

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

**DECEMBER 14, 2022**

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

**Visitors:** Karen Livingood, Resident (via Zoom) Rachel Stevens, Resident  
Chris Wary, Resident

The meeting was called to order at 6:04 p.m.

### **Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

### **Approval of Minutes**

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

### **Old Business**

**Sidewalk Repairs** – A moratorium had been established several years ago by a previous Mayor that instructed the Code Department to refrain from requiring property owners to repair public sidewalks damaged by Borough tree roots. It is understood that sidewalk repairs are the responsibility of the property owner, however, when a Borough tree causes damage to the sidewalk the responsible party becomes unclear. Mr. Moyer reported that the Shade Tree Commission was requested by the Traffic and Infrastructure Committee several years ago to create a policy that would mitigate this conflict between the Borough and property owner. The policy evaluates the tree and then based on that grading provides a course of action for sidewalk repairs. A 50/50 sidewalk repair program with a maximum Borough contribution to offset the cost to repair sidewalk panels damaged by Borough tree roots was discussed. Matching funds have not been allocated within the proposed 2023 budget. However, it was thought that a portion of tree trimming funds could be used towards this program. The question arose as to the allocation of funds towards a 50/50 sidewalk program becoming the burden of all taxpayers. Mr. Moyer stated that the Code Department has been enforcing sidewalk repairs during property transfer inspections if the damage is not related to Borough tree roots. The progression of enforcement would begin in areas where trees have been removed, during property transfer inspections, and then street by street inspections. Borough Council will be asked to determine a course of action.

Motion to recommend Borough Council to reaffirm sidewalk repair guidelines and determine financial responsibility as it relates to sidewalk panel replacements impacted by Borough tree roots. **Moved** by Mr. Grassley and seconded by Ms. Kaag. **Motion carried.**

Mr. Moyer departed the meeting at 6:35 p.m.

**Council Chamber Audio/Video Upgrades** – A revised proposal was provided totaling \$9,450.98. It was noted that \$25,000 had been budgeted for upgrades in 2022.

Motion to recommend to Borough Council the approval of the proposal from Haverford Systems, Inc., dated 11/15/2022 for audio/video upgrades to Council Chambers totaling \$9,450.98. **Moved** by Mr. Grassley and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried.**

**Delaney Circle Improvements** – The most recent plan update shrinks the cartway of the circle and modifies all approaches, except Fifth Avenue, to stop intersections to slow traffic and bring more awareness to pedestrians. Regarding the liability of removing the crosswalk to the center of the circle, the solicitor had

indicated that it would be a judgement call made by the Borough. There was a discussion regarding moving Delaney's frog statue and memorial to a safer, more appropriate location such as the triangular section adjacent to the circle between North Fifth Avenue and Tulpehocken Avenue or to the park area. It was noted that December of 2023 would be the ten-year anniversary of Delaney's passing. A decision would be made internally on the alternate location prior to approaching the family for feedback. Should these items be relocated, the engineer would be requested to revise the plan to remove the crosswalk to the circle.

**Children at Play Signage** – Mr. Grassley reported that the signs have been ordered and will be installed in appropriate locations.

**400 Block Chestnut Street** – As a follow up to last month's discussion measurements were obtained to determine if a double yellow line should be added to better control traffic and pedestrian safety. It was determined that the average 8.5' wide travel lane would not support the installation of a double yellow line, and single yellow lines are now prohibited by PennDOT. It was noted that installing center lines in the hopes of slowing traffic could potentially reduce the line of sight between parked vehicles. Chief Holben indicated that the three recent pedestrian accidents were not related to speed and that educational flyers have been hand delivered to each residence within this block. Chief Holben also noted that the school district, with the assistance of AAA, educated students on pedestrian safety.

**Handicapped Parking Space Applications** – It was noted that these types of applications are being reviewed by this committee on a quarterly basis. Chief Holben provided recommendations for the following handicapped parking space applications:

- **309 Sycamore Road** – There are two existing space designations of four available spaces within the 300-400 blocks of Sycamore Road. One of the existing spaces near Parkview Road is no longer needed. The applicant requested designation of the fourth space from Parkview Road on the south side of Sycamore Road. It was noted that the existing space designation near Parkview Road will be moved to accommodate this request.
- **325 Kline Street** – The applicant currently has a space designated near Fourth Avenue and requested relocation of this space closer to her home within the fifth space from Fourth Avenue, on the south side. It was noted that only one space may be designated within this block.
- **728 Franklin Street** – There are no current handicapped space designations within this block that would support a total of three spaces. The applicant does have available parking in the rear however, the stairway is too steep for her to navigate. The space that was previously designated for her mother was requested to be posted again. The ninth space on Franklin Street from Lakeview Drive, on the south side was recommended.
- **100 S. Second Avenue** – The applicant requested a space designation within the 200 block of Franklin Street on the north side. There are no current handicapped space designations within this block that would support one space. The first space from South Second Avenue on the north side was recommended.
- **327 Spruce Street** – There are no current handicapped space designations within this block that would support a total of two spaces. The applicant requested a space on the south side of Spruce Street, second space from Fourth Avenue.

Motion to recommend Borough Council to approve the five requested handicapped parking space designations as recommended by the Police Chief. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Ms. Kaag. **Motion carried.**

## **New Business**

**Penn Avenue Paid Parking** – Several years ago an update to a parking study had been completed, and a part of this study reviewed the potential for paid parking along Penn Avenue. The 2015 study recommended

increasing turnover of on-street parking spaces by implementing paid parking on Penn Avenue to push longer-term parking to off-street parking areas. The 2018 parking meter study was provided to the committee tonight and recommended to be reviewed for discussion next month. Parking meter rates in other municipalities will be reviewed to compare the rates that were quoted roughly five years ago within the study. It was noted that on-street parking rates should be higher than the paid parking lots. Aspects to consider prior to implementing a paid on-street parking program were: 1) the cost to purchase two kiosks per block, per side; and 2) the need for increased parking enforcement manpower. Paid parking apps were discussed noting that Park-Mobile should be up and running soon. Mr. Murray indicated that the Flowbird App remains somewhat unreliable and would be phased out once the Park-Mobile App is in operation. It was thought that a clean break from Flowbird to Park-Mobile may cause less confusion.

Mr. Wary noted issues finding parking near his home in the 300 block of Franklin Street and recommended the Borough provide an overflow parking lot at Rite-Aid. It was also recommended to lower the street sweeping fine from \$50. It was noted that paid parking revenue at the Rite-Aid lot is shared with the owner of the lot and the fine for street sweeping is established to encourage compliance with MS4 permitting requirements.

**Penn Avenue Variable Message Sign** – Chief Holben requested feedback prior to purchasing a \$200 part to repair the electronic sign situated within the 200 block of Penn Avenue noting an annual \$1,500 fee to program messages from a computer and collect data from the flashing speed limit sign situated in the 300 block of Penn Avenue. A replacement variable message sign would cost roughly \$18,000. It was recommended to review the existing sign to determine if it's feasible to program messages without the need for an annual program fee, and if so, purchase the part to continue use of the existing sign.

**FCC Broadband Internet Map** – Mr. Lincoln noted the recent release of a national broadband map of the country that depicts areas without internet coverage and encouraged everyone to review the map for accuracy. There are areas within West Reading, such as the hospital and the Borough Hall building, that indicate there is no internet coverage. The owners of these properties would need to report the inaccuracies by January 13, 2023. This map is being used to distribute funds from the infrastructure bill that was passed to areas that need broadband internet.

### **Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

### **Adjournment**

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 8:03 p.m. by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Mr. Grassley. **Motion carried.**

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Madeira  
Borough Secretary