

MINUTES
PRINCETON TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
February 10, 2014
Meeting Room A
Witherspoon Municipal Building

Present: Kristin Appelget (Princeton University liaison), Murali Balasubramanian, Sam Bunting, Pamela Hersh, Robert Kiser (staff liaison), Anton Lahnston (Chair), Sgt. Tom Murray (police department liaison), Surinder Sharma, Deanna Stockton (engineering staff), Jack West (staff liaison), and Ralph Widner. **Absent:** Robert Altman, Jo Butler (Council liaison). **Guests:** Douglas Rubin.

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

1. Approval of Minutes

The Chair asked for review and approval of the Minutes for the meeting on January 13, 2014. Ralph Widner said one typographical error requires correction. Sam Bunting moved approval and Pam Hersh seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

2. Police Reports for December 2013 and January 2014.

Sgt. Tom Murray reported 94 accidents in December 2013, for six of which no report was filed. Sixteen involved injuries. One pedestrian was struck while not in a crosswalk, though the motorist was found at fault for not seeing him. A bicyclist was hit riding, not walking, the bike in a crosswalk. Three accidents with deer involved no injuries.

In January 2014, there were 71 accidents, for three of which no reports were filed. Eight accidents involved injuries. Four were with pedestrians, all with injuries. One was a hit and run. Another involved two vehicles and the first fled the scene. No bicycle accidents were reported, but there were six with deer, none of which involved injuries.

Both reports are attached to and made a part of these minutes.

Chairman Lahnston asked Sam Bunting if bicyclists are aware of the fact that they should walk their bikes when in a crosswalk, otherwise they are regarded as drivers of a vehicle, not pedestrians. Sam Bunting replied the Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee is not as informed about accidents as the Traffic and Transportation Committee. There is an initiative underway in the committee to catalog and map the most dangerous spots in town.

Sgt. Murray reported that the new roundabout on Alexander Road at University Place was accident-free in its first week. He and Jack West and Bob Kiser told Kristin Appelget that working relations with the university's

construction and safety team in the Arts and Transit District have been exemplary.

3. Public Comments

Douglas Rubin told the committee that the use of taxis in Princeton is both sparse and expensive. He said that he wished to explore ways to make taxi use more frequent and affordable because taxis provide flexibility for the rider and a way to reduce downtown traffic. He feels that subsidized systems, such as the FreeB and Tiger Transit, plus the high rates set under the former borough's ordinance, discourage patronage.

Surinder Sharma asked whether he had data and wanted support from the Transit Trust Fund to develop it. Mr. Rubin replied that he contemplated submission of a proposal to the Transit Trust Fund for that purpose.

Pamela Hersh asked whether his goal is to look into rates, gaps in services, or what? She said she would be willing to contribute some ideas for such a study.

Anton Lahnston remarked that visitors who park in remote locations, such as Princeton Shopping Center, who then journey to dine and shop or be entertained downtown, are ideal candidates for a taxi shuttle or rideshare jitney service. A member of the Committee cited the "Zip Car" as another version of personalized transport.

4. Bus Shelters

Pam Hersh and Bob Kiser discovered that—at an estimated \$80,000 per unit—designed bus shelters are too expensive for widespread use in Princeton. They suggest that a design competition, funded by the Transit Trust Fund, be held for two "showcase" shelters—one at Palmer Square, the other at Princeton Shopping Center—and that we use New Jersey Transit shelters at the other locations they recommended at a previous meeting. They submitted photos of the New Jersey Transit designs, which are attached to and made a part of these minutes.

Kristin Appelget pointed out that both of the proposed "showcase" shelters would be on private land and that it would be wise to find out whether the owners will agree to have them on their land before proceeding. Pam Hersh concurred, and added that the Palmer Square shelter requires approval from the local and state historic preservation bodies. Consequently, considerable time may elapse before the showcase shelters can become a reality.

Ralph Widner asked if we can proceed in the meantime to procure the other shelters from New Jersey Transit. Bob Kiser responded affirmatively, but pointed out that NJ Transit requires a certain volume of patronage at a stop

before it will provide a shelter. We do not yet know whether all the selected stops meet this requirement.

5. Arts and Transit District

Kristin Appelget reported that the roundabout on Alexander Road at University Place opened ahead of schedule and has proven successful. Later the temporary traffic light at University Place and College Road was removed.

WAWA access is still temporary and will remain so until the new Dinky station opens. The new traffic meters will be installed in the Dinky parking lot in March. At a later date a new traffic light will be installed on Alexander at the access to the new station.

6. Report of the T & T Subcommittee

- **Sign Survey**

Bob Kiser reported that the survey of road signs in Princeton is underway.

- **Ordinance Eliminating Parking on Eastern Side of Scott Lane**

Bob Kiser said that residents in the Scott Lane/Bainbridge Street neighborhood have complained that parking on both sides of the street creates a very narrow passageway for moving vehicles and that this has become a safety hazard. He requested that the Traffic and Transportation Committee recommend an ordinance to Council that eliminates parking on the eastern side of Scott Lane. Ralph Widner moved and Murali Balasubramanian seconded approval of the draft ordinance (attached to and made a part of these minutes). The motion was approved unanimously.

- **Traffic Light on U.S. 206 at Robeson**

Jack West submitted a draft resolution that would authorize an expenditure of up to \$40,000 as 25 percent of the cost for the New Jersey Department of Transportation to investigate the feasibility of a left turn signal on U.S. 206 for drivers turning onto Paul Robeson Place. Murali Balasubramanian moved that the draft resolution (attached to and made a part of these minutes) be approved and forwarded to Council for consideration at its February 18th session. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

- **Traffic Light at Mountain Avenue and Great Road**

Bob Kiser said that an ordinance to authorize \$15,000 to cover 25 percent of the cost to investigate the feasibility of a traffic light at the junction of Mountain Avenue with Great Road is to be drafted and submitted to the committee for future consideration. The light, which he hopes will be one that operates automatically in response to traffic demands, will facilitate commuter and school traffic making turns into and from Mountain Road at Great Road. In addition, a bike path connection could be provided between the existing one on the north

side of Mountain Road and the path south of Elm Court that leads to Johnson Park School, D & R Greenway, and neighborhoods beyond. Deanna Stockton will gather the traffic counts to support the resolution. Sgt. Murray also said that he hopes the speed limit signs can be moved closer to Wescott Road when these changes are made.

- **Installation of New Parking Meters at Princeton Station Lot**
Jack West said that new “state of the art” parking meters will be installed in the Princeton Station Lot during March. Users will be able to deposit and monitor their payments via smart phone, part of a pilot test to determine whether such meters might eventually be used elsewhere in town.
- **Upgrade of Traffic Lights at Faculty Road & Alexander**
Jack West presented a drawing of the plan for a walking/ biking path on the south side of Faculty Road to connect the university’s new Lakeside graduate housing with Alexander Road. Kristin Appelget said that, because the path crosses the Dinky rail line, Faculty Road and the Dinky line must be shut down for five days during the summer to allow the path’s construction across the rail bed and the bed across Faculty to be rebuilt. Part of the five days will fall on a weekend. In addition, regulations currently require that, when the crossing gates for the Dinky close off Faculty Road, the traffic lights on Alexander also must turn red automatically. Jack West and Kristin Appelget recommended that the Chair send a letter from the committee (the draft of which is attached to and made a part of these minutes) to the New Jersey Department of Transportation’s Railroad Engineering & Safety Unit urging that the agency investigate the consequences for traffic that would result from this change in operation and re-consider. Comments on the letter should be forwarded to Bob Kiser.

7. Priority Goals of Mayor and Council

Sam Bunting presented a list of Traffic and Transportation priorities from the 2013 priority list of the Mayor and Council. Mayor Lempert has asked the Committee to prepare a list with measurable benchmarks. Anton Lahnston asked committee members to review the list and prepare recommendations for discussion at a future meeting. Sam Bunting suggested that there should be fewer, more actionable priorities. Chairman Lahnston said that the 2013 list was really a catchall for every issue on the table at the time of consolidation. Now they should be turned into an actionable list. The priorities should be related to the Circulation Element in the Master Plan and to “Complete Streets.” Kristin Appelget added that they should also be related to the capital budget. Sam Bunting provided copies of the 2013 Mayor and Council Priorities which is attached to and made a part of these minutes.

8. Princeton Future Forum on Traffic and Transportation

Chairman Lahnston announced that Princeton Future will sponsor a public forum on Traffic and Transportation on February 22 in the community room of the Princeton Public Library and invited all committee members to attend. A copy of the public announcement is attached to and made a part of these minutes.

9. Action Register

Surinder Sharma circulated the Action Register and asked that any suggested changes be forwarded to him.

Chairman Lahnston adjourned the meeting at 7:15 p.m. and announced that the next committee meeting will be on March 10, 2014.

Respectfully submitted

Ralph R. Widner
Secretary

Attachments:

- (1) Summary of Accidents, 2010-2013.
- (2) Police Reports for December 2013 and January 2014.
- (3) Examples of bus shelters available from New Jersey Transit
- (4) Recommended ordinance to eliminate parking on Eastern Side of Scott Lane.
- (5) Recommended ordinance to provide 25 percent of cost for a feasibility study of a left turn signal on U.S. 206 at Paul Robeson.
- (6) Draft letter regarding concerns about new lights at Faculty and Alexander
- (7) 2013 Mayor & Council priorities for traffic and transportation.
- (8) Announcement of February 22 Traffic and Transportation public forum.
- (9) Action Register.

ATTACHMENT 1

PRINCETON ACCIDENT SUMMARY 2010-2013

Total Accidents Involving Motor Vehicles, Pedestrians and Bikers, January-December

	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
2010	85	96	91	94	96	108	88	97	91	83	114	111	1,154
2011	146	118	83	85	99	88	100	99	91	85	104	97	1,195
2012	77	91	81	75	112	100	74	76	81	111	89	62	1,029
2013	77	91	67	79	83	79	86	66	77	88	94	94	981

Total Persons Injured in Accidents, January-December

	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
2010	5	11	8	18	9	7	7	16	9	14	13	11	128
2011	11	7	14	8	8	6	16	12	13	14	19	15	143
2012	7	14	11	9	16	9	8	11	10	9	11	11	126
2013	5	10	6	7	7	10	9	7	6	7	13	16	103

Total Motor Vehicle Accidents Involving Pedestrians, January-December

Pedestrian Accidents	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
2010	0	1	0	3	1	1	0	2	2	1	0	0	11
2011	0	2	1	1	0	1	4	0	1	0	2	4	16
2012	0	5	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	4	3	0	18
2013	3	1	*2	1	3	0	0	2	1	1	0	1	15

* One Bicycle/pedestrian accident (no mva)

Total Motor Vehicle Accidents Involving Bicycles, January-December

Bicycle Accidents	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
2010	0	2	0	2	1	1	0	1	0	3	0	1	11
2011	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	3	3	3	1	11
2012	0	0	0	0	2	3	0	2	1	0	0	1	9
2013	3	1	0	2*	1	2	1	0	2	3	1	1	15

* One Bicycle/pedestrian accident (no mva)

Causes of Bicycle/Pedestrian Accidents, April-December 2013

	April	May	June	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Pedestrian Accidents										
<i>Engineering</i>										
<i>Behavior</i>	1	3	0	0	2	1	1	0	1	9
Bicycle Accidents										
<i>Engineering</i>			.5							.5
<i>Behavior</i>	2	1	1.5	1		2	3	1	1	11

Motor Vehicle Accidents with Deer

	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
2013	3	2	3	0	2	1	1	0	2	5	8	3	30

Total Citations for Speeding

	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
2013	131	116	67	84	50	57	65	33	56	53	57	31	800

Total Citations for Cell Phone Use While Driving

	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
2013	50	64	46	35	34	36	37	16	34	42	23	7	424

Total Citations for Not Wearing Seatbelts

	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
2013	10	13	12	15	70	21	16	11	8	8	7	2	193