable by the number of spaces from an intersection since the parking stall lines primarily remain unchanged.

The goal in updating this policy is to provide more flexibility to be best situated to the applicant while limiting the number of spaces per block. It was thought that a percentage of parking spaces may accommodate most scenarios based on the number of parking spaces per block. An understanding of the number of parking spaces per block will be reviewed to determine the best strategy. Existing handicapped parking space designations would be reviewed in comparison to the new policy to decipher whether the designated space would be better situated to the applicant at an alternate location.

Mr. Rogers recommended reviewing the length of parking stalls in relation to the more compact vehicle styles of today to increase the number of available parking spaces per block. He also recommended adding parking spaces to North Fifth Avenue and Chestnut Street where curbs are currently marked in yellow. Sergeant Phillips shared a recollection from a former Chief of Police that the Chestnut Street yellow curb designation was implemented to increase the line-of-sight for emergency vehicles exiting the Borough Hall parking lot.

Staff was requested to review the number of parking spaces per block and committee members to review the proposed 2019 policy for further discussion next month.

Review of § 430-21 Parking Prohibited at All Times – Mr. Lincoln noted a prior review of this section that required an onsite review of a few references. It was also noted that the newly approved alley names have been incorporated into this ordinance section. The following matters were discussed:

- Alley between Obold Street and South Third Avenue – This unnamed and unmaintained narrow alley located from Franklin Street 202 feet south connecting to Grape Street was unclear as to whether this is an alley, right-of-way, or private property. Staff was requested to determine ownership of this area and if necessary to assign an alley name.
- The Grape Street mid-block restriction was clarified to be for a garage entrance, this restriction will remain in the ordinance.
- Kent Way – An additional restriction was added to the east side to accommodate the driveway access near Wayne Avenue, similar to the driveway access near Spruce Street. The west side was modified to restrict parking across from the driveway access near Wayne Avenue.
- South Fourth Avenue – The reference to east and west was unclear for the restriction between Cherry Street and a point 46 feet northwardly thereof. A virtual review of the intersection was thought to be restricted to allow sufficient sight distance. The reference to east will be removed and the 46 feet reference verified.

Motion to recommend approval to Borough Council of Section 430-21 Parking prohibited at all times subject to the minor updates and verification. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Mr. Grassley. **Motion carried.**

Traffic Circle Modifications – Mr. Lincoln noted that we are awaiting a conceptual plan from the Borough Engineer for short-term pedestrian safety improvements. This item was tabled until next month.

Handicapped Parking in Parkland – Mr. Murray noted that painting curbs blue to delineate handicapped parking spaces has not been practiced in recent years due to the fluctuation in space designations. However, Mrs. Livingood recently requested that the curbing for two spaces permanently designated near the pool be painted blue to deter illegal parking. Sergeant Phillips indicated that enforcement of these restrictions should improve now that the two new Parking Enforcement Officers have been fully trained. It was decided to only paint curbing blue for permanently designated handicapped spaces.

Public Comment – Mr. Rogers recommended consideration be given to establishing a permanent handicapped parking space near the Pavilion. Staff was asked to provide a recommended location for this designation next month.

Mrs. Hasty requested pedestrian crosswalks to be added to the intersection of Park Road and Parkside Drive North. This intersection is shared with the Borough of Wyomissing, Mr. Murray will discuss the addition of a crosswalk with the Wyomissing Borough Manager. It was noted that a safer place to cross would be at the Seventh Avenue intersection.

Mrs. Hasty also reported the lack of a pedestrian crosswalk at the Fifth Avenue and Delaney Circle intersection. It was noted that the circle had been reviewed by a PennDOT representative and the Borough Engineer for short-term improvements and we are awaiting comments from the Borough Engineer to implement these improvements.

Mrs. Hasty reported the lack of a pedestrian crosswalk from the 422 East ramp onto Penn Avenue. It was unclear as to whether this would be a Borough responsibility or PennDOT responsibility. The Borough Manager will contact the local PennDOT municipal services representative to request pavement markings. Mrs. Hasty also reported high grass/weeds in this vicinity. It was noted that PennDOT maintains the cloverleaf and Norfolk Southern maintains the railroad bridge areas. The Code Department will be requested to review this area to facilitate maintenance of the grass/weeds that impedes line-of-sight.

Mr. Rogers recommended reviewing the North Fifth Avenue yellow curb designation that previously restricted parking near Penn Avenue for a bus stop that is no longer in use. Removing this restriction would provide two additional parking spaces in the business district. Mr. Rogers also noted unnecessary restrictions on North Sixth Avenue for a loading zone.

Mr. Rogers questioned the no right turn on red restriction from Fourth Avenue onto Penn Avenue. Mr. Lincoln reported that this is a PennDOT signal permit that more than likely restricts this activity due to line-of-sight issues.

Adjournment

Motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 7:22 p.m. by Mayor Kaag and seconded by Mr. Grassley. **Motion carried.**

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Madeira
Borough Secretary