

Meeting Minutes
State College Borough Transportation Commission
February 9, 2016

The State College Borough Transportation Commission (TC) met on Tuesday, February 9, 2016 in Room 304 of the Borough Municipal Building. Chairman Rito called the meeting to order at 12:16 p.m.

Members Present: Chairman Rito, Richard Garis, Joseph Haloua, Diana Malcom and Ray Najjar

Others Present: Amy Kerner, Borough Engineer; Alan Sam, Environmental Coordinator/Arborist; Patrick Ward, Borough Parking Manager; Ed Holmes, Public Services Manager; Anne Messner, Zoning Officer/Planner; Courtney Hayden, Communication & Special Project Coordinator; Trish Meek, MPO, CRPA; Robert DeMayo, Penn State University (PSU) Transportation Director; Louwana Oliva, CATA Director; Officer White; Kelly Doyle, AmeriCorps volunteer; Margaret Gray; James Graef; Sandra Lieb, Staff Assistant and other interested parties

Approval of Minutes:

The December 8, 2015 minutes were approved as submitted by Chairman Rito.

Public Hour:

James Graef, 1360 Lynn Street, is a senior at State College Area School District. Mr. Graef stated that he has concerns about crossing Westerly Parkway during school hours. He believes that the crosswalk has become restricted. Mr. Graef suggested that in order to alleviate the problem the crosswalk can be widened into a shared space design and the cars would have to yield to the pedestrians. He stated that this is done on Pollock Road where all the cars must stop and pedestrians can cross. Mr. Graef suggested that this could be done with painted lines on the road and as it progresses, it could become a bigger capital project. Mr. Graef asked if there were any questions.

Mr. Haloua asked what the exact problem is. Mr. Haloua questioned if there were times when pedestrians needed to cross and they weren't allowed. Mr. Graef stated that the Crossing Guards stop the pedestrians to wait for long periods of time for the cars to pass which gives priority to the cars instead of the pedestrians. Mr. Graef noted that there are some crosswalks that cannot be used because they have been fenced off. Mr. Haloua asked if the Crossing Guards could be instructed differently to allow more pedestrians to go through. Mr. Graef stated that he has talked with the administration and they are working on it, but he wondered if the Commission had any suggestions. Chairman Rito stated that there is a 15 mph speed limit and asked if the lights are on during this period. Ms. Kerner stated that the lights are on and are timed in accordance with the class changes and when the crossing guards are there. She said this was discussed in length and that the Final Land Development Plan has most classes in the South Building which should eliminate most of the crossings during the day. Ms. Kerner stated that the funneling of pedestrians to one crossing was done purposefully for the safety of pedestrians during the construction.

She noted that the pedestrians are being directed to the sidewalk by the pool and to the intersection which has a push-button activated flashing pedestrian sign. Ms. Kerner recommended that the crossing guard or the pedestrians push that button to alert the vehicles that pedestrians will be crossing. Ms. Kerner stated that at the end of the construction there will be or should be a traffic signal at that intersection so pedestrian control will also be at that signal. Chairman Rito asked if the current crosswalk was painted. Ms. Kerner stated that it is and that a thermoplastic inlay will be installed at the end of construction. She suggested that the paint could be freshened up in the Spring. Chairman Rito asked if it could be placed on the priority list. Ms. Kerner agreed. Mr. Haloua asked whether the pedestrian priority signs used on College Avenue could be used on Westerly Parkway. Ms. Kerner stated that the Borough has donated the signs to the school district and they are theirs to use and maintain. She noted that she has seen them on Westerly Parkway.

Action Items

Next Five Intersections of Study

Mr. Najjar asked if the first five intersections were given priority and if this was the ranking given by Stahl Sheaffer. Ms. Kerner stated the study in 2010 ranked each of those in line but were taken off line as previously noted. These five intersections were still high ranking but they thought there was a better time to study them. Chairman Rito asked for a motion to pass these or for more discussion.

Mr. Haloua asked why the College/Fraser intersection was listed. Ms. Kerner stated that staff is not recommending to do all ten, but just the first five. Mr. Najjar asked if Atherton/Westerly was currently being studied. Ms. Kerner noted that Atherton/Westerly was part of the last round that was finished in 2014. Ms. Malcolm asked whether there was any priority within the five. Ms. Kerner stated not specifically because all five will be included in the study. Mr. Haloua asked about moving College/Allen up on list. Chairman Rito questioned whether there would be anything new that would be done. Ms. Kerner asked Aaron Fayish, from Stahl Sheaffer, if he would like to comment and offer insight on what they would be looking for the different intersections. Mr. Fayish stated that the study would look at all modes of transportation, such as vehicles, pedestrians and bike improvements. He noted they would specifically look at types of crashes occurring at those locations. Ms. Malcolm asked for a reminder of Allen/Hamilton. Ms. Kerner stated that this one had been taken off because a tree was removed and they wanted to wait to see if there would be a change.

Chairman Rito asked for a motion to pass the recommendation. Ms. Malcolm made a motion and Mr. Haloua seconded. The vote was unanimously in favor.

Summary of Projects for Parking Fund - \$5,216,025

Mr. Ward and Mr. Holmes spoke on the projects in the Capital Budget. Mr. Holmes stated that the intention is to consolidate the projects and that there is close to \$6 million worth of work which will affect the parking fund. Mr. Holmes noted that it was necessary to borrow money to advance all of these projects. The discussion is broken down by facility.

1. Fraser Garage - \$1,904,750
 - Exterior renovations - \$845,750 (which includes the plaza and walkway)
 - Elevator replacement - \$700,00 (reason is a lack of speed and recommend replacement with traction elevators)
 - Brick façade & maintenance - \$38,000 (routine maintenance)
 - Structural repairs & maintenance - \$320,000
 -

Mr. Holmes stated that while Fraser Street is closed for the dismantling and hauling way of the crane for the Fraser Centre, they can take advantage of that time to do the work since there will not be any cars in the garage during that time.

2. Beaver Garage - \$800,000
 - Replacement of three high-speed traction elevators - \$800,000 (service issues, age of garage and frequent down time of elevators)

Mr. Holmes noted that the projects in the Pugh Street Garage will be spread out over three years. There were some questions on whether a significant maintenance project would be done or close the facility. The engineering consultants believed the Pugh Street Garage had 15-20 years of life since there had not been appreciable degradation to the facility since the condition appraisal of 1999. Mr. Holmes stated that if it had that much life left, that it was an inexpensive capital investment.

3. Pugh Street Garage - \$2,185,000
 - Elevator replacement - \$220,000
 - Structural repairs and maintenance – \$765,000
 - Replace lighting and electrical system -\$475,000
 - Stair tower refurbishing - \$125,000 (replace bottom three stairwells for all towers)
4. Parking Access and Revenue Control Equipment (PARCS) - \$650,000

Other Capital projects:

5. Beaver/Fraser Public Space - \$125,000
 - This would come out of the General Fund not the Parking Fund.
6. Pugh Streetscape - \$300,000
 - New pavers and concrete sidewalks

Mr. Holmes stated the projects in the Parking Fund totaled approximately \$5.6 million and the General Fund money would contribute approximately \$425,000. Council was asked to pass a resolution to authorize the borrowing.

Mr. Ward explained how the funds would be recovered.

He stated with the Fraser Centre scheduled to open in September, the decision was made to do the work now while service was already being interrupted.

Mr. Ward noted that there are four rate changes that are proposed along with the parking garages:

Parking	Now	New
Special Event	\$1.75/hour	\$2.25/hour
Monthly Permit		\$10.00/month increase
On Street	\$1.00/hour	\$1.25/hour
Surface Lot	\$1.00/hour	\$1.25/hour

Mr. Ward stated that this a 15 year repayment plan of approximately \$529,700.07.

Mr. Najjar asked about the capacity and how are we doing now and how do you think we be doing in the future. Mr. Ward stated that CATA has a lot more service in the area than they did before. Mr. Ward noted that instead of building more parking structures they should explore other avenues, such as park and ride or a partnership with Penn State. Mr. Ward believes that there are other opportunities that will open up parking in the downtown area. Ms. Malcolm asked about the Pugh Street Garage and what are the thoughts about a future facility. Mr. Ward stated that they need to have flexibility for that space and decide what that facility would be used for in the future whether it would be repurposed for another parking facility or something would be built in another location. Mr. Haloua asked about the increased parking fee on the patrons of the businesses. Mr. Ward stated that there is the merchant validation program and he does not see a change in that program. Mr. Haloua asked about the impact on employees that have to park downtown. Mr. Ward stated that it is important to look at transportation options in the downtown whether it is working with CATA on a Park & Ride or other options and that would include businesses that pay their employees parking.

Ms. Kerner stated that they are asking the commission to make a recommendation to Council on the new rate increases.

Mr. Holmes stated that Council approved the borrowing resolution and the repayment resolution.

Mr. Garis made a motion. Mr. Najjar seconded. The vote was unanimously in favor.

VI. Discussion Items

Preliminary Findings for Atherton Street Corridor Study

Mr. Aaron Fayish presented the preliminary findings of the study, the goal of the study, the scope of the work of the study and the recommendations. The goal of the study was to review the impact of various pedestrian enhancements to the traffic signal on North Atherton Street. This study also collected vehicle, pedestrian and bike counts. All peak hours were analyzed. Park Avenue was below acceptable.

Mr. Najjar asked what the numbers meant. Mr. Fayish stated that a level of service of "D" or better is needed.

Mr. Fayish evaluated the following scenarios:

Scenario 1 – all walk phase - is unacceptable according to PennDot.

Scenario 2 – maximize pedestrian crossing times - is implemented in the downtown and is acceptable to PennDot.

Scenario 3 – leading pedestrian interval - is acceptable to PennDot.

Scenario 4 – pedestrian recall operation - would eliminate all pedestrian push buttons and the pedestrian signal would appear automatically. This would be acceptable to PennDot.

Scenario 5 – There would be a left turn with a green arrow and would be acceptable to PennDot.

Scenario 6 – a crosswalk at Curtin Road only and would be acceptable PennDot guidelines.

Ms. Malcolm asked if it was safer with Leading Pedestrian Interval (LPI). Mr. Fayish stated that they have found that crashes with pedestrians and vehicles have decreased significantly. Mr. Najjar asked why LPIs are not everywhere. Mr. Fayish stated that it is evolving as more people get educated on this solution. Ms. Malcolm stated that she would like to look at the LPIs together with Scenario 6. Mr. Fayish stated there is still a crossing at Hillcrest Avenue.

Chairman Rito asked about pedestrian bridges. Ms. Kerner stated that they have received the feedback from the neighborhoods but it has not progressed further than that based on the capital costs and physically being able to do it.

Mr. Najjar asked if you wait longer at an intersection with push buttons. Mr. Fayish stated that you do not wait longer. Mr. Najjar asked when you push a button does it just activate an interval that is already there so it is an advantage to pedestrians to get rid of the buttons. Mr. Fayish stated yes.

Chairman Rito asked during peak time if there are people crossing all the time. Mr. Fayish answered yes.

Liaison Reports

MPO/CRPA/COG Transportation: Ms. Meek reported the MPO will meet this month and talk about adopting a two year work program for the staff of the Centre County Planning Organization. Long range planning, bike and pedestrian improvements and review of statewide programs will be discussed. They will be talking about the four year transportation improvement program and all the state and federal funds will be reviewed. A public meeting will be held in May. They will also be reviewing the two transportation alternative program applications that were submitted.

Centre Area Transportation Authority: Ms. Oliva reported that with the redevelopment in the Borough there are conversations of CATA being involved at the Borough level.

Penn State Transportation: Mr. DeMayo reported that Penn State is going through the bike RFP reviews and proceed to a second step and cost analysis. They are finalizing new parking equipment in the parking decks which will be installed in July.

Borough Engineer: Ms. Kerner reported the last six intersections discussed were maintenance issues. A meeting has been slated with the Operations Manager and the Facilities Manager to go over the issues on the intersections. The Rise had a scoping meeting for their traffic impact study and have defined the study.

Environmental Coordinator/Arborist: Mr. Sam asked Ms. Doyle to give an update of some things she has been working on. Ms. Doyle stated they have been going into the Driver's Educational course and teaching the drivers how to safely share the road with bicyclists. A Middle School program on how to safely operate a bicycle while sharing the road is being developed. Ms. Doyle would like to reach out to CATA and teach them how to safely share the road and also create a link of how to safely share the road which would be on the Borough website.

Parking Office: Mr. Ward had nothing to report.

State College Police: Officer White had nothing to report.

Items of Information

Future Meetings

The next meeting of the Commission will be April 12, 2016 at 12:15 pm.

The Conflict of Interest policy must be completed by May.

Adjournment

With no further business to discuss, this meeting was adjourned at 1:57 p.m. by Chairman Rito.

Respectfully submitted:
Sandra Lieb, Recording Secretary