

Town of University Park

Council Committee on Police, Traffic and Public Safety

Monday, February 11, 2013
University Park Elementary School
4315 Underwood Street
University Park, Maryland

Meeting Notes

Committee Members: Michael Cron, Council Member Ward 6; James Gekas, Council Member, Ward 2; Roy Alvarez, Council Member Ward 7, Committee Chair
Arlene Christiansen, Council Member Ward 3, also attended

Guests: Ed Papazian, Traffic Engineer, Kimley Horne & Associates
Michael Wynnyk, University Park Chief of Police
Michael Beall, University Park Director of Public Works

Residents of University Park who attended the meeting included Robert Bourque, Bruce Burrows, Dave Clissold, Bryson Couvillon, Laurie Morrissey, Jen Russell and John Tornquist. In addition, a student from the University of Maryland attended this meeting as a class assignment

The Chair, Roy Alvarez, called the meeting to order at 7:35. He noted that the purpose of the meeting was for the Committee and Mr. Papazian to hear from residents about traffic concerns in the Town before a traffic survey was begun.

Agenda

1. Continue discussion of traffic control in the area around Tennyson Road, 40th Avenue and Queens Chapel Road.

Residents discussed the difficulty of traffic on Tennyson Road north of 40th Avenue. The narrow road with parking on both sides of the street makes it difficult for two-way traffic to travel on the road, especially in the morning on school days. Some residents of 40th Avenue, including Mr. Bourque and Mr. Tornquist, are concerned about the speed of traffic on their street east of Tennyson Road. It appears that many cars entering University Park from Adelphi Road via Tennyson Road speed down 40th Avenue toward Queens Chapel Road.

Discussion followed concerning closing Tennyson Road in one direction for a certain time before school opens and before school closes. The use of rumble strips or speed tables on 40th Avenue was also discussed. Mr. Bourque noted that his neighbors are not generally in favor of having a speed table in the area, and it was noted that rumble strips tend to make it noisy for houses in their vicinity.

Mr. Gekas recommends measuring the volume and speed along that stretch of 40th Avenue.

2. Discuss traffic control in the area of Van Buren Street and Route 1.

Laurie Morrissey and Jen Russell, residents of Van Buren Street between Route #1 and 44th Avenue, discussed the concern for speeding vehicles entering Van Buren Street from Route #1. Through discussion at the meeting and emails sent to the Committee, several residents requested that something be done to make the area safer. Vehicles entering University Park from Route #1 often speed toward 44th Avenue, often not stopping at the stop sign at the corner. This problem is particularly apparent in the morning before school, however it occurs throughout the day. The residents requested that the Town add a speed bump and/or a line by the stop sign (stop bar) to help control traffic.

It was also noted that turning from Van Buren on to Route #1 is difficult because of limited sight onto Route #1. In addition, drainage in the area is poor causing the road to become slick when it rains or snows.

Council Member Christiansen spoke with several residents on Van Buren between Route #1 and Queens Chapel Road. She noted that some residents mentioned that many drivers do not stop at the stop sign at Van Buren and Queens Chapel Road. She also noted that residents were curious as to the reason for parking being limited to one side of the street on 44th Avenue. Council Member Christiansen also noted that some residents were not in favor of having a traffic light installed at the intersection of Route #1 and Van Buren as is proposed in the current plan for the Cafritz development.

The Committee consensus was to suggest to the Town Council that they consider placing a temporary speed bump on Van Buren Street between Route #1 and 44th Avenue. The effects of the speed bump could be evaluated after several months to determine if it deterred speeding on that area of Van Buren Street. The Committee would also like the Town Council to consider painting stop bars at the stop signs on Van Buren Street at the intersections of 44th Avenue and at the intersection of Queens Chapel Road.

3. Discussion of proposal for curb painting and No Parking sign at the intersection of 44th Avenue and East-West Highway.

Bruce Burrows, a resident living on East-West Highway, spoke about the difficulty turning onto 44th Avenue from East-West Highway and turning on to East-West Highway from 44th Avenue. He noted that cars often park close to the corner, which restricts visibility and maneuverability at the intersection. He suggested erecting "No Parking" signs and painting yellow lines where parking is prohibited to prevent the problem. Mr. Beall and Chief Wynnyk suggested placing a "No Parking" sign twenty feet from the stop sign on 44th Avenue to help keep that area clear. It was noted by Committee Member Cron that painted curbs are not consistent with how many residents want the Town to look. Mr. Burrows said he would be interested in seeing what effect the "No Parking" sign would have on the traffic problems at that intersection.

The Committee will recommend that the Town Council consider having a “No Parking” sign erected twenty feet from the stop sign on 44th Avenue at the East-West Highway intersection.

4. Discussion of traffic control on College Heights Drive.

Dave Clissold, a resident living on College Heights Drive, said he believes traffic on College Heights Drive has slowed after Mr. Beall and Chief Wynnyk put speed limit signs up on the road. Mr. Beall and Chief Wynnyk noted that they did not add any new signs, they just moved the existing signs to areas that are more visible to drivers. They were happy to know that the new sign placement has been effective.

Chief Wynnyk suggested that the Town might want to investigate placing signs at entrances to the Town that welcome people to University Park and remind them that the maximum speed in the Town is 25 miles per hour.

Mr. Beall and Chief Wynnyk also noted that they will check stop signs throughout the Town to determine if they are at the proper height (usually 7-feet) and the appropriate size (30-inches).

5. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 PM.

Submitted for the Police, Traffic and Public Safety Committee by Committee Chair,
Council Member Roy Alvarez