

**PRINCETON TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**March 11, 2013**  
**Community Meeting Room A**  
**Municipal Building**

**Present:** Robert Altman, Jo Butler (Council liaison), Robert Kiser (staff liaison), Anton Lahnston (Chair), Lt. Chris Morgan (police department liaison), Marvin Reed (Planning Board liaison), Surinder Sharma, Jan Weinberg, Jack West (staff liaison), Ralph Widner. **Absent:** Kristen Appelget (Princeton University liaison), Murali Balasubramanian, Pamela Hersh. **Guests:** Ray Crawley, President of Greater Princeton Chamber of Commerce and Adam Perle, Vice President; Carolyn Bradshaw, of Terhune Road, and an estimated 10 members of the public and press.

**1. Approval of Minutes of Special Meeting on February 25, 2013.**

Robert Altman moved approval of minutes for the special meeting on February 25, 2013. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

**2. Police Report**

*Lt. Chris Morgan provided a report for the month of February, which is attached to and made a part of these minutes.* There were 91 motor vehicle accidents, nine of which involved injuries and seven of which were not reported. One accident involved a pedestrian and one a bicyclist. Both involved injuries. Two accidents with deer involved no injuries.

Murali Balasubramanian asked whether intersection cameras were being used to identify speeders and motorists running traffic lights. Lt. Morgan responded that the courts have disallowed use of the cameras for those purposes. Robert Altman added that the former township found that the cameras were inaccurate and had decided to get rid of them.

Chairman Anton Lahnston asked Ralph Widner and Surinder Sharma to maintain a statistical record comparing month-by-month accident rates in previous years with current rates. *The table is attached to and made a part of these minutes and will be incorporated into all future minutes.*

Lt. Morgan said that residents in the Stony Brook area requested that the department investigate the use of Stony Brook bridge on Mercer Road/Princeton Pike by overweight trucks. He will report findings to the committee.

**3. Recommendations to Council Regarding Nassau Street Kiosks.**

Chairman Lahnston explained that Council has asked the committee for its comments on a proposal from the Princeton Regional Chamber of Commerce to renovate the two downtown kiosks on Nassau Street. He explained that

Council wants the committee's views on whether information posted on the kiosks would distract motorists and pedestrians and cause accidents.

Robert Altman referred to a memorandum on the subject circulated to committee members prior to the meeting by Ralph Widner. He said that the following portion of that memorandum falls within the committee's jurisdiction and provides an acceptable basis for a recommendation to council:

"The Princeton Regional Chamber of Commerce presented its proposal to the committee on February 11. It explained that a community map would be placed on the street-side of the kiosks, its size and scale suitable for use only by pedestrians on the sidewalk. No advertising or other display materials would be placed on the street-side of the kiosks that might distract the attention of passing motorists or bikers. If that is done, the committee believes that renovation of the kiosks poses no threat to public safety or would complicate traffic management on Nassau Street."

Anton Lahnston explained that in his view a proposal to "bump out" some of the curbs to improve pedestrian safety at several crosswalks would not be affected by any renovation of the kiosks.

Surinder Sharma said that he had recently observed the design of kiosks in Boston and found them both informative and attractive. Murali Balasubramanian feels that the present kiosks are eyesores and should be improved. Anton Lahnston expressed similar views. Marvin Reed explained that the kiosks were originally installed to discourage haphazard handbill postings on streetlights, waste cans, and merchant's doors and windows. Over the years, however, the postings on the kiosks have become just as chaotic and disorderly.

Ralph Widner said that he agreed with the recommendation from Pam Hersh that, for the sake of passengers, comprehensive bus schedules and route maps be posted. However, neither of the two kiosks is close enough to the main bus stop to serve that purpose. We must find a way to place that information near the news kiosk.

Widner added that in the course of carrying out the *Campaign for a Safer Princeton* last year, he attempted to post handbills on the kiosks promoting safety. Within less than a day, they were either stapled over or removed by others putting up their own materials, often for-profit services or housing rental advertisements. He argued that it is within the committee's jurisdiction to inform council that the present kiosks inhibit the posting of information to the public by duly constituted bodies of the local government.

Chamber President Ray Crawley said that community arts and cultural organizations have the same complaint. They are unable to use the kiosks effectively to inform the public about upcoming performances or events.

He said that the proposal to renovate the kiosks must be reviewed by both the local and state Historical Preservation Commissions because Nassau Street is part of the “Lincoln Highway Historical District.”

Robert Altman moved that the committee report to Council that the committee finds the proposed kiosk renovations pose no threat to public safety or traffic management. It also finds that current lack of management of postings on the kiosks impedes effective dissemination of public information. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

*Following the meeting, Chairman Anton Lahnston submitted a memorandum to Mayor Lempert, which is attached to and made a part of these minutes.*

#### **4. Subcommittee to Review Common Traffic Issues**

Chairman Anton Lahnston reported that he has set up a subcommittee modeled on the former township traffic safety committee that will handle common problems and complaints. In addition to Robert Altman, the subcommittee is comprised of Robert Kiser, Jack West, and Lt. Morgan. Someone from the Public Works Department will also serve. The purpose is to reduce the number of problems that come to the full committee and to handle them more efficiently and expeditiously. He said the subcommittee has three pages of action items involving intersections, lights, and streets.

#### **5a. Review of Data from Jug handle Experiment**

Jack West cautioned that the NJDOT data from the Jug handle experiment that he has provided to some committee members is preliminary and not for public release. NJDOT will prepare a full report in the next month or so.

#### **5b. U.S. 1 Update**

Anton Lahnston stressed that the community needs this and other data on U.S. 1 in order to respond effectively to the current NJDOT proposal for U.S. 1 between the Dinky bridge and Scudders Mill Road. He said it is also essential that Princeton’s government engage directly with NJDOT, the university, West Windsor, Plainsboro and the hospital.

Jo Butler said that Commissioner Simpson has expressed considerable urgency about a speedy and constructive response from the local governments involved. Otherwise, whatever funds might be rounded up for the project will go elsewhere.

Jack West said that he will attend a meeting with West Windsor shortly, in which an alternate to the initial NJDOT proposal is to be submitted.

Anton Lahnston emphasized that West Windsor's interests are not necessarily aligned with Princeton's. Princeton wants to maintain full and convenient access from and to U.S. 1 at Alexander, Washington, and Harrison. West Windsor would like to deflect as much traffic as possible away from Washington Road.

Ralph Widner said that we should be mindful of the very constructive argument that arose from public comments on the initial NJDOT proposal: "whatever is done now should be designed as Stage 1 in a longer-term project to fully solve the access problems at Harrison and Washington."

Marvin Reed said that NJDOT's current staff seems to be unaware of the data and projections developed by the Penn's Neck EIS process. That data should be on the table and used to come up with a solution.

He added that West Windsor wants to extend Vaughan Drive from Princeton Junction to join up with the access road into Sarnoff so that there is a by-pass around central West Windsor and Washington Road. It is in West Windsor's Master Plan and a key to the proposed Transit Village.

#### **5c. U.S. 206 crosswalks**

Jack West said he does not yet have an update on the matter of crosswalks across U.S. 206 at the Merwick-Stanworth site. He will meet with the university soon.

#### **5d. 628 Cherry Valley Road**

Robert Kiser said that survey work is underway at the sharp curve on Cherry Valley Road near the Great Road to determine whether the curve can be moved or changed so that it poses less of a traffic hazard. The affected property owner is concerned about any possible taking of land. (Note: one side of the road is Princeton and the other side is Montgomery.)

#### **5e. Terhune Road—Speeding and Truck Traffic**

Carolyn Bradshaw, a resident living on Terhune Road has requested that the speed limit be lowered on Terhune Road because speeding cars and trucks pose a hazard for families living along the thoroughfare, which is being used as a way into and out of town from U.S. 206 and Rt. 27, particularly at rush hour. Anton Lahnston said this matter has been referred to the new subcommittee, and that an initial report has been received from Sgt. Murray of the police department. Ms. Bradshaw said she plans to attend the next subcommittee meeting on March 26, 2013.

#### **5f. Police Patrols in CBD**

Lt. Chris Morgan reported that the police department is getting complaints about juveniles "hanging out" at certain downtown businesses. He also said

that enforcement of parking has been increased. Anton Lahnston explained that the committee wants to explore the feasibility of random patrols to enforce laws regarding pedestrians and bikers. Lt. Morgan said that because of some current operational issues in the department, this is not the best time to explore that question and suggested the committee wait until these matters are settled.

**6. Improvements/Best Practices for Sidewalks and Pedestrian Safety**

Jan Weinberg described his “walks” about downtown to spot problems and photograph them. He complimented Robert Kiser for correcting many such problems when he reports them. He said that ideally, staff itself would do this as normal procedure.

Anton Lahnston requested that Jan submit a 1-page report at each meeting summarizing the kinds of problems he spots and to work through the committee to engage engineering and keep the committee informed.

**7. Campaign for a Safer Princeton**

Chairman Anton Lahnston said that there is a need to re-energize this initiative. He asked Jan Weinberg and Murali Balasubramanian to lead the effort and they agreed.

**8. Daytime FreeB—Current Proposal.**

Marvin Reed reported that on February 25, the Transit Task Force presented recommendations to Council that the number of trips on the Daytime FreeB be increased from five to six and to eliminate the Commuter FreeB because of low use and the fact that a combination of NJ Transit bus #655 and Tiger Transit can meet the needs of the commuters.

However, Council seems reluctant to terminate the Commuter FreeB.

He said marketing is the challenge. If a second bus were to be acquired, it might be possible to provide service every half hour, which would attract more users, as would the provision of bus shelters. He pointed out that the state might well be able to provide an allotment for bus shelters.

It has also been suggested that teen users could help increase ridership if Corner House were served.

**9. Action Register**

Anton Lahnston urged Surinder Sharma and Ralph Widner to activate the action register and make it a standard submission for each meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 7 p.m.

## **MEMORANDUM TO MAYOR REGARDING NASSAU STREET KIOSKS**

To: Liz Lempert, Mayor  
From: Anton Lahnston, Chairman, Traffic and Transportation Committee  
Date: March 13, 2013  
Subject: Renovation of Kiosks on Nassau Street

### Public Safety and Renovation of the Kiosks

Council has requested an opinion from the Traffic and Transportation Committee concerning a proposal by the Princeton Regional Chamber of Commerce to renovate the two kiosks on Nassau Street. The Committee received a briefing on the proposal by the Chamber's President on February 11 and discussed some of the safety issues with the Chamber at that time. On March 11, 2013 the Committee again considered the renovation of the Kiosks with particular focus on potential issues faced by motorists, bikers and pedestrians on Nassau Street.

The charter of the Traffic and Transportation Committee includes providing leadership in Princeton to address issues of traffic and pedestrian safety. The committee partners with existing municipal organizations, local institutions, businesses, service organizations – and the public in general – to continually foster a safer Princeton. With that in mind the Committee voted unanimously for the renovation of the kiosks.

It must be noted that several factors were very important in making this decision.

1. The Committee felt there would be no adverse impact on the safety of motorists and pedestrians in this area of the kiosks.
2. We noted a several very important points that must be considered:
  - a. The kiosks will not interfere with any changes in the sidewalk cuts and crosswalk treatment that is being discussed by the New Jersey DOT.
  - b. There is a great opportunity to place valuable information in the form of maps and bus schedules on the panels of the redesigned kiosks facing the sidewalk. There is a desperate need for this type of information in the view of the Committee. In fact, it was noted by one member of the Committee that while in Boston he observed many pedestrians stopping to gather information from maps and other municipal information on similar kiosks located in an area of heavy pedestrian traffic.
  - c. The kiosks also provide a space for important (and time sensitive) information about community and University events better serving the surge in visitors over recent years.
  - d. Currently, the kiosks are an eyesore and distraction in a very attractive area of Princeton. The chaos of postings and public blight should be addressed. The renovated kiosks would be less chaotic while at the same time providing some space for residents to post their notices and continue the practice of free speech but in a manner that is more orderly, less distracting and generally safer.

In our meeting on March 11 these factors were reviewed by the Committee while members of the Chamber were present. If you have any questions about this opinion from the Traffic and Transportation Committee please do not hesitate to contact me.

**Total Motor Vehicle Accidents  
2010-2012  
Former Princeton Township and Borough**

	2010	2011	2012
All motor vehicle accidents			
<i>Township</i>	484	507	433
<i>Borough</i>	670	688	567
<b>Total</b>	<b>1154</b>	<b>1195</b>	<b>962*</b>
with injuries			
<i>Township</i>	84	89	82
<i>Borough</i>	45	54	41
<b>Total</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>123</b>
Accidents with pedestrians			
<i>Township</i>	8	4	7
<i>Borough</i>	11	17	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>21</b>
with injuries			
<i>Township</i>	6	0	6
<i>Borough</i>	11	13	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>20</b>
Accidents with bicycles			
<i>Township</i>	4	7	10
<i>Borough</i>	11	7	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>19</b>
with injuries			
<i>Township</i>	4	4	7
<i>Borough</i>	11	7	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>15</b>
Accidents with deer			
Township total	28	32	29

Sources: Monthly and Annual Police Reports, Princeton Township and Princeton Borough Police Departments; 2010-2012.

\* December 2012 borough police data missing from the count.

Proposed Format for:  
**MONTHLY CONSOLIDATED PRINCETON ACCIDENT SUMMARY TO DATE  
 2010-2013**

**Total Accidents Involving Motor Vehicles, Pedestrians and Bikers , Jan & Feb**

	January	February
<b>2010</b>	85	96
<b>2011</b>	146	118
<b>2012</b>	77	91
<b>2013</b>	77	91

**Total Persons Injured in Accidents, Jan & Feb**

<b>2010</b>	5	11
<b>2011</b>	11	7
<b>2012</b>	7	14
<b>2013</b>	5	10
<b>2010</b>	5	11

**Total Motor Vehicle Accidents Involving Pedestrians, Jan & Feb\***

Pedestrian Accidents	January	February
<b>2010</b>	0	1
<b>2011</b>	0	2
<b>2012</b>	0	5
<b>2013</b>	3	1

\*Monthly data for former borough only.

**Total Motor Vehicle Accidents Involving Bicycles, Jan & Feb\***

Bicycle Accidents	January	February
<b>2010</b>	0	2
<b>2011</b>	0	0
<b>2012</b>	0	0
<b>2013</b>	3	1

\* Monthly data for former borough only.

**Total Motor Vehicle Accidents with Deer, January and February**

Deer Accidents	January	February
2010	3	3
2011	5	2
2012	2	1
2013	3	2

\* Data for former t