

PRINCETON TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes

June 10, 2013

Community Meeting Room A

Witherspoon Hall

Present: Robert Altman, Kristen Appelget (Princeton University liaison), Jo Butler (Council liaison), Pamela Hersh, Robert Kiser (staff liaison), Anton Lahnston (Chair), Sgt. Tom Murray (police department liaison), Marvin Reed (Planning Board liaison), Surinder Sharma, Jack West (staff liaison), Ralph Widner. **Absent:** Murali Balasubramanian, Jan Weinberg. **Guests:** John Heilner and Dan Rappaport.

Chairman Anton Lahnston convened the meeting at 5:15 p.m. He asked all committee members to sign a consent form after reading the municipality's *Board, Commission & Committee Members' Handbook*. Some members said that they had signed the form at the start of the year.

1. U.S. 206 Re-Paving and Modified Curb Ramps

Jo Butler informed the committee that NJDOT plans to replace the current curb ramps and slightly re-locate the crosswalks at the Stockton/Nassau Street intersection during re-paving of U.S. 206 this fall.

2. Review and Approval of Minutes

Robert Altman moved approval of the minutes for the May 13, 2013 meeting. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

3. Police Report for May 2013

Sgt. Tom Murray reported 83 accidents during May, seven with injuries. Three were motor vehicle accidents with pedestrians, one with a bicycle. He explained that there is usually a discrepancy between the number of accidents and his tally because in some cases no report is filed on an accident. These are not included in his report. He recommended, however, that we use the higher actual number in our statistical tally for the year. He also said that all pedestrian accidents are reported as "with injury" because EMS is always called to the scene for such accidents.

He reported that one accident occurred because the pedestrian tried to rush across busy U.S. 206 outside of a crosswalk. A truck struck her. The truck driver does not appear to be at fault. In another incident, a motorist backed out of his/her driveway and struck a sidewalk pedestrian. The third occurred at 1 a.m. in the dark when a car hit a pedestrian in a crosswalk. The bicycle accident resulted when a juvenile rode against a stop sign.

Jo Butler said that every morning she observes traffic and pedestrian behavior at the Herrontown-U.S. 206 intersection. She asked whether it would make sense to forbid left turns onto U.S. 206 from Herrontown and also put a “Stop for Pedestrians” sign in the middle of the crosswalk on Herrontown. Sgt. Murray replied that he can provide five years of data that indicate few pedestrian accidents there.

Anton Lahnston testified personally to quick response by our police. A car failed to stop for his wife while she was in a crosswalk and bumped her. Fortunately, a patrol car was nearby, saw the incident, and promptly pursued, stopped, and ticketed the motorist.

He added that anyone who doubts that we have a pedestrian safety education problem should have watched behavior at the Witherspoon-Nassau Street intersection during commencement.

The chairman asked Sgt. Murray if he thought it was useful for Ralph Widner to record monthly and annual accident statistics as part of the minutes. He responded that he thought it was quite useful. Surinder Sharma seconded that view.

4. Bus Shelter Installation

Pam Hersh reported that New Jersey Transit has provided a list of the most frequently used bus stops in town. She said that decisions now must be made about both locations and design and how to fund any upgrade from NJ Transit’s standard design. Bob Kiser circulated the list of most frequently used stops. This is attached to and made a part of these minutes.

There was some discussion about how location decisions should be made. Stops used by commuters will have the highest frequencies. Lower income persons use many other stops, so equity factors should be taken into account in decisions about location.

<p>The chairman asked about “next steps.” Pam Hersh said that she and Bob Kiser should prepare a proposed strategy for implementation and bring that back to the committee. The chairman said that should happen at the September meeting.</p>
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5. Comments by John Heilner on Dinky Parking

John Heilner, a resident on Library Place, requested that the Traffic and Transportation Committee and the town’s Engineering Department ensure that Princeton University has provided, as it promised, the same number of commuter parking spaces during construction of the Arts and Transit District

as were available prior to construction. (His request is appended to and made a part of these minutes.)

Kristen Appelget replied that the university has done the counts and can provide a chart that can be verified.

Anton Lahnston said that he and others were shocked to discover that no parking is available across from the WAWA at present. Kristen Appelget responded that this was necessary because of utility work. Marvin Reed and Anton Lahnston said that elimination of these spaces was not identified in the submissions to the Planning Board. Kristen Appelget stressed that both sides of University Place will be open by July 31.

Jo Butler said that the public should be informed when something like this is going to happen. Kristen Appelget replied that the media are kept informed and that e-mail notices are sent out to everyone who has signed up for them. Pam Hersh suggested that the university take out full-page announcements in *Town Topics*, since everybody reads it. She also remarked that she felt that the original parking in front of the WAWA was extremely dangerous for those trying to back out into on-coming traffic.

The Chairman then asked that the following two actions be taken:

- a. In collaboration with Princeton University, Bob Kiser and Jack West should conduct an on-the-ground count to verify the number of commuter parking spaces that existed prior to the start of the project and compare that against those listed in the university's provisions for commuting parking until the project is completed.
- b. The university should fully inform the public of these facts and that the current parking situation in front of the WAWA and across the street will last until July 31 because of work on utilities.

6. Arts and Transit Update

Kristen Appelget said that the construction is on schedule. Sgt. Murray praised the cooperativeness of the construction project managers with the police department. Bob Kiser and Jack West agreed.

7. FreeB

Marvin Reed reported that extensions of FreeB daytime services, including through the noon hour, have been well received and that usage is up. Ridership on a Saturday was 72, a significant increase. Many of the improvements were achieved at modest cost. The schedules, including connections to NJ Transit buses 605, 606, and 655 are posted on the town's website and printed schedules and information are being distributed widely throughout the community.

Both Marvin Reed and Anton Lahnston credited the Greater Mercer Traffic Management Association for much of the progress.

8. Action Register

Anton Lahnston told Surinder Sharma that he has trouble keeping up with the status of initiatives listed on the Action Register. He suggested that they confer a week or so before each meeting to make sure action status is up to date. Surinder Sharma said that he also would e-mail each actionee two weeks before a meeting to ensure accuracy.

9. Speed Bumps and Speed Humps

Robert Altman submitted a report, appended to and made a part of these minutes, that analyzed national experience with the effectiveness of speed bumps and speed humps to slow down traffic and reduce the number of accidents.

The report concludes that, while these structures may temporarily slow down traffic, there is little evidence that they have resulted in measurable improvements to safety or accident reduction. On the other hand they cause significant problems for emergency vehicles. The delays incurred by these vehicles, particularly ambulances, pose significant dangers to human life, particularly when responding to emergencies involving heart attack and stroke.

Surinder Sharma suggested that perhaps the committee should hear out the positive case to be made by inviting some of the neighborhoods to explain their reasons and describe the benefits they believe they have received from installation of speed bumps or speed humps on their street.

Robert Altman replied that the positive reasons were examined by the study and that we would not learn anything new. Sgt. Murray added that the structures do not really slow down traffic, except temporarily. Additionally, once they are installed residents frequently do not want them in front of their house because of the noise.

Robert Altman moved that: "The Traffic and Transportation Committee recommends that Princeton state its intent to no longer create new speed bumps or speed humps on its public streets."

The Motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

10. Possible "Ap" for Resident Use

Anton Lahnston remarked that Murali Balasubramanian is unable to attend the meeting because he is stranded on a bus en route from New York. Murali and Jan Weinberg have been asked to look into development of an "ap" for

residents to use on their smart phones and tablets and computers that could provide more convenient access to and communication with the town's engineering and police departments.

11. Subcommittee Report

Cherry Valley Road: Bob Kiser reported that there was a constructive meeting with the county regarding elimination of the sharp curve on Cherry Valley Road. Sgt. Murray suggested that until the realignment is approved and funded, it might be useful to mark the road with chevron signs and striping.

Truck jake-breaking at Edgerstoune: Bob Kiser and Sgt. Murray reported that residents on Edgerstoune have requested that a "No Jake-breaking" sign be posted prior to the U.S. 206 traffic light at Edgerstoune.

Ralph Widner said that he understands that the Federal Highway Administration opposes such local restrictions for safety reasons. Sgt. Murray said that this is true because jake-breaking extends the life of truck break linings. Though communities may put up such signs, police cannot really enforce the restriction because of the Federal decision.

Ralph Widner moved that the Edgerstoune residents be informed that a sign could not be posted because of Federal objections. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

12. Avalon Bay Streets and Parking Plan

Jack West showed the committee the proposed street and parking plan for the Avalon Bay re-development of the former hospital site. He said that the planned redevelopment will generate about 45% as much traffic as the comings and goings to the former hospital. Some questions about garage access and on and off-street parking were raised in the discussion, but since the plans are currently up for engineering and planning review, the committee was not asked to take any action at this time.

Ralph Widner moved for adjournment. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved. The meeting adjourned at 7:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ralph R. Widner
Secretary

Attachments: (1) Accident Summary; (2) Police Report for May; (3) List of Most Frequently Used Bus Stops; (4) Action Register; (5) Report on Speed Bumps and Speed Humps.

**MONTHLY PRINCETON ACCIDENT SUMMARY TO DATE
2010-2013**

Total Accidents Involving Motor Vehicles, Pedestrians and Bikers, Jan -May

	January	February	March	April	May
2010	85	96	91	94	96
2011	146	118	83	85	99
2012	77	91	81	75	112
2013	77	91	67	79	83

Total Persons Injured in Accidents, Jan -May

	January	February	March	April	May
2010	5	11	8	18	9
2011	11	7	14	8	8
2012	7	14	11	9	16
2013	5	10	6	7	7

Total Motor Vehicle Accidents Involving Pedestrians, Jan -May

Pedestrian Accidents	January	February	March	April	May
2010	0	1	0	3	1
2011	0	2	1	1	0
2012	0	5	0	1	1
2013	3	1	2 (one death)	1*	3

* One Bicycle/pedestrian accident (no mva)

Total Motor Vehicle Accidents Involving Bicycles, Jan -May

Bicycle Accidents	January	February	March	April	May
2010	0	2	0	2	1
2011	0	0	0	0	0
2012	0	0	0	0	2
2013	3	1	0	2*	1

* One Bicycle/pedestrian accident (no mva)

Cause of Bicycle/Pedestrian Accident, 2013

	April	May		
Pedestrian Accidents				
<i>Engineering</i>				
<i>Behavior</i>	1	3		
Bicycle Accidents				
<i>Engineering</i>				
<i>Behavior</i>	2	1		

Motor Vehicle Accidents with Deer

	January	February	March	April	May
2013	3	2	3	0	2

Total Citations for Speeding

	January	February	March	April	May
2013	131	116	67	84	50

Total Citations for Cell Phone Use While Driving

	January	February	March	April	May
2013	50	64	46	35	34

Total Citations for Not Wearing Seatbelts

	January	February	March	April	May
2013	10	13	12	15	70