

**MINUTES**  
**PRINCETON TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE**  
**January 11, 2016**  
**Conference Room A**  
**Witherspoon Municipal Building**

**Present:** Robert Altman, Kristin Appelget (Princeton University liaison), Sam Bunting, Jenny Crumiller (Council liaison), Amner Deleon, Pam Hersh, Robert Kiser (Engineering liaison), Sgt. Tom Murray (Police Department liaison), Surinder Sharma, Deanna Stockton (Princeton Engineering), Jack West (Princeton Engineering), Ralph Widner. **Absent:** Nat Bottigheimer. **Guests:** Philip Abrams, Anton Lahnston (Chair, Public Transit Committee), Dan Rappaport.

The meeting convened at 5:15 p.m.

**1. Review and Approval of Minutes of November 16, 2015 Meeting**

Ralph Widner said that he has corrected numerous typographical errors in the circulated draft minutes. Chairman Bob Altman asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the November 16, 2015 meeting as corrected. Surinder Sharman moved approval. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

**2. Resolution Re-Structuring Transportation-Related Committees.**

Chairman Altman circulated a draft resolution developed at a meeting of representatives of all the committees involved in transportation, which he said he inadvertently did not attend. The draft is attached to and made a part of these minutes.

If adopted by Council, it would re-constitute the Traffic and Transportation Committee as the "Complete Streets Committee," an umbrella committee intended to coordinate all the elements of the Complete Streets Policy adopted by the former borough and township governments in February and March 2012 and incorporated into the Master Plan by the Planning Board on November 12, 2013.

He said that Council member Jenny Crumiller, Anton Lahnston (Chair, Public Transit Committee), and Ralph Widner, representing the Traffic and Transportation Committee, prepared the draft. Because not all members of the committee were involved in the discussions that led up to the draft, and because there were some questions about both structure and process, Council member Jenny Crumiller wanted it discussed by the full Traffic and Transportation Committee before Council takes it up.

He invited Jenny Crumiller to explain the reasoning behind the resolution.

Jenny Crumiller said that part of the concern is that we have a set of “silos” regarding transportation, and that the Complete Streets Policy contemplates a “holistic” approach to how we manage our traffic and transportation issues. At present, the Pedestrian and Bicycle Committee focuses almost entirely upon bicycles, while most pedestrian issues are addressed by the Traffic Safety Committee, or the Traffic and Transportation Committee.

Anton Lahnston added that, after assuming chairmanship of the Public Transit Advisory Committee when Marvin Reed stepped down, he felt that the committee had become unwieldy in terms of the number of members, and its relationship to other transportation bodies in the town.

He said that he could not help but look at the matter from his perspective as the former Chair of the Consolidation Task Force. Initially, right after we began functioning as a consolidated municipality in January 2013, he continued, we retained the structure of many of the boards and committees that formerly existed in the borough and township. Now, after three years of experience, he and others recognize that some structural adjustments are necessary in order to help advise the Council more effectively. He finds the present set up regarding transportation chaotic and not well designed to implement the Complete Streets Policy effectively.

Ralph Widner reminded the committee of an exchange during a committee meeting in October 2015 when a member of the public asked: “To where do I turn when I want to find out about traffic volumes on our streets? Do I go to the Planning Board? Or do I come to this committee?” Marvin Reed, the Planning Board liaison, replied that the Planning Board classifies the arterials and connectors in town, but that the Traffic and Transportation Committee is responsible for monitoring the actual traffic. Chairman Altman responded that this is not his understanding of the Traffic and Transportation Committee’s responsibilities. Ralph Widner and Surinder Sharma said they did not agree with that assessment.

Continuing, Ralph Widner said this exchange made clear that there is a great gap in transportation policy and planning for the town that has been, and continues to go, unfilled. The Circulation Element of the Master Plan expresses only goals and aspirations. There are no strategies or concrete action steps in the plan to attain those goals. If that is not the Planning Board’s responsibilities, whose is it? Now that we have adopted the Complete Streets Policy, an answer to that question is doubly important. Otherwise, the Master Plan and the Complete Streets Policy are no more than “wish lists” — meaningless pieces of paper.

Sam Bunting said that it really boils down to “What does the Council Want?” The role of these boards and commissions is to provide advice to the Mayor and Council, not to be operating arms of government. He said that he is not clear what the PBAC actually does. The municipality’s staff does most of the planning. Doesn’t Council need to make clear what functions it wants these boards and committees to perform?

Anton Lahnston said that this has been done. He pointed to the voluminous handbook every new board or committee appointee is asked to read before serving.

Pam Hersh said that, nevertheless, people have to know where to go. It is obvious that there is confusion about who does what.

Bob Altman said that in the draft resolution, the Traffic Safety Committee is regarded in the same light as the Public Transit Advisory Committee, the Pedestrian and Bicycle Advisory Committee, and the Traffic and Transportation Committee, even though it is actually a staff committee. He and Jenny Crumillier attend all of its meetings as if they are invited guests. It addresses the dozens of day-to-day traffic safety issues that arise in town, but it should in no way come under the reporting and operating requirements that govern the boards and commissions.

Ralph Widner pointed out that the Traffic Safety Committee is really a perpetuation of the former township’s Traffic Safety Committee. The Traffic and Transportation Committee is a perpetuation of the former borough’s committee. This is what leads to both operational and public confusion.

He asked Sgt. Murray about the issue of safety as a case in point. We all agree that over 90 percent of our pedestrian and bicycle accidents are behavioral in origin, yet almost all of our “safety” actions are focused on engineering-related matters: poor lighting, line-of-sight, crosswalk signs & lights, etc. We have five or six uncoordinated traffic safety education programs, but they barely make a dent in changing behavior. Don’t we need a concerted, long-term traffic safety education program that involves a lot more resources and personnel than can be addressed in the Traffic Safety Committee or by the Police Department alone?

Sgt. Murray responded by advising not to meddle with the Traffic Safety Committee. As soon as a problem is identified, action can take place within 24 hours.

Anton Lahnston asked how the public knows about the work of the Traffic Safety Committee if it is not required to report or operate in public view? Bob Kiser said that usually staff is in contact with complainants within a very short time, so there is community interaction and transparency at that level.

Surinder Sharma said that the committee titles in the draft resolution do not correspond to the official titles listed on the town's website. He submitted a markup indicating the disparities. He also said that he can not tell what the objectives are. We need a clearer draft.

Amner Deleon said that he agreed with the intent and concept of the resolution, but that a clearer draft is necessary.

Pam Hersh said that she agreed, particularly with the need for a link to the Planning Board and its process in order to make sure we get the "big picture", and she volunteered to help with a re-draft.

Sam Bunting moved, and Amner Deleon seconded, that the resolution be clarified and re-drafted, then turned over to Jenny Crumiller, who will submit it for consideration by Council.

### **3. Bus Shelters**

Bob Kiser reported that, with the exception of the proposed "green roof" on the bus shelter at Palmer Square, during an informal meeting with the Historic Preservation Commission the other planned shelters at stops on Nassau Street (Rt.27) were viewed favorably. The commission felt that the "green roof" was inconsistent with the colors and character of other street furniture in the area.

He said that NJ Transit is willing to provide a 14-foot shelter for the Palmer Square stop in lieu of the one proposed and he submitted a picture of how that would look, which is attached to and made a part of these minutes.

Pam Hersh said that, before proceeding she wants to solicit the views and advice of Jim Constantine regarding whether we should press the case for the "green roof" shelter and as his opinion of the NJ Transit offer. She said she would do this in the context of the recommendations he is preparing for the Nassau streetscape in general.

#### **4. Bicycle Master Plan**

Sam Bunting said that attended a public session for the Bicycle Master Plan at which a charette was held, and that the process seems to be going well. Deanna Stockton added that two focus groups have been convened so far and a third is scheduled for January 20. Participants in all three might then be brought together for discussions before a draft is prepared and public meetings held to consider it. In response to a question from Dan Rappaport, she said that so far there have been no strong areas of disagreement.

#### **5. Police Reports**

Sgt. Murray submitted the police reports for November and December 2015, which are attached to and made a part of these minutes.

In November, there were 75 occurrences, seven involving injuries. Two were with pedestrians, one with a bicycle. No injuries were incurred in a second bicycle accident. There were five accidents with deer, none involving injuries. Sgt. Murray noted a decline in summons for many violation categories, probably because the number of officers is done as a result of retirements and leaves.

Seven injuries resulted from 85 occurrences in December 2015, one with a pedestrian; none in four deer accidents.

The meeting adjourned at 7 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ralph Widner  
Secretary