

MINUTES
PRINCETON TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
Special Meeting
March 18, 2013
Community Meeting Room A
Municipal Building

Present: Kristen Appelget (Princeton University 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:** Robert Altman, Murali Balasubramanian, Jo Butler (Council liaison), Pamela Hersh. **Guests:** Bob Gregory and Frank Setnicky, of the Princeton Fire and Rescue Squad; Bill Bausmith and Kate Jones from Princeton University; Michael and Unia Oliver, owners of Skillman Furniture; and Lou Slee.

Chairman Anton Lahnston convened this special meeting at 5:30 p.m.

1. NJDOT Request for Municipal Deposit to Improve Public Safety at Nassau/Washington/Vandeventer intersection.

Chairman Lahnston reported that before NJDOT will examine the feasibility of improvements to traffic signaling, lighting, crosswalks, and curbs, the Mayor has been informed that the municipality must budget \$35,000 to defray one-fourth of the cost to improve safety at the Nassau/Washington/Vandeventer intersection. The chairman said that, for lack of a quorum, no recommendation from the committee can be voted upon at this meeting. Jack West advised that there is sufficient time to vote on a recommendation to Council at the next regular committee meeting.

2. Briefing by Princeton University on traffic management during the initial phases of construction of the new Alexander Road Arts and Transit District.

Kristen Appelget presented a series of maps showing how traffic will be managed during the early phases of construction from late spring 2013 through 2014. [Construction of the full project will take four years.] One of the maps is attached to and made a part of these minutes.

She suggested that committee members sign up on the university's website to receive e-mail notices about the project as it proceeds.

Spring 2013: Demolition and site mobilization

- In May, the east side sidewalk on Alexander will be closed south from University Place to just north of Sonia's café, Skillman Furniture, and

the gas station at Faculty Road. A construction fence will be erected around the Lewis Center construction site.

- The west sidewalk on the Springdale side of Alexander will remain open.
- Transit and the WAWA will continue to operate as at present.
- Alexander Road will be closed between University Place and College Road shortly after commencement exercises end in the second week of June. The closure is necessary in order to allow relocation of utilities. Traffic will detour via University Place and College Road.
- The sidewalk on the west side of Alexander in front of Forbes dormitory will be diverted.

Bob Gregory and Frank Setnick, of the Princeton Fire and Rescue Squad, asked whether emergency vehicles will have access to homes on that stretch of Alexander during the closure. Kristen Appelget assured them that they will have access, as will all the property owners in the neighborhood.

July 2013: Utility relocations continue and construction of a new commuter parking lot and temporary Dinky platform begins.

- The segment of Alexander Road between University Place and College Road that had been closed will re-open.
- Two-way traffic will resume on Alexander.
- Though there will be no street parking on the east side of Alexander south of University Place, parking on the Springdale side of the road will still be allowed.
- Demolitions of existing buildings on the Arts & Transit site will be completed.
- Construction of a new parking lot and temporary train platform will start.
- The WAWA will continue to operate as at present.
- The Dinky will not operate for a period of one week while the station is relocated. It will be replaced by an express bus service to Princeton Junction.

Late summer/early fall 2013: Utility relocations completed and new commuter parking lot and temporary Dinky platform open.

- Dinky service will shift to the new temporary station.
- An express bus will continue to offer service directly to Princeton Junction from the current station site.
- The new commuter parking lot (with the same capacity as the present lot next to the Dinky station) will open (see map).
- Utility work will proceed south on Alexander temporarily eliminating parking and walking on either side of Alexander.

- A path from the present Dinky station site to the temporary train station platform will be constructed so that pedestrians can walk via the campus from University Place to the temporary Dinky platform.
- Bus service by Tiger Transit, NJ Transit buses and the FreeB will be integrated so that commuters and others using the Dinky will be able to get to Nassau Street and most destinations in town. (The express bus will stop only at the present Dinky site.)
- Though Alexander will be open to two-way traffic, a temporary cut-through road will be constructed to eventually detour traffic from Alexander to University Place while a new roundabout is constructed.

Michael Oliver, of Skillman Furniture, said that he is concerned that daylong parking will not be provided for proprietors in the neighborhood and that his customers and delivery trucks will have real access problems. The university will discuss these issues with him.

Fall, 2013: Construction of Roundabout and Renovation of Existing Dinky Station Buildings.

- Renovation of the existing train station buildings and construction of the new station plaza, a new WAWA, and a new access road to the West Garage (Lot 7) will get underway.
- Once the Dinky resumes operation, commuters may choose to either board the Dinky at the temporary platform, or take advantage of the express bus, which will operate between the present station site and Princeton Junction until the new Dinky station opens in 2014.
- In October, Alexander will be closed from the temporary road cut-through to University Place north to College Road so that the new roundabout can be constructed.
- That temporary cut-through road linking Alexander to University Place will open to traffic. A temporary road will also provide access to the existing WAWA and the West Garage (Lot 7).
- Pathways on the west side of Alexander will link up with loops that provide easy pedestrian access from Forbes College to McCarter and other locations on University Place.
- The WAWA will still operate in its current location. A crosswalk and pathways, as well as a 15-place parking lot, will provide customer access.

Fall 2013 to early 2014: Roundabout Construction

- The new roundabout at University Place and Alexander will be constructed. It will start operating in early 2014.
- Normal two-way traffic will resume on Alexander.
- The temporary cut-through road will be closed and eliminated.
- The temporary Dinky station will still be operating and the transit arrangements remain unchanged.

Summer 2014: Completion of pre-Lewis Center Construction Phase.

- The new Dinky station, WAWA, transit plaza and access road to the West Garage (Lot 7) will open. (Until this time, the WAWA will operate at its current location.)
- Express bus service to Princeton Junction may or may not continue, depending upon ridership.
- There will be sidewalks on both sides of Alexander.

Summer 2014-2017: Construction of Lewis Center

- The new Lewis Center will be constructed.
- Opening dates for the restaurant and café in the former station buildings cannot be determined until appropriate partners are selected.
- There will be no traffic light at the new University Place/Alexander roundabout, but there will be a new traffic light south of the Lewis Center.

There were questions from the committee and guests about access and egress of heavy trucks to and from the construction site. Kristen Appelget responded that most are likely to exit via Faculty and Harrison. The university has a “staging area” in West Windsor it can use to manage truck traffic involved in the construction.

Anton Lahnston said that the university should do a great deal of outreach and marketing to make sure that the public “gets the word.” He said commuters need to be fully informed, in particular.

Kristen Appelget responded that the university is working with New Jersey Transit and that it has ready access to all who hold parking permits from the university. She said that they will seek permission from Council to put the website address on the construction fence.

Surinder Sharma asked if the university planned to use electronic bulletin boards to provide alerts. She said that they probably would where appropriate.

The meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

