

Town of University Park

Council Committee on Police, Traffic and Public Safety

January 14, 2016

6:30 PM

Corner of Woodberry Street and College Heights Drive
and Conference Room
University Park Town Hall
6724 Baltimore Avenue

Present

Committee Members: Linda Verrill, Council Member, Ward 4; Joe Thompson, Council Member, Ward 1; James Gekas, Council Member, Ward 2; Roy Alvarez, Council Member, Ward 7 and Committee Chair

Absent: Committee Member Michael Cron, Council Member, Ward 6

Guests: Lenford Carey, Mayor; Brad Hess, Council Member, Ward 3; Wayne McCully, Captain, University Park Police; Mickey Beall, Director of Public Works; James Cook, TruCount Data and Resident; Judy Lee, Dave Tully and Keenan Keeling, Residents of University Park

Meeting Notes

1. Update on Request for Four Way Stop at Woodberry and College Heights

The Committee met with the Mayor Carey, Mickey Beall, Director of Public Works and Captain McCully, University Park Police at the corner of Woodberry Street and College Heights Drive to continue discussion from the previous meeting on traffic and pedestrian safety in the area. Mr. Beall pointed out the possible placement of stop signs on College Heights Drive. These two additional stop signs are proposed to improve traffic safety and pedestrian safety at the intersection. Mr. Beall also noted that the shape of the intersection made it difficult for drivers to see around the corner and for pedestrians to see and be seen by drivers. He suggested that the intersection could be reconfigured when WSSC is working in the area replacing pipes under the road in the near future. The Mayor and Captain McCully both expressed their belief that placing two stop signs on College Heights Drive and reconfiguring the intersection would improve traffic safety at that intersection.

When the Committee reconvened at Town Hall at approximately 7:10 PM, the following motion was made by Committee Member Verrill and seconded by Committee Member Thompson:

The Police, Traffic and Public Safety Committee will recommend to the Town Council that two stop signs be installed on College Heights Drive at Woodberry Street and four stop bars should be painted at each of the four corners of the intersection. In addition, the intersection should be reconfigured when funds become available.

The motion passed 4 to 0.

2. Update on Request for Speed Bump on Tennyson between 41st and the Park

The Committee continued discussion from the last meeting of traffic problems on the block of Tennyson Road between 41st Avenue and the park with the help of Mr. Cook of TruCount Data who is a Town Resident and has done traffic studies for University Park in the past. Mr. Cook stated that he did

not believe that a speed bump would be effective on Tennyson because the motorists causing the problems are probably lost and likely enter the area once and do not return. A traffic study in the area would be expensive and may not be able to provide the data necessary to help alleviate the situation. He suspects that the problem is caused by drivers who are trying to leave Town by way of Queens Chapel Road or toward Adelphi Road or are looking for an alternative way to the elementary school. He suggested three ideas that may help the situation. First, a larger "No Outlet" sign could be placed at the intersection. Second, the current "NO Outlet" sign could be replaced with a more graphic "European" sign that may be more easily noticed. Third, painting arrows in the road to guide motorists to major roads. Committee Member Verrill suggested that signs directing traffic to Adelphi Road and Queens Chapel Road could be attached to the "No Outlet" signs.

Mr. Beall noted that a speed bump would be a hindrance to snow plows, ambulances, fire trucks, and police cars. He also stated that the 24-inch "No Outlet" sign was changed early this day to a 30-inch sign. The sign is diamond shaped, yellow with black lettering.

Committee Member Gekas requested that the "Children Playing" sign currently on Tennyson Street be moved to a more prominent place near the entrance to the area.

The Committee decided against recommending a traffic study at this time. The Committee will recommend to the Town Council that a request be made to the Director of Public Works to attach directional signs to all the "No Outlet" signs in area. The directional signs should point to Adelphi Road and Queens Chapel Road as appropriate.

3. Update on Request for Parking Restrictions on "Upper" Queens Chapel

The Committee continued the discussion from the previous meeting of possible parking restrictions on Queens Chapel Road between Baltimore Avenue and 44th Avenue, to prevent the possible impediment of school busses and emergency vehicles that enter University Park from Baltimore Avenue.

Captain McCully noted that there had been no complaints filed with the University Park Police Department since the previous Committee meeting in November 2015. Mayor Carey noted that the area in question would be torn up during the WSSC project to replace water pipes under the roads in parts of Town. The Chair asked that the Mayor and/or the Director of Public Works request the Town Engineer to provide an estimate to widen that section of Queens Chapel when the WSSC project is in progress.

4. Discussion of Cars Blocking Driveways of Residents Near University Park Elementary

Committee Member Verrill, Captain McCully and two Residents of Underwood Street who live across from University Park Elementary School discussed the problem of cars being left parked and unattended for long periods of time blocking Resident's driveways. This situation happens frequently before and after school when students are dropped off and picked up. Residents in the area have been denied use of their driveways at time. The safety of students entering school grounds around illegally parked cars was also noted. Homeowners and Town Police Officers have requested drivers to refrain from blocking driveways and double parking, however the problem has continued for months. Mayor

Carey noted that the problem had also occurred in the past and has yet to be resolved. Police presence and ticketing of illegally parked cars has not solved the problem.

The idea of restricting parking on school side of the street to two hours or restricting parking during the morning drop-off time and evening pick-up time to provide more short term parking were discussed. The Committee believed that these ideas, however, may be too burdensome to the school faculty and staff, plus Residents who frequently park in that area.

It was decided that Mayor Carey along with Chief Wynnyk or Captain McCully would discuss the situation with the school principal and PTA representatives. It is hoped that notices could be sent to parents reminding them not to block driveways or double park. In addition, the Mayor and the Town Police Department will discuss the possibility of having an officer dedicated to enforcing parking regulations during the most troublesome times in the morning and evening. In addition, the Town Police may make the drop-off area larger on Underwood Street near the front of the school by taking several more parking spaces on the school side of the street and by encouraging school personnel to park on the resident side of Underwood during school hours, thus allowing more students to safely exit and enter cars.

It was also suggested that the Mayor and/or Chief of Police may wish to write an item for the Town Newsletter concerning the problem.

5. Implementation of Security System Rebate Program

The Chair provided a draft of the "Home Security Rebate Request" form. Committee Members requested that a paragraph describing the program be added to the top of the form. In addition, it was noted that warranty card information or the Prince George's County Alarm Registration number should be supplied before reimbursement is provided. The Committee decided that the request should be submitted to the Town Clerk who would notify the Chief of Police and the Committee Chair. The Committee also indicated that the form should note that questions about the program should be directed to the Town Chief of Police.

The Chair stated that he would incorporate the requested information into a second draft of the "Home Security Rebate Request" form to be discuss at the next meeting.

6. Discussion of Rules for Bicycle Riders In Relation to Stop Signs in Town

Council Member Hess stated that he and the Town Chief of Police had discussed the possibility of changing the Town Code to allow bicyclists to yield at stop signs in Town rather than coming to a full stop. Council Member Hess provided information that indicated the program was in place in several areas of Idaho and Colorado and being considered in Santa Fe, New Mexico. He provided a picture of a yield sign with a bicycle on it that is in use in some jurisdictions.

The Committee Members expressed concern about the Town's ability to change the traffic laws for bicyclists as those laws are likely established and regulated by the state. However, the Chair will check with the Town attorney to determine if the Town is permitted to make such a change for bicyclists. If so, the matter will be considered at a future meeting.

7. Update on Signage

Due to the late hour, this item was not discussed. [However, at the Mayor and Town Council Meeting held on January 11, 2016, Mr. Beall noted that a contract has been established with a sign company to put signage on the Town Hall building. Mr. Beall also noted that it was likely that two additional green and gold "Town of University Park" signs similar to the one at Pineway and Baltimore Avenue would be ordered in the near future. Mr. Beall and the Committee Chair subsequently went to the areas that the Committee had suggested (the triangle at Beechwood Road and 40th Avenue, and the intersection of Wells Parkway and Calverton Drive) and marked the placement for the signs.]

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 PM.

Submitted by Roy Alvarez, Committee Chair