

PRINCETON TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
Meeting Minutes
February 11, 2013

The meeting convened at 5:15 p.m., February 11, 2013 in Room A at the Princeton Municipal Complex.

Present: Kristen Appelget (Princeton University liaison), Murali Balasubramanian, Jo Butler (council liaison), Pamela Hersh, Robert Kiser (staff liaison), Anton Lahnston, Lt. Chris Morgan (police department liaison), Surinder Sharma, Jan Weinberg, Jack West (staff liaison), Ralph Widner. **Absent:** Robert Altman. **Guests:** Robert W. Bruschi (Town Administrator), Peter Crowley (President, Princeton Regional Chamber of Commerce), Adam Perle (VP, Princeton Regional Chamber of Commerce), Dan Rappaport, Mary Cluman.
(Note: Action items are highlighted in a box.)

1. **Introduction of Committee Member Jan Weinberg:** Anton Lahnston asked Committee member Jan Weinberg to introduce himself to the committee since he was unable to attend the committee's first meeting on January 23.
2. **Approval of Minutes of Last Meeting:** Murali Balasubramanian moved approval of the Minutes for the January 23 meeting. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.
3. **Police Report:** Lt. Chris Morgan submitted the police report for January, which is attached to and made a part of these minutes.
4. **Proposed Renovation of Downtown Kiosks:** Peter Crowley, President of the Princeton Regional Chamber of Commerce, and Chamber vice-president Adam Perle presented the Chamber's proposal to renovate the two downtown kiosks. The committee has been asked to review the proposal and make recommendations to Council.
 - They explained that the objectives are to make the kiosks look better. The existing structures would be retained, but the chaos of posters, bulletins, and advertisements would be replaced with a more orderly array of public information useful to residents and visitors. Local merchant advertising would yield about an estimated \$40,000 in revenue needed to improve and maintain the kiosks. The information for visitors would be coordinated with the new visitor center housed in the University Store.
 - There would be lighting behind the panels, but no electronic advertising.
 - A community events calendar and a corkboard for orderly postings by community arts and cultural organizations will be provided. Some limited private ad postings may also be allowed. Advertising and other announcement would be changed every four weeks.
 - No advertising or materials that will distract motorists will be placed on the street side of the kiosks. Most probably, that side of each kiosk would be the locus for a town map.

- In answer to questions, they (echoed by Town Administrator Robert Bruschi) said that relocation of the kiosks was not practicable because of the electrical cables installed within and beneath both structures.
- They agreed that transit schedules should be posted. Pam Hersh said that would be most appropriate at the Palmer Square kiosk near the main bus stop.
- Chair Anton Lahnston said that the Committee would discuss the proposal and vote on its recommendations at the next committee meeting.

5. Review of Existing Issues:

- (a) **Vandeventer/Washington/Nassau intersection:** Jack West and Bob Kiser said that they met with Commissioner Simpson of NJDOT and that he is anxious to install some safety improvements at this intersection as soon as possible, including changes in traffic signaling, crosswalks, and street lighting. To move forward, it is necessary for Council to commit in advance to funding 25 percent of the costs (estimated at about \$35,000).
- (b) **Nassau Street crosswalks:** Bob Kiser and Jack West suggested that the most practicable pedestrian safety measure for downtown Nassau Street would be to install curb “bump outs” at the main pedestrian crossings combined with improved street lighting. Bikers would not be affected, since they travel in the sharrows in the main line of traffic. While curb “bump outs” present some problems for snow plows and parallel parkers, they are preferable to flashing lights and overhead signs, which the street is too wide to accommodate. In an historic district, flashing lights and obtrusive signage are unlikely to win approval. Both Kiser and West believed that the “bump outs” and improved street lighting would be covered under the cost-sharing Memorandum of Agreement with Princeton University.

It was agreed that they should proceed to explore next steps to implement the “bump outs.”

- (c) **Parking on Stockton across from Monument Hall—**The committee has received a complaint that on-street parking on Stockton (U.S. 206) opposite Monument Hall causes traffic backups during busy times of the day.

It was agreed that the police department and engineers would examine whether time limits for parking in those spaces or elimination of several of the spaces near the junction with Nassau Street (Rt. 27) would alleviate the problem if one is found to exist. Lt. Morgan, Bob Kiser, and Jack West will report their findings to the committee at its next meeting.

- (d) **NJDOT revised plan for the Harrison/Washington intersections with U.S. 1:** The committee discussed NJDOT’s revised proposal to provide at-grade jug handle intersections serving traffic going to and from U.S. 1 at Washington and Harrison. (A map of the proposal is attached to and made a part of these minutes.) Kristen Appelget and Pam Hersh both said that if one of the proposed jug handles were moved north from NJDOT’s proposed location to a site owned by the university along with a new road from U.S.1 to Harrison Street, convenience for motorists using that exit would be much improved.

Ralph Widner expressed concern that the at-grade proposal does little to address the needs of commuters making east-west crossings of U.S. 1 each day, a priority in the draft Circulation element of the Master Plan. He submitted an analysis attached to and made a part of these minutes. Pam Hersh and Kristen Appelget responded that improving the flow of through-traffic on U.S. 1 is a matter of high concern for the surrounding municipalities and that, given the funding situation in which the state finds itself, if this proposal does not go forward, we are unlikely to see *any* improvements for a good many years.

It was agreed that the views of West Windsor and Plainsboro on the proposal should be ascertained, and that the Committee would hold a special meeting at 5:30 on February 25 to take a position on the NJDOT proposal and make its recommendations to Council that same night.

- (e) **Crosswalks across Bayard (U.S. 206) at Merwick/Stanworth site:** Robert Kiser and Jack West reviewed a proposal to place crosswalks across Bayard near Westcott that would be equipped with pedestrian controlled “walk” lights.

The committee agreed that this was a sound proposal, but that a community meeting should be convened at an appropriate time to discuss it. Murali Balasubramanian agreed to arrange the meeting when the appropriate time arrives.

- (f) **Campaign for a Safer Princeton:** At the Chair’s request, Ralph Widner submitted a brief review of the *Campaign for a Safer Princeton* in 2012 and suggested that a far more concerted safety campaign in which all the efforts of Council, police department, the Committee, the schools, the university, and the merchants. The summary is attached to and made a part of these minutes.

Chairman Anton Lahnston asked Robert Altman and Jan Weinberg to take the lead on this.

- (g) **Resurfacing of U.S. 206:** Robert Kiser reported that NJDOT has scheduled re-paving of U.S. 206, possibly next fall. A detour is proposed that would close the Mountain Avenue jug handle. Traffic would be diverted to the Valley Road-Witherspoon intersection and thence through the traffic light at Cherry Hill Road. The project would take about four weeks.

The committee concurred that the proposed detour seemed the only practicable option at that location.

(h) **Blind spot at Pine and Spruce intersections:**

It was agreed that engineering would look into complaints about this problem and make recommendations.

(i) **Harrison Street pedestrian signs:**

In accordance with State Law, it was agreed that the "Yield to Pedestrian" signs on Harrison would be replaced with "Stop for Pedestrians" signs.

(j) **Rt. 206 Vision Study:**

Chair Anton Lahnston asked Robert Kiser to provide the committee with a good website link to the U.S. 206 Vision Study so that it can be reviewed and parts of it identified for possible implementation.

(k) **Best Practices for Sidewalks and Pedestrian Safety:**

Chair Anton Lahnston asked Jan Weinberg to take the lead in pulling together an initiative on this important safety topic.

(l) **Daytime FreeB:** Chair Anton Lahnston asked committee members to attend the February 25 meeting of Council when a task force would request financial support for the Daytime FreeB and suggest that the commuter FreeB be supplanted with more extensive Daytime FreeB service. Pam Hersh asked if there is any possibility that the FreeB could provide service to the hospital on Saturday mornings. Anton Lahnston said a study of how to coordinate Bus 655 and the FreeB for the purpose is under consideration.

(m) **Complaints about speeding on Herrontown/Terhune/Rosedale:** Chair

Anton Lahnston asked that the police department and engineering look into complaints about speeding on Rosedale and a request from some residents that the speed limit be reduced from 45 mph to 40 mph. and similar complaints about speeding received from residents on Herrontown and Terhune. (See complaint attached to and made a part of these minutes.)

(n) **Traffic light at Terhune/Harrison:**

A complaint was received about the traffic light at this intersection holding too long for Harrison and out of synchronization with the "walk" light. The police department and engineering were asked to investigate.

The meeting adjourned at 7:05 p.m. A special meeting was called for February 25 at 5:30 p.m. to review NJDOT's U.S. 1 proposal.

