

BOROUGH OF WEST READING TRAFFIC & INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE

SEPTEMBER 14, 2022

The Borough of West Reading Traffic & Infrastructure Committee met on Wednesday, September 14, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. at Borough Hall with the following persons present: Chairman Christopher Lincoln; Council Member Patrick Kaag; Chief of Police Wayne Holben; Mayor Samantha Kaag; Public Works Director Kerry Grassley; Borough Manager Dean Murray; and Borough Secretary Cynthia Madeira.

Visitors: Philip Wert, Resident Karen Livingood, Resident (via telephone)

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

Public Comment

Mr. Wert expressed concerns regarding the intersection of North Sixth Avenue and Reading Avenue with regards to line-of-sight issues exiting Sixth Avenue onto the heavily traveled Reading Avenue. A recommendation was made to modify the direction of travel on Sixth Avenue to one-way from Reading Avenue to Court Street. Mr. Lincoln noted ongoing discussions of either permanently prohibiting parking or limiting the direction of travel on Court Street for safety purposes and a desire to determine this outcome prior to potentially increasing traffic on this narrow roadway. The tentative plans to create a Pocket Park on North Sixth Avenue between Penn Avenue and Court Street are on hold pending the outcome of redevelopment plans of the shopping center parcel. A reconfiguration of the current Sixth Avenue dumpster placement and loading zone would be preferred prior to creating a Pocket Park feature. A four-way stop would be difficult to justify, one of the criteria to meet would be 300 vehicles per hour for a number of hours per day, and both roadways need to be similarly classified in all four directions. One-way away from Reading Avenue would be a realistic option if the area between Penn Avenue and Court Street is closed.

Mr. Wert noted the October 24th soft opening plans of Kimberton Whole Foods in Wyomissing Borough that will more than likely increase traffic to the Eighth and Reading Avenue intersection. Mr. Lincoln recommended that the Borough Manager inquire with the Borough of Wyomissing to determine if a traffic analysis was completed that would require modifications to this traffic signal.

Approval of Minutes

Motion made to approve the Traffic and Infrastructure Committee minutes of August 10, 2022. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Mr. Grassley. **Motion carried.**

Old Business

Cherry Street & Court Street Traffic Modifications – Mr. Kaag noted a meeting between himself, Mr. Grassley and the owners of West Reading Tavern and provided images of the intersections of Fifth Avenue through Eighth Avenue and Cherry Street as well as an image of a box truck making a delivery in the 600 block and the difficulty of a standard sized vehicle navigating around the parked box truck. It was noted that the flashing was modified on the structure adjacent to the Fifth Avenue and Cherry Street intersection due to the number of delivery vehicles that caused damage to this structure. Mr. Kaag indicated the primary concern of the businesses is the ability to park behind their business to receive deliveries and to allow the frequent parking requirement of service workers. The garages along this roadway are primarily used for storage. Adding Cherry and Court Streets to the list of Snow Emergency routes would not eliminate snow plowing issues, and the option to create loading zones would not support the need for service vehicles to park for an extended period of time. The two-hour temporary loading zone established for the church's use near Seventh Avenue on Saturday afternoons could remain. It was thought that a one-way direction of travel, east to west, could allow parking on the north side of the alley while maintaining a sufficient lane of travel. A comprehensive review of each block along Cherry and Court Streets are needed to determine if a one-way direction of travel is warranted.

Delaney Circle – Mr. Unger reached out to LTAP this afternoon. Therefore, we do not have an answer to the request to shift the right-turn-only lane onto Fifth Avenue and the pedestrian crosswalk to the center of the traffic circle. Further conversation was deferred to next month.

Utility Billing Policy – Mr. Lincoln noted concerns from administrative staff that rental property owners are taking advantage of staff as their collection agency. The proposed water, sewer, and refuse billing policy was reviewed noting the following:

- An option to provide the tenant an additional copy of the water, sewer, and refuse invoice would be granted if agreed to by both the owner and the tenant. The Borough would have discretion to revoke this privilege if the tenant fails to make payments in full prior to the termination of services. The number of attempts made by staff to collect these fees was noted with a request to notify the rental property owner five days prior to termination of services to allow the owner to urge payment by the tenant or to remit payment to avoid termination of services.
- A meter reading was recommended to be provided when a tenant vacates the property in order to generate an interim invoice to be paid in full within thirty-days.
- A budget payment plan option that would allow residents to budget average monthly payments as opposed to quarterly payments. The monthly payment would be adjusted should the account incur high usage and on an annual basis.
- Parameters to enter into a payment plan for outstanding balances would require a 25% down payment for residential properties, and a 50% down payment for commercial properties. The remaining balance would be required to be paid monthly within 6-12 months for residential properties and 3-6 months for commercial properties. A limit of two failed payment agreements would be allowed at which time the amount must be paid in full. Any new bills must be paid in full in addition to making the agreed-upon monthly payments.
- Aspects of the payment plan agreement were reviewed with unnecessary sections to be removed. Sections ten through eighteen were recommended to be reviewed by the solicitor.

The noted changes will be made for further review next month.

New Business

Council Chambers A/V Upgrades – Mr. Murray shared highlights of a new quote to improve audio and visual upgrades for public meetings in the Council Chamber room totaling \$12,818. These improvements would allow meeting participants to share presentations for projects such as land development plans. The current speakers and microphones are guaranteed to successfully interface with the new system. Haverford Systems, Inc. will be requested to attend next month's meeting to answer questions such as consumer versus commercial grade display options, the ability to focus audio and video on the speaker, and visitor access security.

Public Comment

Mr. Wert requested that the yellow curbing be refreshed and lines painted on the street to deter vehicles from blocking the line-of-sight at the Tulpehocken Avenue and Walnut Street intersection.

Chief Holben requested trimming of the tree that is blocking the school zone speed limit sign located on the southbound side of on Fifth Avenue. Mr. Grassley reported that this tree is slated to be removed next week.

Adjournment

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

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Madeira
Borough Secretary