

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

SEPTEMBER 13, 2023

The Borough of West Reading Traffic & Infrastructure Committee met on Wednesday, September 13, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. at Borough Hall with the following persons present: Chairman Christopher Lincoln; Council Member Patrick Kaag; Mayor Samantha Kaag; Public Works Director Kerry Grassley; Borough Manager Dean Murray; Chief of Police Richard Tornielli; and Borough Secretary Cynthia Madeira.

Visitors:

Karen Livingood, Resident	Maureen Hasty, Resident
Autumn Manley, Resident	Terrie Taylor, Resident
Dale Miller, Resident	Thomas Urban, Resident
John Turner, Resident & Business Owner	Magdalyne Bruckner, Visitor

The meeting was called to order at 5:59 p.m.

Public Comment

Mrs. Taylor noted her informal attendance at this meeting as a resident, parent, and school board member, noting a lack of school crossing guards on the north side of the Borough. Children from the 200 and 300 blocks of Reading Avenue and Summit Street must walk an extra block, crossing a busy intersection that is not a four-way stop, adjacent to a convicted sex offender residence to Delaney Circle for crossing guard assistance. They then proceed down Fifth Avenue to Chestnut Street with signaled device intersections to a crossing guard assisted intersection to walk another extra block to the Fourth Avenue access to the school. Mrs. Taylor noted that West Reading Borough is the only borough of the eighteen districts in the County that does not reimburse or share crossing guard expenses with the school district. Typically, the municipality shares 50% to 100% of the expense. West Reading Borough has not paid for school crossing guards since the 2014-2015 school year. As a parent her concern is her child crossing the Fourth and Reading Avenue intersection. She inquired with the school district as to adding a crossing guard to this intersection, their response was that there are no funds available to add crossing guards. She suggested an on-duty police officer to monitor the Fourth and Penn Avenue intersection to control the traffic device if needed and cite pedestrians that do not follow the crossing signal. She noted that one of the lighted crossing signals is currently not working at this intersection to cross Penn Avenue. The timeframes requested were 8:00 a.m. to 8:15 a.m. and 2:45 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. Mr. Lincoln was hopeful that police presence at this intersection will make drivers more aware of their surroundings and funding of an additional crossing guard can be discussed during upcoming budget meetings.

Mr. Tobias thanked the Public Works Department and the Traffic and Infrastructure Committee for revisions to the Lakeview Drive and Spruce Street intersection, noting that the elimination of one parking space has improved safety. He shared some confusion as to the allowed direction of travel on Holland Square, noting delivery vehicles seem to be going in the wrong direction. Consideration was requested to limit the direction of travel on Holland Square to one-way and to install a stop sign on the north access of this roadway. Mr. Lincoln thanked Mr. Tobias for bringing this to our attention and noted further discussion planned later in the agenda.

Mrs. Hasty inquired about the recent pedestrian death on Penn Avenue and wondered if there was anything that could be improved to prevent future incidents. Mr. Lincoln was unaware of all the details surrounding this incident. It was his understanding that the person crossed Penn Avenue mid-block at night in the rain. To force people to cross at crosswalks would require fencing which is not feasible based on the on-street parking amenities.

Ms. Manley recommended the installation of a four-way stop at the Reading and Sixth Avenue intersection based on the number of incidents there that are in part caused by motorists parking in the yellow zone for takeout orders. Mr. Lincoln noted that our Public Works Department met with a state Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP) representative to study this intersection and found that it was not warranted to become an all-way stop based on not meeting the criteria of similar flows of traffic. It was noted that it is difficult to enforce parking in the yellow zone because the cars are parked for a few minutes while picking up takeout orders. Speeding was also noted as an issue that contributes to accidents on this roadway with minimal traffic control devices.

Ms. Manley's profession is in the field of sustainability and is currently reviewing Electric Vehicle (EV) Chargers that are presently not sustainable. The biggest issue is infrastructure, and she recommended the installation of one charging station in the vicinity of Reading Avenue, possibly partnering with McDonald's restaurant to encourage visitors into the Borough. The three levels of EV Chargers are:

- Level 1 is an at-home charger.
- Level 2 is the most common public charger with a full charge in roughly four hours.
- Level 3 is DC/Fast Chargers with a full charge in roughly twenty minutes.

Tesla Chargers are specific to Tesla and Electrify America Chargers can charge both Tesla and other EV users but statistically are not well maintained. Locally owned and operated level 2 chargers are not conducive to road trips and various levels of ownership contribute to issues with maintenance and reliability. A map of locally owned and operated chargers within five miles of the Borough located twenty, which is a large discrepancy in the number of EVs in the area. Chargepoint service and software financing options as well as rebate programs were provided noting that an electrician would need to be hired separately. An outright purchase cost of a level 2 charger would be \$9,000 to \$18,000. The rate charged per kilowatt hour can be set at different levels for residents versus non-residents, and the average fast charge rate is \$0.45 per hour. She recommended a level 2 charger for a trial basis. Mayor Kaag requested a presentation to be made to the Environmental Advisory Council. A copy of the PowerPoint presentation was requested for further consideration.

Mr. Miller spoke of the trash hauler and neighbor's difficulties navigating the narrow Plane Alley roadway due to an influx of vehicles in the neighborhood. He asked if parking enforcement could be ramped up to remedy the issue. Mr. Murray requested that he report vehicles blocking the lane of travel to the police department to document the incident and direct an officer to the area. Mr. Miller asked about progress on charging households for an excess number of vehicles. Mr. Lincoln noted that the overall permit parking system needs to be revamped, and a part of that would be a cost scale per vehicle per household.

Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the Traffic and Infrastructure Committee minutes of August 9, 2023. **Moved** by Mr. Grassley and seconded by Mayor Kaag. **Motion carried.**

Old Business

Sidewalk Repairs – Mr. Lincoln noted the lengthy information provided by the Mayor this afternoon on this subject and recommended tabling this discussion until the committee has time to review. A noted goal would be to have a policy finalized for implementation early next year. Mayor Kaag noted her planned attendance at a Mayor's Roundtable with the same topic of discussion and will report back to the committee on those discussions.

Handicapped Parking Applications – There are no new applications this quarter, however, there is one application from last quarter that Officer-in-Charge Chad Marks had difficulty connecting with the resident

to discuss off-street parking capabilities. The request to relocate an existing space designation is in line with prior approvals.

Motion to recommend Borough Council to approve the relocation of the existing handicapped parking space designation within the 100 block of Tulpehocken Avenue. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Mr. Grassley. **Motion carried.**

Motorcycle Parking & Permitting – Mr. Lincoln recapped previous discussions of motorcycles sharing a parking space and permit visibility on a motorcycle parked on a public street that is under cover. Chief Tornielli noted the license plate should be visible if parked on a public street and generally regulations regarding covered vehicles on public streets would be addressed in an ordinance. Sergeant Marks had pulled some information together, Chief Tornielli was asked to review the information to provide additional feedback. Further discussion was tabled until next month.

Lofts at Narrow Elm Street Intersection – Mr. Lincoln recapped previous discussions noting the owner of the Lofts at Narrow installing, as requested, a stop sign to slow traffic exiting the Lofts at Narrow parking lot onto Elm Street. A written complaint has been received recommending the installation of a speed bump to slow traffic since the stop sign has not accomplished this goal. Mr. Lincoln noted that speed bumps cannot be installed on public streets and recommended requesting the owner to install a speed bump on his property. Mr. Murray will contact the owner to make this request.

Mrs. Taylor departed the meeting at 6:41 p.m.

Yarnell Street Parking Restriction – Parking restrictions on Grape Street were discussed to improve trash hauler access to this narrow roadway. It was noted that one day per month would conflict with street sweeping. To improve access to Grape Street it was thought that single spaces could be restricted on Yarnell Street. Staff were recommended to review the area in question to make recommendations on parking restrictions. Mr. Grassley intends to follow the trash hauler on Friday to better understand the difficulties they experience in this area.

Lakeview Drive & Spruce Street – As noted by Mr. Tobias earlier tonight modifications have been made to this intersection to improve safety. Mr. Lincoln asked if there was any feedback from area residents. Mr. Grassley indicated that he spoke with the adjacent property owner prior to making the change who welcomed the modification to improve their line of sight exiting their driveway.

Temporary Road Closure Policy – Mr. Lincoln noted Sergeant Marks research and form creation to better communicate temporary road closures between contractors and departments. The form is currently in use without a fee and Chief Tornielli felt this was a good way to coordinate efforts.

Motion to recommend Borough Council to implement a policy for road closures that includes the identified request form. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Mr. Grassley. **Motion carried.**

Third Avenue and Pine Street Intersection – Mr. Lincoln recapped a discussion in July to improve the safety of this intersection, as prompted by resident concern, and the inability to create an all-way stop based on not meeting the criteria of similar flows of traffic. Mr. Murray indicated that the resident reached out the following day apologizing for not recognizing the “Cross Traffic Does Not Stop” signage. Mr. Murray noted previous complaints received regarding bus stop safety. Mr. Grassley recommended communicating with the bus company to encourage the bus driver to take control of the intersection to control the flow of traffic.

Mrs. Hasty suggested eliminating the Pine Street portion from Sunset Road to Third Avenue to create a pocket park. The parking spaces could be moved over to Sunset Road, and there is an adjacent existing

triangular grassy area with a Cherry Tree. The technical aspects of this idea need to be reviewed and discussed with the engineer and solicitor.

New Business

Juniata Street & Holland Square Direction of Travel – Mr. Lincoln noted the earlier discussion of converting Holland Square from a two-way to a one-way roadway based on the narrow width that does not support two-way traffic. It was recommended to fill out PennDOT's form TE-106 One-Way Street Study, draft an ordinance amendment and install two Do Not Enter signs, one Stop Sign and two One-Way signs. Mr. Murray will share the proposed changes with the Borough of Wyomissing's Manager to potentially implement changes simultaneously to the Wyomissing Borough half of the loop.

Last month a request was made to modify the direction of travel on Juniata Street to one-way from Buttonwood Street to prevent damage by the trash hauler to a garage that is located across from a utility pole. It was thought that the change would have a relatively minor impact on residents on that block.

Motion to recommend the Public Works Director to present one-way changes to Holland Square and Juniata Street to Borough Council. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Mayor Kaag. **Motion carried.**

Public Works Monument – A motion was made to amend the agenda to add a topic for discussion regarding a Public Works Memorial. **Moved** by Mayor Kaag and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried.**

Mr. Grassley referred to an image of a proposed memorial that would be funded by multiple municipalities and the Reading Area Water Authority who plans to donate the drinking fountain. A request was made to locate the memorial within the West Reading Park area potentially near the Pickleball Courts and adjacent to the proposed terraced seating. Plaques to memorialize Public Works Members could be added to the brick wall. Feedback is needed from Borough Council.

Adjournment

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 7:07 p.m. by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Chief Tornielli. **Motion carried.**

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Madeira
Borough Secretary