

MINUTES
PRINCETON TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
November 18, 2013
Meeting Room A
Witherspoon Municipal Building

Present: Robert Altman, Kristen Appelget (Princeton University liaison), Murali Balasubramanian, Jo Butler (Council liaison), Robert Kiser (staff liaison), Anton Lahnston (Chair), Jan Weinberg, Jack West (staff liaison), and Ralph Widner.

Absent: Pamela Hersh, Sgt. Tom Murray (police department liaison), Surinder Sharma. **Guests:** Deanna Stockton (engineering staff); Michael and Unia Oliver, owners of Skillman Furniture.

Chairman Anton Lahnston convened the meeting at 5:15 p.m.

1. Review of October 21, 2013 Minutes.

Robert Altman moved approval of the minutes of the October 21, 2013 meeting. The motion was adopted unanimously.

2. Police Report for October.

Chairman Lahnston said that Sgt. Tom Murray was unable to attend the meeting because of a family emergency. The October police report will be taken up at the December meeting.

3. Terhune Road Traffic Study

Chairman Lahnston said the traffic data collection on Terhune Road has been completed and is now under analysis. He, Robert Kiser, and Sgt. Murray will meet to develop recommendations for the Traffic and Transportation subcommittee on December 17. Terhune Road resident Carolyn Barnshaw will be invited to the meeting when the recommendations are prepared.

4. Parking on Alexander Road

Robert Kiser reported that parking passes will be available for businesses on Alexander Road affected by construction of the Arts and Transit District. Robert Altman asked if the permits will be provided through the Clerk's office. Jack West responded that that is the usual point of submission, but that applications are then forwarded to him.

5. Arts and Transit District Update

Kristen Appelget reported that the paths on Alexander have been widened to accommodate bikes. Unfortunately, despite signs telling bicyclists to dismount before entering crosswalks, many students do not do so, a difficult practice to police and correct. Thus the problem is likely to persist.

She then suggested that the differences between the former borough and township codes regarding bicycle paths should be reconciled. Bicycles were

permitted on sidewalks in the borough, except on the business side of downtown Nassau Street. The Township's code requires 10 feet widths for paths intended to accommodate both walkers and bicyclists. Ralph Widner asked if the Traffic and Transportation Committee should propose to draft a new ordinance that reconciles the two, but the question was not answered.

Council President Bernard Miller has asked about the width of the bike path between Harrison and Alexander. Kristen Appelget said that the path is being modified and constructed to accommodate both walkers and bicyclists using the requirements under the old township code.

Kristen Appelget said that toilets at the temporary Dinky station are only open during the hours when the station is manned. During mid-day hours they are closed for reasons of personal security. Michael Oliver commented that, because of this, a number of transit users enter Skillman Furniture asking to use a restroom. Kristen Appelget said that, once the new Dinky station is open, restrooms will be available throughout the hours of the train's operation.

6. ASUP Task Force Public Meeting November 9, 2013

Kristen Appelget said the reports of the two consultants at the November 9, 2013 public briefing on the work of the Alexander Street/University Place Task Force so far are available on the town's website. AECOM, the traffic consultant, reported on its analysis of various options to manage projected increased traffic on Alexander, University Place, Mercer, College and Nassau. URS, the transit consultant, outlined various options for transit in the Alexander corridor between Nassau Street and Princeton Junction.

7. Uses of Transit Trust Fund

Anton Lahnston reported that the Transit Trust Fund trustees met on October 11 and agreed to draft guidelines for its use. Trustees agreed on a tentative list of potential uses to which the \$500,000 Fund might be put. They include:

- Replace vehicles of the municipally-owned FreeB Vehicles (FreeB Task Force)
- Education about transit options and ridership (T&T and FreeB Task Force)
- Paid municipal staff position to work on mass transit issues
- Expansion of transit from Princeton Station to Nassau Street (Traffic and Transit Task Force)
- Improved bus shelters
- Improved/new transit signage
- Better integration of transit options
- Bike share (Bike/Pedestrian Committee)
- Remote parking for employees,

- Parking with transit options—Community Park north lot
- Planning studies to enable development of new mass transit options in Princeton.

Muraili Balasubramanian asked who the trustees are. Anton Lahnston replied that the community has six representatives and Princeton University has three. As it happens, three are members of the Traffic and Transportation Committee: Anton Lahnston, Kristen Appelget, and Jack West. The other trustees are Kim Jackson and Karen Jezierny from the University, Scott Sillars from the community, Mayor Liz Lempert, and Council members Bernie Miller and Pat Simon.

Since the funds are provided by Princeton University, decisions are in the trustees' hands and are not referred to the municipal governing body.

Murali Balasubramanian asked what happens when the \$500,000 is expended? Anton Lahnston responded that the Fund expires at that point.

8. Bus Shelters

Robert Kiser reported that he and Pan Hersh have settled on an initial list of locations for the installation of bus shelters:

- Witherspoon Street at Community Park School (southbound)
- Witherspoon Street at Princeton Arts Council
- Witherspoon Street at Avalon Bay
- Nassau Street at Palmer Square (westbound)
- Nassau Street at Witherspoon (eastbound)
- Nassau Street at Harrison (eastbound)
- Harrison at Hamilton (southbound)

Ralph Widner suggested that they study the need for a shelter on the southbound side of Stockton at Library Place in front of the former Aquinas Center. He said that significant numbers of lower income workers wait for the bus there and there is absolutely no shelter available in bad weather.

Kristen Appelget asked Bob Kiser whether the town possesses right-of-way at each of the locations. He replied said that it does.

He said that he and Pam Hersh plan to meet December 9 about design, a possible design competition, and funding.

Jo Butler asked if we really want to undertake the financial responsibility for purchase, maintenance, and spare parts for non-standard NJ Transit shelters. Anton Lahnston commented that he personally finds the bus shelters purchased by Plainsboro to be attractive and possibly more suitable for Princeton.

Robert Altman hinted that the possibility to find private sponsors/funders should not be dismissed. The township was able to find private support for the deer reflectors it installed. He also advised caution about putting different kinds of shelters in different locations. This might convey a sense of discrimination.

Jo Butler suggested that it would be a good idea to have a representative from the Historic Preservation Commission sit in on and participate in the decision since whatever is decided must go to that body anyway because Nassau Street is part of the Lincoln Highway Historic District. Robert Kiser concurred. Ms. Butler said she would follow up with the PHC.

7. Crosswalk Design

Chairman Lahnston announced that he will appear before Council on November 25, 2013 to urge adoption of the Resolution on Crosswalk Design adopted at the last meeting of the Traffic and Transportation Committee. He said Sergeant Murray will make the presentation. He said that any committee members who wish to do so may join him at the meeting to urge adoption.

9. FreeB

The chair reported that, despite necessary reduction in the number of daytime FreeB trips from seven to six, ridership is holding steady at about 65. Ridership on the commuter FreeB is up slightly, but it appears that some of the loops can be reduced, so more decisions lie ahead. He said the vehicle has been repaired, but there is real need for a replacement.

He added that the "Christmas Shopper" service will be offered once again this year.

10. Action Register

Anton Lahnston then reviewed the status of outstanding projects on the Action Register.

- **Crosswalks on US 206 at Merwick/Stanworth:** Jack West said that there is agreement on the crosswalks and recommendations were sent to NJDOT, but the state agency has said that it does not know when it will get to it because of understaffing. Kristen Appelget said that, starting in fall 2014, the housing at Merwick/ Stanworth will be occupied
- **Best practices for sidewalk maintenance:** Jan Weinberg said that he is unable to proceed on this matter because of lack of support or agreement.

- **“See it/Fix it” app:** Bob McQueen, of the municipal staff, has the lead to develop this mobile app for citizen reports and complaints.
- **U.S. 1:** Kristen Appelget said the university and the town are working closely together on responses to NJ DOT’s proposals on U.S. 1, but that the state may not proceed for financial or other reasons. In addition, Jack West reported that the differences of view between Princeton and West Windsor regarding the turning issue at the Washington Road/ U.S. 1 jug handle are still undiscussed.
- **Nassau Street Crosswalk lighting:** Jack West said that staff is still working on this matter.

11. Traffic and Transportation Subcommittee Report

- **Sign Survey:** Robert Kiser said that a well-versed municipal staff member will pick up responsibility for the sign survey come January. He will begin with the Central Business District and work outward.

Jo Butler suggested that the survey include an analysis of newspaper box proliferation. She also said that Sgt. Murray held a very effective meeting last Saturday with John Street residents and that there are many sign issues on that street.

Murali Balasubramanian called attention to the strategy used in Portland, Oregon. Deanna Stockton said staff will chart sign locations using GPS and Smartphones and place them on a Google map.

- **Parking ordinances:** Robert Kiser reported that on December 17, the committee will meet to reconcile differences in the former borough and township parking ordinances with respect to overnight parking and permits. Jo Butler mentioned that she has received an e-mail request from a Dinky parking lot customer who requested a rebate on his permit because free parking had been available in the lot during the term of his permit.

12. 2014 Meeting Schedule

The chair suggested the following meeting dates for 2014:

January 13, February 10, March 10, April 21 (to avoid the beginning of Passover April 14), May 12, June 9.

The meeting adjourned at 6:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Ralph R. Widner, Secretary