

BOROUGH OF WEST READING TRAFFIC & INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE

JULY 12, 2023

The Borough of West Reading Traffic & Infrastructure Committee met on Wednesday, July 12, 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; and Borough Secretary Cynthia Madeira.

Visitors:

Karen Livingood, Resident
Blake Tobias, Resident (via Zoom)

Winston Simmons, Resident
Tammy Simmons, Resident

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 p.m.

Public Comment

Ms. Simmons spoke of missed trash collections from her home on Yarnell Street due to the inability of the trash hauler to navigate the narrow alley behind her home and the regular practice of the hauler dragging trash cans to the end of the alley to empty the containers. The recommendations requested were restricting parking within the alley on waste collection days and/or establishing a location near Grape and/or Franklin Street for residents of this block to place containers on days of collection. Mr. Lincoln offered to review the area to ensure that parking restrictions within the alley would not conflict with parking restrictions during street sweeping.

Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the Traffic and Infrastructure Committee minutes of June 14, 2023. **Moved** by Mr. Murray and seconded by Mayor Kaag. **Motion carried.**

Old Business

Sidewalk Repairs – Mr. Lincoln stated this item is tabled until next month to allow the Mayor an opportunity to gather additional information from the PSAB webinar discussions.

Alley Maintenance – Mr. Murray noted a discussion with the solicitor and the three available options to address the grass alley between Olive Street and Jade Alley:

- Vacate the area to adjacent property owners, although this would be costly.
- Maintain the alley, although this may be difficult based on the terrain.
- No maintenance of the alley. It was noted that the area comes to a dead end at the sidewalk parallel to Olive Street, and there is no curb cut or apron to access Olive Street.

Committee members plan to visit the area to take photos for further discussion next month.

Fifth & Penn Avenue Traffic Signal – Mr. Lincoln recapped previous discussions surrounding the amount of time available for pedestrians to cross Penn Avenue. Telco had previously confirmed that the signal operates as permitted. Mr. Lincoln reviewed the permit which allows a total of nineteen seconds for pedestrians to cross. The low-end average of 2.5' per second to cross this roadway would require seventeen seconds. Confusion may lie in the walk symbol span of seven seconds while the flashing hand symbol allows the continuance of crossing but is meant to deter anyone from beginning to cross at that time. There appears to be a sufficient amount of time to cross the intersection before the solid hand symbolism for no crossing.

Handicapped Parking Space Applications – Mr. Lincoln tabled this item until next month when the Officer-in-Charge returns from vacation.

Temporary Road Closure Policy – Mr. Lincoln tabled this item until next month to allow the Officer-in-Charge time to draft a policy.

Motorcycle Parking & Permitting – Mr. Lincoln tabled this item until next month to allow the Officer-in-Charge time to draft a policy.

Council Chamber Microphone – Mr. Murray stated that a name had been provided for another vendor to potentially save money on the purchase of an additional microphone to amplify the sound for virtual visitors to hear the audience, staff members, and consultants that sit along the side of the room. However, it was noted that a consulting fee may be necessary to connect to our existing system. Therefore, Mr. Murray reviewed the three available options quoted by Haverford Systems, Inc.:

- Wireless handheld microphone with stand is the least expensive option but would need to be passed around the room.
- Single hanging microphone is a mid-range device that would be mounted from the ceiling centered near the audience area. This would however pick up all noise/conversation in the room.
- Tri-element hanging microphone is the most expensive option that would direct the microphone to the person speaking.

It was noted that the hanging ceiling microphone options would be visible through the ceiling mounted cameras and that it may be best to revert to a single wireless handheld/podium mounted device.

Motion to recommend Borough Council to approve the purchase of a single wireless handheld microphone to integrate with the existing audio/video system in Council Chambers. **Moved** by Mr. Murray and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried.**

Mr. Grassley arrived at 6:30 p.m.

Trash / Recycling / Yard Waste / Landfill Requests for Proposal – Mr. Murray noted discussions with the solicitor to draft a Request for Proposal (RFP) to remove waste with varying options. The intent of encouraging larger establishments to bid that would provide both hauling and landfill services is hoped to provide improved services. Committee members agreed that it would be preferable to hire one hauler to provide both trash and recycling collection services.

Yard waste collection was discussed at length in as far as not being a benefit to all residents, the number of senior residents that are unable to bring these materials to the garage, and the increased number of resident yard waste drop offs at the garage each day. Options such as an additional Saturday morning drop-off per month at the garage, or every other week collection by Public Works during the months of April through November were thought to be less expensive options. Mr. Grassley recommended that Borough collection of yard waste be based on residents registering for collection by the Thursday prior to collection to provide appropriate staffing.

The solicitor will be requested to draft a Waste RFP that would retain existing services.

Pedestrian Safety Improvements – Mr. Lincoln recapped previous discussions of the Fourth and Reading Avenues intersection that was reviewed by a representative of LTAP who provided a memorandum with various suggestions regarding sight lines and the elimination of parking spaces to increase sight distances. Mr. Grassley reported that the high visibility piano key crosswalks have been added to all four crosswalks and pedestrian crossing signs have been added to the non-stop approaches of this intersection. He also noted receipt of a verbal approval from a neighboring property owner of the changes made to this intersection. The major impact of removing parking spaces was discussed, and it was decided to refrain

from making any further changes to this intersection at this time to determine if additional safety improvements are needed.

Lakeview Drive & Spruce Street Intersection – Mr. Grassley shared measurements from the stop sign on Lakeview Drive that approaches Spruce Street of six feet to the first of two, twenty-one feet parking stalls and the distance of fourteen feet from the second parking stall to a driveway apron. Mr. Grassley offered to remove one parking stall while centering one parking stall between the stop sign and driveway apron. Committee members agreed to these changes noting the ample resident off-street parking capabilities in this vicinity and the rarely used on-street parking near the hospital.

New Business

Intersection Safety – Third Avenue & Pine Street – A resident raised safety concerns of this two-way stop intersection requesting consideration be given to modifying this to a four-way stop. Mr. Grassley reported that an LTAP representative reviewed this intersection and did not recommend a four-way stop based on the potential of creating congestion. Mr. Lincoln noted certain thresholds that need to be met to create a four-way stop and does not believe that this intersection would qualify. Enforcement is needed at this and other high incident intersections throughout the Borough. It was thought that the higher visibility piano key crosswalks could be painted at bus stop intersections such as Third Avenue and Pine Street, and Sunset Road at Spruce Street and Linden Lane. A review of this intersection was requested for alternate safety improvement recommendations.

Public Comment

Mr. Simmons spoke of the bollards recently installed near his home in the alley and the low hanging wires. Mr. Grassley will review the area to determine the responsible party to contact.

Mr. Grassley inquired as to the possible creation of regulations that would require utility companies to remove the old telephone poles following the installation of a new telephone pole. A sample ordinance will be drafted and provided to the committee for review.

Mr. Simmons noted a pole that was leaning towards a home. Mr. Grassley will visit the area to obtain a pole number to report this hazard.

Adjournment

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 7:12 p.m. by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Mr. Grassley.

Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Madeira
Borough Secretary