

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

**MARCH 8, 2023**

The Borough of West Reading Traffic & Infrastructure Committee met on Wednesday, March 8, 2023, 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; Fire Chief and Code Enforcement Officer Chad Moyer; Borough Manager Dean Murray; and Borough Secretary Cynthia Madeira.

**Visitors:** Karen Livingood, Resident James Rogers, Resident  
Maureen Hasty, Resident

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m.

### **Public Comment**

Mrs. Livingood expressed concern about resuming enforcement of sidewalk repairs and the hardship this may cause retired residents that are on a fixed income. She asked that consideration be given to corner property owners that have sidewalks fronting two streets with multiple trees causing damage to numerous sidewalk panels. Mrs. Livingood asked that a flyer or announcement of some sort be provided to residents to allow them time to prepare for this expense.

### **Approval of Minutes**

Motion to approve the Traffic and Infrastructure Committee minutes of February 8, 2023. **Moved** by Chief Holben and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried.**

### **Old Business**

**Sidewalk Repairs** – Mr. Lincoln stated that Borough Council has requested implementation parameters regarding the potential funding of an incentive type sidewalk repair program that relates to Borough owned tree root damage. Borough Council has not yet expressed their desired approach to either fully fund the repairs, a cost sharing program, or requiring the property owner to fully fund repairs. Mr. Murray indicated that with receipt of technology grant funding from the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency the Administration portion of budgeted funds totaling roughly \$12,000 to replace the server could be reallocated towards sidewalk repairs. The legality to limit funding of this type of program to residential owner-occupied properties would need to be posed to the solicitor. A 50/50 program up to a maximum of \$1,000 per property was thought to be reasonable except for corner properties where a per tree aspect could be recognized. Fixed income residents with severely damaged sidewalks could be offered a repayment plan through their quarterly water, sewer, and refuse account.

From an enforcement standpoint, Mr. Moyer indicated that the program would be best received on a case-by-case basis as opposed to identifying violations by block. It was thought that non-tree related sidewalk repairs could be addressed during rental or property transfer inspections. Mr. Moyer indicated that enforcement would be as flexible as possible in obtaining the goal of compliance. Mr. Moyer was requested to identify ten high impact sidewalk areas for next month's meeting to begin creating a program surrounding these instances. Mr. Grassley will research the average costs related to sidewalk panel replacement, and Mr. Kaag will review grant funding opportunities.

**Alley Parking – Twilight and Wedge Alley** – As a follow up to last month's discussions Mr. Murray spoke with the owner of the triangular shaped garage property who was not opposed to the Borough posting no parking signs on the side of the structure. Enforcement of parking on at least a portion of private

property or right-of-way was discussed. Chief Holben noted Section 455-55 of the Zoning Ordinance that refers to the authority of the Fire and Police Chief to post fire lanes as “No Parking”. This section was thought to pertain to commercial properties. Chief Moyer indicated that vehicles parked adjacent to the garage structure is a safety issue with regards to fire vehicle access. Mr. Grassley offered to paint yellow hash lines and post “No Parking” signs on the garage structure to begin enforcement.

**Bulk Trash Collection** – In an effort to better control bulk trash collection to keep resident costs down a tag system was discussed last month. The tag system would provide a convenience to residents to place items out on any regular trash collection day as opposed to waiting for the first Friday of the month. Mr. Moyer indicated that the labor-intensive task of reviewing trash disposal practices throughout the Borough prior to collection is nearly impossible. However, a tag system where the hauler leaves a bulk item behind would be more efficiently enforced. Mr. Grassley noted that a tag system would alleviate the hauler’s need to determine if a structure contains multiple units. A description of the bulk item and address for collection should be required when purchasing the tag. Tracking and distribution of bulk tags would be handled by the Administration Department. It was thought that there should be a limit of two items per household per week. A free bulk collection day was considered in either the spring or fall. A draft policy with logistical information was requested for review next month that would include a fee of \$15 per tag. Material research was also requested for bright colored all weather paper.

## **New Business**

**Handicapped Parking Space Application** – A single new application was received this quarter for the 100 block of S. Second Avenue. Currently there are no handicapped space designations within this block that would support three spaces, and there are no available off-street parking opportunities for the applicant. Chief Holben recommended placement of a space designation on the east side of South Second Avenue six spaces north of Chestnut Street.

Motion to recommend the approval of a handicapped space designation in front of 117 S. Second Avenue. **Moved** by Mr. Grassley and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried.**

**Event Road Closure** – Mr. Murray requested feedback on accommodating Mr. Woodward’s request to expand the area to host the French Fry Festival this year. It was noted that last year South Sixth Avenue was closed from Penn Avenue to Franklin Street including access to Cherry Street from Sixth Avenue. Mr. Woodward initially requested the closure of Penn Avenue but has since rescinded this request. His newest request is to close Sixth Avenue from Penn Avenue to Franklin Street and Franklin Street to Kent Way. The ramifications of closing access to the 500 and 600 blocks of Cherry Street and Franklin Street were discussed. The closure of North Sixth Avenue raised concerns of increased pedestrian traffic crossing Penn Avenue; however, it was noted that most visitors will be parking on the paid parking lot and crossing Penn Avenue. Chief Holben recommended a setup like the Farmers’ Market on Penn Avenue where the right lane is closed with vendors setup in the parking spaces and visitor access is from the sidewalk area. It was thought that sidewalk congestion issues may bring pedestrians around the vendors and into the flow of traffic. Chief Moyer was not opposed to closing Franklin Street as long as a driving lane is maintained. It was thought that half of the intersection of South Sixth Avenue and Franklin Street could be closed onto Franklin Street to Clark Alley with vendors setup in the parking spaces with visitor access from the sidewalk. Mr. Murray will share the options of adding North Sixth Avenue or a portion of Franklin Street with Mr. Woodward.

**Pedestrian Safety Improvements** – Mr. Lincoln referred to written resident concerns regarding the three following intersections:

- **Penn & Third Avenues** – Due to the slope of Penn Avenue, there is insufficient motorist notification of this 4-way crosswalk area in both the east and west bound lanes of travel. Additional pedestrian crossing signs were suggested. It was thought by committee members that the crosswalks should be removed that cross Penn Avenue noting that traffic is prohibited to turn left onto Penn Avenue from both North and South Third Avenue. Mr. Lincoln stated that this is a long unsignalized crossing distance with high traffic volumes, and that PennDOT would need to be consulted prior to making any changes. Should the Penn Avenue crosswalks be removed, the handicapped ramp corner accesses should be modified to only access Third Avenue.
- **Reading & Fourth Avenues** – An all-way stop was recommended by the resident based on low-visibility. It was thought that the criteria would not be met to convert this intersection to a multi-way stop, and a stop sign on Fourth Avenue from Penn Avenue would be apt to back traffic up onto Penn Avenue. Line-of-sight distances were recommended to be reviewed for the existing parking stall configurations.
- **Franklin Street & South Third Avenue** – An all-way stop was also recommended by the resident for this intersection based on the slope of Franklin Street. The existing three-way stop was designed to accommodate the flow of truck traffic up the hill on Franklin Street, especially during times of inclement weather.

Mr. Murray noted an incident recently where a Public Works vehicle double parked momentarily within the 400 block of Chestnut Street to terminate water service during school bus unloading. It was reported that certain school buses double park in lieu of safely pulling up to the curb to load or unload students. Chief Holben offered to contact the Superintendent to request the prevention of double parking along Chestnut Street. Mr. Grassley has instructed the crew members to avoid double parking especially within this block.

### **Public Comment**

Mrs. Livingood thanked the committee for the informality of this meeting that allows residents to provide feedback.

Mrs. Hasty noted the trash hauler's new route of travel on Timber Alley that has been causing curb damage. Mr. Lincoln noted that the Borough is working with the hauler to correct these issues around the Borough.

### **Adjournment**

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 8:01 p.m. by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Chief Holben.

**Motion carried.**

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Madeira  
Borough Secretary