

Town of University Park

Council Committee on Police, Traffic and Public Safety

Wednesday, October 3, 2012

University Park Elementary School

4315 Underwood Street

Meeting Notes

Committee Members: Michael Cron, Council Member Ward 6; James Gekas, Council Member, Ward 2; Roy Alvarez, Council Member Ward 7, Committee Chair

Guests: Michael Wynnyk, University Park Chief of Police
James Cook, Tru Count Data

Residents of University Park that attended the meeting included Robert Bourque, Bryson Couvillon, Mickey Lucas, John Shoaff, Ed Lee, Katherine Motsuk, and Joe Thompson. In addition, a student from the University of Maryland attended this meeting as a class assignment

1. Discussion of the traffic study completed for Wards 2 and 6, Spring 2012

The Traffic Study for Wards 2 and 6 was originally reviewed at the Town Council meeting on September 24, 2012. The author of the study, Mr. James Cook, noted that he did the Traffic Study for Wards 2 and 6 because of concerns related to the volume and speed of traffic in specific areas of those two wards. The purpose of the study was to provide data to assist the Mayor and Town Council in determining the need for traffic control in the areas.

Mr. Cook stated that compared to 40th Ave. or College Heights Drive, Tennyson Rd. doesn't have much of a speeding problem. The problem is that the posted speed limit of 25 -- the same by current law for any residential street regardless of its width or sight lines -- is not low enough to provide the proper measure of safety. With the curve in the road obscuring approaching vehicles, residents don't seem to have enough time to safely enter or exit their cars from the driver's side, even when going the posted speed limit (or even slightly below). Opposing drivers are similarly surprised, particularly at the approach to the curve. The complaint of driver-side mirrors being clipped by passing cars seems to exist all over town. However, Tennyson's relatively narrow width with cars parked on both sides means that even the slightest distraction, even for cars traveling at the posted limit, can often result in damage to parked vehicles.

Mr. Alvarez noted that the Town was in the process of interviewing and hiring a traffic engineer to do a complete study of traffic in University Park and to make recommendations about traffic flow in the Town before and after the Cafritz development opens. Some decisions about traffic flow will need to be deferred until the Town traffic study is completed and recommendations are made by the traffic engineer.

Ward 6 resident Ed Lee expressed his concerns about the traffic speed on College Heights Drive. He provided the committee members with a written statement about his concerns along with a detailed map of the placement of stop signs and speed bumps and speed tables in the Town.

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Mr. Gekas reviewed the traffic problems on Tennyson Road. There is a large volume of traffic on this narrow street which has resulted in damage to several parked vehicles. In some instances, vehicles often travel too fast for the narrow street. Much of the problem occurs during the morning hours when many cars and school busses are in route to the elementary school.

Several possibilities for traffic control on Tennyson Road were discussed:

- (1) Make Tennyson a one-way street (Council Member Gekas noted that, in the past, most residents along Tennyson Road were opposed to one-sided parking)
- (2) Add a speed bump or speed table
- (3) Restrict parking to one side of the street
- (4) Restrict entrance to Tennyson Road from 40th Avenue between the hours of 7:00 AM and 9:00 AM on school days, and add a speed bump or speed table on 40th Street south of Tennyson Road to control the speed of the additional traffic

Ward 2 resident Katherine Motsuk expressed opposition to adding a speed bump on Tennyson Road between 40th and 41st Avenue. She does not believe that reducing the speed would solve the problem and it would make it difficult for her to transport her daughter who has a medical problem that is exacerbated by being bounced while riding in a car. Ms Motsuk asked if the speed limit on Tennyson Road could be lowered. Chief Wynnyk explained that state law will not allow the speed to be reduced. Mr. Cook also noted that speed is not the big problem. Mr. Gekas noted that a temporary speed bump could be installed at little or no cost to the Town.

Chief Wynnyk suggested that restricting traffic on Tennyson Road from 7:00 AM to 9:00 AM would reduce the flow to one way during those hours. The Chief also noted that he will contact school officials in attempt to have school bus traffic rerouted so the buses would use Queens Chapel Road to a greater extent than they do now.

Ward 2 resident Robert Bourque said that he would not oppose restricting Tennyson Road from 7:00 AM to 9:00 AM if a speed bump or speed table were placed on 40th Avenue south of Tennyson Road. He said reducing the speed of vehicles, especially those that appear to be cutting through from Adelphi Road to Route #1, was a major concern. He said he would discuss the prospect of a speed bump or speed table with his neighbors to determine if they would also be in favor of such a measure. He will contact Mr. Alvarez or Mr. Gekas with the results.

Ward 1 residents Joe Thompson and John Shoaff encouraged the Committee to recommend to the Town Council that speed bumps or speed tables be installed again on Sheridan Street. The speed bumps have been removed due to the recent street paving. They also suggested that a traffic triangle or "pork chop" be constructed to prevent the illegal right turn at corner of Sheridan Street and Route #1.

The possible use of rumble strips to reduce traffic speed was discussed. However, it was determined that rumble strips would be ineffective at slower speeds and they would increase vehicle noise in the neighborhood.

2. Committee recommendations to the Town Council concerning traffic control in Wards 2 and 6

The Committee made no specific suggestions for traffic control in Wards 2 and 6 at this time. A future meeting will be held to discuss the alternatives. The Committee anticipates this meeting will be held within the next few weeks.

3. Discuss committee recommendations on the use of stop bars, speed bumps, speed cameras and curb painting in the Town

The Committee Members voted unanimously to recommend to the Town Council that speed bumps or speed tables be reinstalled on Sheridan Street as soon as possible.

The Committee Members voted unanimously to recommend to the Town Council that the less expensive speed bumps or speed tables be installed throughout the Town. All speed bumps or speed tables should be uniform throughout the Town.

Chief Wynnyk asked the Committee to recommend to the Town Council that the Town Police Department investigate the installation of a speed camera/red light camera on Adelphi Road near the library. The Chief indicated that there would be no cost to the Town for the camera or installation. Ward 2 resident Bryson Couvillon noted that speeding vehicles northbound on Adelphi was a significant problem. The Committee Members voted unanimously to recommend to the Town Council that the Town Police Department investigate the installation.

Further discussion of stop bars, speed bumps, speed tables, speed cameras, and curb painting will be held at a future meeting. The Committee anticipates this meeting will be held within the next few weeks.

4. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 PM.

Submitted by:

Roy Alvarez, Council Member, Ward 7

Chair of the Police, Traffic and Public Safety Committee