

BOROUGH OF WEST READING TRAFFIC COMMITTEE

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2015

The Borough of West Reading Traffic Committee met on Thursday, November 12, 2015 at 6:00 p.m. at Borough Hall, with the following persons present: Chair Chris Lincoln, Police Chief Stephen Powell, Borough Manager Rich Sichler, Public Works Director Dean Murray, and Parking Enforcement Officer Jason Witman.

Visitors: Council President Phil Wert
Council Vice-President Carl Garman
Nicholas Roman (N. 6th Avenue)
Maria Roman (N. 6th Avenue)
Police Sgt. Ryan Phillips

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

Public Comment

Nicholas and Maria Roman spoke about the lack of parking on N. 6th Avenue which became an issue when the ownership of the shopping center changed a few years ago. The problem is compounded by the parking restrictions on Penn Avenue which causes the business patrons to park off of the Avenue. They noted that they are often forced to park on the lot adjacent to McDonalds. It was noted that the new owner of the shopping center had offered to rent spaces on the lot, however it was not clear if that is still an option.

Mr. Lincoln told the Romans that the Committee is looking at permit parking as well as reviewing the recommendations made in the recently completed parking study that may help their situation. Mr. Sichler also spoke about the alley behind their home that would give them access to off street parking. He noted that the alley was never paved and is currently grass covered, but it is an actual alley according to maps. This could be discussed with their neighbors if they are interested in off street parking.

United Public Safety Presentation

John Holland (retired NJ Police Chief) was on hand to provide information and demonstrate how the handheld parking device would work for the Borough. He noted the following:

- Ticket is printed on polyvinyl paper that will not tear when wet and the ink will not smudge. It has a built in thermal printer that will print about 65 tickets per roll (paper cost is \$.04 per ticket). Also, the ink will not fade and the paper will not darken in the heat.
- It is a cellular device that uploads the data to a 'cloud' as soon as the ticket is printed.
- It is GPS assisted and will auto-fill the location of the vehicle.
- When the plate number and state are entered, scofflaw notifications (if any) automatically are shown on the screen.
- Has a camera that will take up to 3 pictures per violation; one picture will be automatically printed on the ticket.
- Violators can go online to see the ticket information and see all three pictures. This will generally stop most from trying to fight the ticket because the violation is clearly shown in the pictures.
- An 'e-commerce' site (which is included in the cost) will allow them to pay the ticket online and charges a \$1.00 convenience fee as well as 3.9% of the ticket cost to the violator. The Borough can choose not to use this payment system if so desired. Their experience is that 70% of people will pay the ticket online.

- Instead of chalking the tire, a picture is taken of the valve stem and a timer is set for 2 hours and will notify the PEO when the time has elapsed.
- The system also allows for bar coded parking permits that residents can apply for online. While their request is being processed, a temporary permit can be printed out. Once the resident is in the system, the parking permit can be scanned to give all of the information to the PEO and will automatically fill in all of the information for a ticket, if necessary.
- The system will create a list of unpaid tickets which will be exported to the DMV to acquire owner information. Once the information is received, the system will create a state citation which can be e-filed directly to the court. (Additional cost of \$29 per month)
- A warning notice can be generated if so desired and mailed out to the violator.
- The company builds the initial cloud with Borough information. The cost to partner with Verizon for the transmission of data is \$299 per year.
- The company is located in Horsham and can have a replacement unit delivered the same day if the unit is not functioning for any reason. They provide 24/7 technical support.

Mr. Holland left at this point and discussion ensued regarding the pros and cons. The system would allow the PEO to issue more tickets and have less clerical work. Office staff would also have less clerical work to do with the processing of the tickets. Cost is \$8232 however with the e-file component it would be \$7872. The software package is \$199 per month as well as the data cost through Verizon of \$299 per year.

Moved by Mr. Sichler and seconded by Chief Powell to recommend to Council the purchase of the ticketing system. **Motion carried.**

Buttonwood Street Bridge Detour

Chief Powell had gathered statistics regarding accidents in the detour area from August 1st to November 10th and compared them to the same time frame in 2014 which indicated that incidents are up by 30%, a significant increase. It has been proposed to increase the timing of the traffic signals at 4th and Penn and 5th and Penn to help alleviate traffic backups. Chief Powell also commented that he will no longer assign an officer for traffic duty at 4th and Penn because it's too dangerous now that it gets dark earlier. He also suggested that the barricades at 3rd and Penn could be put out earlier to help prevent illegal turns.

School Zone Signage

In response to Mrs. Kulesa's concern regarding lack of signage on S. 4th at the school, it was noted that an engineering study would be required before anything could be changed. Chief Powell said that he will be meeting with the school district soon and he can speak to them about paying for this or perhaps cost sharing. Mr. Sichler indicated that he would speak with Mr. Unger for a recommendation.

Traffic Calming

Previous comments regarding excessive speeding on Kline Street prompted discussion regarding traffic calming devices. Speed humps were mentioned, however this becomes an issue with snow plowing and it was noted that the placement of one would not be sufficient, however the street is too short for two. Also noted was the inability to determine the speed of vehicles because police are not permitted to use radar devices. Speeding in alleys was discussed further and several suggestions were made:

- 'Slow' could be painted at the top of the alley.
- Some parking spaces could be moved so they are not all on the same side of the street.
- Install adhesive rumble strips (Rich will look at obtaining pricing).

Street Cleaning Program

Mr. Murray indicated that he would like to add the following streets to the already well established program for 2016:

- 4th Wednesday
 - Tulpehocken Avenue
 - Holland Square
 - 300 Cherry Street
 - S. 2nd from Penn Avenue to Spruce Street
- 1st and 3rd Thursdays
 - Spruce Street from Linden Lane to 5th Avenue and 6th to Lakeview
 - Reading Avenue from the dead end to 5th Avenue and from Delaney Circle to Hill Avenue
- 2nd and 4th Thursdays
 - Franklin Street from S. 3rd to S. 8th Avenue
 - Playground Drive
 - S. 5th Avenue from Museum to Playground Drive

Mr. Murray asked that all of the streets be placed in the ordinance, but if funding isn't available to place all of the necessary signage, then just a portion can be activated.

Discussion ensued about the temporary "No Parking" signs that are placed when the Crew does work on the streets. The signs need to state that it is the entire block, or each space should be marked so it's easier for residents to determine if it is just one space or the entire block. Numbering all of the parking spaces in the borough was also discussed briefly – particularly on Penn Avenue.

Alley Parking Problem

Mr. Sichler spoke about an issue the trash hauler is having getting through an alley because of vehicles being parked there. The alley is off of Wayne Avenue, just west of S. 7th Avenue and runs behind Holland Square. He asked that parking be restricted in this area. **Moved** by Chief Powell and seconded by Mr. Murray to recommend to Council that parking be restricted on trash and recycling days in the north/south alley east of Holland Square from Wayne Avenue up to the 'T'. **Motion carried.**

It was also noted that there is an issue with signage on the north side of the 700 block of Penn Avenue. There is a long stretch that doesn't have a sign for 2-hour parking. Also, in that same stretch, there are no parking stall lines. Mr. Murray will look into have the lines painted and a sign placed.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cathy Hoffman
Administrative Assistant