

MINUTES
PRINCETON TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
April 21, 2014
Conference Room A
Witherspoon Municipal Building

Present: Robert Altman, Kristin Appelget (Princeton University liaison), Jo Butler (Council liaison), Sam Bunting, Pamela Hersh, Robert Kiser (staff liaison), Surinder Sharma, Jack West (staff liaison), Deanna Stockton (engineering staff), and Ralph Widner. **Absent:*** Anton Lahnston (Chair), Sgt. Tom Murray (police department liaison), **Guests:** Michael and Unia Oliver (owners of Skillman Furniture)

* Murali Balasubramanian has resigned from the committee after serving the community for several years on both the Borough T and T Committee and the consolidated Princeton T and T Committee .

Vice Chair Robert Altman convened the meeting at 5:18 p.m.

1. Approval of Minutes, March 10, 2014 Meeting

Robert Altman moved approval of the minutes of the March 10, 2014 meeting. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

2. Police Report

Sgt. Tom Murray was unable to attend the meeting. The police report for March was postponed until the next meeting.

3. Report on Bus Shelters

Pam Hersh reported that on March 11 she and Bob Kiser submitted the committee's proposal to the Mass Transit Trust Fund trustees to fund a bus shelter design competition. The trustees raised questions about how maintenance would be financed. In addition, management of Palmer Square has yet to be asked about whether it would accept installation of a customized bus shelter near the kiosk. Bob Kiser said that the manager at Princeton Shopping Center seemed amenable to the idea of a customized shelter there. Both Pam Hersh and Bob Kiser felt that the Trust Fund trustees would fund the design competition once these questions are settled. Bob Kiser added that New Jersey Transit is prepared to provide five shelters per year and that the shelters would be placed in accordance with the list of sites proposed previously to the committee.

4. Arts and Transit District

Jack West reported that the university's aim is to have most of the street-side work on Alexander and University Place cleaned up in time for graduation. There are concerns about drivers not stopping for pedestrians at the new crosswalk near the entrance to the Dinky parking lot. In response, the police department has decided to increase monitoring and enforcement.

Jo Butler said she thought that it had been agreed during the MOU discussions that the university's public safety force would do this. Kristin Appelget said that the decision was that the town's police force would do so. Jo Butler added that she thought the visual clutter along Alexander at this stage of construction confused drivers and perhaps leads to some of the violations.

Marvin Reed remarked that there are more mid-street pedestrian warning signs than he can ever remember. Kristin Appelget said that the university paid for them.

5. Report of the T & T Subcommittee

- a. Deanna Stockton submitted proposed plans to provide bike lanes or bike paths along **Mt. Lucas, Hamilton, and Prospect Avenue**. They are attached to and made a part of these minutes.

Sam Bunting said that the Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee has some concerns about visibility on the proposed side paths on Hamilton, and about side paths, in general. Deanna Stockton said that the conflict between ordinances of the former borough and township regarding bicyclists and pedestrian priorities on such paths should be reconciled and a new ordinance prepared. The township posted "bike route" signs; the borough did not. Sam Bunting asked if there is time for further discussion on this matter. Deanna Stockton responded there is. A few more weeks will pass before the plans move forward. Sam Bunting said that he felt the Prospect plan could move ahead. Deanna Stockton pointed out that the plan eliminates the existing islands on Prospect. The school district sees no problem for school buses dropping off or picking up students at Riverside School.

Jo Butler asked if side paths were safer for children on bikes. Sam Bunting responded that research clearly shows that on-road bicycle facilities are safer than sidewalk or side path riding. He said that most active bicyclists prefer a lane rather than a side path. Generally they seem to be safer because they reduce pedestrian-cyclist conflicts and conflicts between cyclists and cars at intersections and driveways. However, it may well be that young children and some riders feel safer riding on a sidewalk or side path. If we succeed in increasing the number of cyclists in town, it may well be that less serious cyclists will prefer side paths. He wants to discuss this in committee some more.

Deanna Stockton added that Public Works prefers more "gradual" curb bump outs and that EMS asks for "mountable" bump outs so that emergency vehicles can go over them when making a sharp turn.

- b. Jack West showed the site plan to be submitted to the Planning Board for **255 Nassau Street**. It calls for an additional curb cut, meaning that there will be three curb cuts/driveways at the site. The developer wanted a permanent easement for the university's access to and through the site. Kristin Appelget said the university had been willing to grant a temporary easement, but—as a matter of policy—never grants a permanent easement, as the developer had requested.

Pam Harsh expressed concerns about pedestrian and bicycle safety at the heavily trafficked site. Kristin Appelget pointed out that this has always been a busy location. Jack West said that there was no need for the committee to make recommendations concerning the plan.

- c. Deanna Stockton reported that she is preparing a **“Safe Routes to School” grant application** for federal reimbursement to improve traffic light timing on Franklin and Hamilton (about \$300,000 per light). This will enable safer student crossings on Franklin and Hamilton, particularly for the John Witherspoon and Charter schools. The grants are administered by NJDOT and reimburse local costs for safety improvements within two miles of a school. No local match is required this year.
- d. Jack West reported that efforts to reconcile township and borough **overnight parking ordinances** are underway with a particular emphasis upon the Witherspoon neighborhood.
- e. Deanna Stockton reported that a contract with IH Engineers has been let to do **12-hour traffic counts at Mountain and Great Road/Elm**. This is the first step toward determining whether a traffic light at the intersection would promote traffic flow and traffic safety.
- f. Bob Kiser reported that he reached agreement with the county and state to move forward with an **evaluation of traffic light timing at Elm and Stockton** and the NJDOT has agreed to move forward with our long-requested **evaluation of the light at Washington/ Nassau/ Vandeventer**.
- g. Bob Kiser said that Public Works stopped action on re-location of the meter and parking space on Chambers Street approved by the committee at its March meeting. He and Sgt. Tom Murray will meet with Public Works to resolve the issue before forwarding the draft ordinance to Council.

Sam Bunting suggested that when we decide—because of visibility concerns—to eliminate a parking space, it might be a good idea to place bike racks in them so that trucks do not seize the opportunity to use the space as an impromptu loading zone. There was general consensus that this is an idea worth serious investigation and consideration.

6. Action Register

Surinder Sharma submitted the Action Register and asked committee members to send him any additions or corrections. The register is attached to and made a part of these minutes.

7. 2014 Traffic and Transportation Priorities for Council

Robert Altman suggested that we postpone discussion of the spreadsheet submitted at the last meeting until Anton Lahnston can participate.

New Business

Ralph Widner said that over the past several years, he has watched how Coach USA and NJ Transit buses load and unload passengers at the Palmer Square/Kiosk bus stop. There is insufficient curb space for them to stop flush with the curb. Frequently, they load and unload passenger at a 45 degree angle that blocks the inside and part of the outside lanes on westbound Nassau. Frequently, vehicles that want to make a right turn into Palmer Square, attempt to slip around and turn directly in front of the bus. On several occasions, this has happened just as the bus prepared to pull out and an accident was barely averted. He suggested that, as part of our plan to install a customized bus shelter at the location, we also investigated how this major stop can be reconfigured for improved safety and convenience.

Robert Altman adjourned the meeting at 6:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ralph R. Widner
Secretary