

MINUTES
PRINCETON TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
October 20, 2014
Conference Room A
Witherspoon Municipal Building

Present: Robert Altman, Kristin Appelget (Princeton University liaison), Nat Bottigheimer, Sam Bunting, Jo Butler (Council liaison, substituting for Jenny Crumiller), Robert Kiser (Engineer liaison), Sgt. Tom Murray (police department liaison), Surinder Sharma, Deanna Stockton (engineering staff), Jack West (engineering staff), and Ralph Widner. **Absent:** Amner Deleon, Pamela Hersh
Guests: Juliana McIntyre and Dr. Richard Fenn, (Edgehill Street residents) and Hendrick Davis (John Street resident).

The meeting convened at 5:15 p.m.

1. Approval of Minutes

Nat Bottigheimer moved and Surinder Sharma seconded approval of the minutes for the meeting on September 9, 2014. The motion was approved unanimously.

2. Traffic Safety Subcommittee Recommendations Regarding Edgehill Street

Robert Altman reported that the Traffic Safety Subcommittee met with residents of Edgehill Street to discuss their concerns about speeding and traffic safety on both Edgehill and adjoining parts of Mercer Street. Following that meeting, the Traffic Safety Subcommittee recommends that the Traffic and Transportation Committee endorse the following specific actions, and that those requiring ordinance be forwarded to Council:

- the speed limit on Edgehill Street be lowered from 25 mph to 20 mph;
- that signs should be placed at appropriate locations on the street to that effect;
- that several parking spaces on Mercer Street should be eliminated; and —
- that an advanced warning sign should be posted for the crosswalk on Mercer Street.

Sgt. Murray said that he researched the history of efforts to address resident concerns on this street; that he thinks the proposals are sound and comprehensive; and that he supports them.

Sam Bunting asked about the process behind these recommendations, given that we turned down a similar request from residents on Terhune not long ago. Sgt. Murray responded that the circumstances are different on the two thoroughfares concerning traffic, pedestrians, character and dimensions of the street, etc., and that it is up to the committee to make decisions based on the merits.

Mr. Fenn said that organized tour groups often walk the street en route from the Einstein house.

Sam Bunting and Jo Butler inquired about impact on the adjacent streets. Sgt. Murray said that he looked at all of them and concluded that adverse consequences seemed unlikely, but that the committee was prepared to review requests from any of the adjacent streets.

Ralph Widner moved and Nat Bottigheimer seconded approval of the T & T Subcommittee recommendations. They were approved unanimously. However, Sam Bunting was out of the room temporarily.

3. Committee Goals for 2015

Chairman Altman submitted a draft of the committee's goals for 2015.

Sam Bunting asked why the targets for speeding were removed from the draft. Chairman Altman replied that they were construed as targets to apprehend speeders rather than targets to establish consistent procedures to establish speed limits on all of the town's streets.

Sam Bunting then said that he is concerned about the lack of enforcement regarding drivers who do not stop for pedestrians in crosswalks. Sgt. Murray responded that it is a straightforward problem of personnel—not enough officers to meet all public safety demands at the same time. If an officer does not see the violation he cannot issue a summons.

Jo Butler said that at some intersections drivers can not see pedestrians until their vehicle actually enters the crosswalk. She used the Chambers Street/Nassau intersection as an example.

Ralph Widner moved, and Surinder Sharma seconded, approval of the Traffic and Transportation Committee's Goals for 2015. ***They are attached to and made a part of these minutes.***

4. Resolution to Support Safety Improvements on Washington Road

In response to an accident involving serious injuries to an adult and child at the intersection of Washington Road and the D & R Canal Towpath, Chairman Altman and Robert Kiser presented draft resolution 2014-R that will be considered by Council urging Mercer County to install safety improvements at that location. If endorsed by the Traffic and Transportation Committee, the resolution will reflect the Committee's support.

Robert Kiser said that the crossing lies inside the municipality's jurisdiction, but Washington Road is a county road.

Sgt. Murray described the circumstances of the accident, but said the investigation is still underway, so he declined to assign fault until the investigation is completed.

Robert Kiser said that safety improvements on Washington should correspond to those at the D & R Canal intersections on Alexander and Harrison. Jo Butler asked why there is a difference. Robert Kiser explained that the university funded the safety improvements on Alexander, and that the county had done so on Harrison. Washington did not seem as necessary at the time.

Sgt. Murray said that there have been lots of improvements to solar technology and that the visibility of in-ground lights can be improved considerably on Harrison and Alexander, and that the county should be urged do the same on Washington.

This prompted Jo Butler to express concerns about the visibility and lighting of the crosswalk north of the new traffic roundabout at the junction of Alexander and University Place. She asked what the accident experience had been there because she noticed some real hesitancy on the part of drivers as they entered the circle from the south to continue up Alexander. Traffic entering from University Place seemed to be a threat and neighbors near the circle don't think the pedestrian lights work.

Sgt. Murray said that he had warned that the learning curve for drivers would probably take several months after the circle was completed and that learning process is still underway.

Nat Bottigheimer moved, and Sam Bunting seconded, that the draft resolution be approved and forwarded to Council, which in turn will send it to the County Freeholders. ***The draft resolution is attached to and made a part of these minutes.***

5. Public Comments

Mr. Hendrick Davis, resident of John Street, asked about progress to harmonize parking regulations between the former borough and township. He is particularly concerned about Lytle Street where, he said, parking limit signs that once existed were removed. They remain on all other streets in Witherspoon-Jackson neighborhood. As a consequence cars park bumper-to-bumper on the street, even in crosswalks and right up against intersections. He asked for immediate action.

Robert Altman and Sgt. Murray explained that the process should involve meeting with a group of Lytle Street residents to discuss the as there are often disagreements between neighbors on such matters and there has to be some neighborhood unity before the town acts. Robert Kiser offered to facilitate such a meeting.

6. Parking Ordinance Harmonization

Jack West reported that the group attempting to harmonize overnight parking rules met September 29 to examine options. Deanna Stockton said that one option is not to change the regulations, others to adapt the former rules to the character of the street and neighborhood.

In response to a question from Nat Bottigheimer, who said that this was the first time he ever lived in a community that restricted overnight parking, Sgt. Murray commented that allowing overnight parking without restriction can mean that some cars remain more or less permanently parked, sometimes becoming a public hazard or nuisance. The issues are how to allow enough flexibility in permit parking so that families can entertain guests.

Jack West said that the group will continue its review of options. Deanna Stockton said that it is likely to be several months before recommendations are ready for Council.

7. Transit Study for Mass Transit Trust Fund

Ralph Widner reported that during the morning the Master Plan Committee of the Planning Board voted to serve as the “client” for a Princeton Future survey of drivers who might convert to the use of transit if it were convenient, dependable, and affordable, and thereby reduce vehicular traffic. The study is funded by the community/Princeton University Mass Transit Trust Fund.

Since the study’s objectives coincide with the Traffic and Transportation Committee’s Goal 5.1 for 2015, he suggested that the Traffic and Transportation Committee be a co-client for the study. The Committee agreed.

The Agreement between the Master Plan Committee and Princeton Future is attached to and made a part of these minutes.

8. Bus Shelter Installation

Robert Kiser reported that agreements with New Jersey Transit to install five bus shelters on Harrison and Witherspoon are moving forward.

9. Traffic Safety Subcommittee Report

- Robert Kiser said the traffic signal changes on Bayard Lane are in place, but that the discussions to install an “all-cross” cycle at the Washington/Nassau/Vandeventer intersection are ongoing. The matter of similar signals at the Witherspoon and University Place intersections with Nassau will be pursued when the Washington/Nassau/Vandeventer intersection work is completed.
- Deanna Stockton said that NJ DOT had misunderstood our earlier request concerning the timing of lights at the Elm Road/ Stockton (I.U.S. 206) intersection and that it is now reviewing whether the

change can be made using the equipment already in place, rather than replacing the entire system as it originally understood.

- Robert Kiser said that NJ DOT now indicates the re-surfacing of U.S. 206 from Princeton to Lawrenceville may be two years off because of funding issues.

Ralph Widner remarked that the new Transportation Commissioner Jamie Foxx is on record advocating an increase in the gasoline tax in order to re-charge the Highway Trust Fund. He argued that the town and all others should back him. ***Robert Altman said he would place that on the agenda for future consideration.***

- Deanna Stockton reported that the plans for installing signals and crosswalks at Mountain Avenue and Great Road have been forwarded to the county and that the town has applied for a state grant for its installation.
- Robert Kiser reported that the old township Department of Public Works garage has been torn down. He said application has been made to install a light at Valley Road and U.S. 206 that would require a variance from NJ DOT's normal rule that lights should not be closer to each other than 1000 feet. The Cherry Hill light is a short distance north on U.S. 206 from the proposed new light.

10. Police Report

Sgt. Murray submitted the Police Report for September 2014. There was one pedestrian accident with injuries at the intersection of Edgehill Road and U.S. 206 (Stockton). ***The report is attached to and made a part of these minutes.***

11. Arts & Transit Update

Kristin Appelget announced that the Dinky station will open some time in November. She said she is astounded at the number of bike vendor requests received and that there will be ample provisions for bikers at the station.

12. Action Register

Chairman Altman said that he and Surinder Sharma will work together between now and the next meeting to format the Action Register so that it is consistent with the Goals adopted for 2015.

The meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Ralph R. Widner
Secretary