

**Meeting Agenda**  
**State College Borough Transportation Commission**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**May 10, 2016**  
**12:15 p.m. / Room 304**

The State College Borough Transportation Commission (TC) met on Tuesday, May 10, 2016 in Room 304 of the Borough Municipal Building. Chairman Rito called the meeting to order at 12:20 p.m.

**Members Present:** Chairman Rito, Richard Garis, Greg Halpin, Paul Jovanis, Diana Malcolm, Ray Najjar

**Others Present:** Amy Kerner, Borough Engineer; Alan Sam, Environmental Coordinator/Arborist; Patrick Ward, Borough Parking 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; Sandra Lieb, Staff Assistant and other interested parties.

### **Approval of Minutes**

Chairman Rito asked to have the five intersections recorded in the February 9, 2016 minutes.

### **Public Hour**

Susan Venegoni, 323 W. Fairmount Avenue. Ms. Venegoni was speaking on behalf of the Highlands Civic Association concerning the five areas of study of the ten intersections. Ms. Venegoni stated that the intersection of Garner Street and Prospect Avenue recently had a hit and run, two pedestrians were hit and there were two accidents within the last week at that intersection. Ms. Venegoni asked if the five intersections that were selected were set in stone or if the Garner Street and Prospect Avenue intersection could be moved up the list.

Mr. Whitfield stated that they will look at that Intersection independently. On May 9, 2016, Mr. Whitfield presented to the State College Borough Council the findings of the report on that intersection.

Larry Jones, 357 E. Prospect Avenue, stated that this intersection has been a problem for some time. There have been some steps taken over the years, such as larger traffic signs, painting on the road, several older trees taken down and parking was removed for the bike lane. Mr. Jones noted that those changes seemed to help with the visibility and help to prevent accidents but now it is a problem once again. Mr. Jones stated that the Borough measures accidents, and he measures near misses. He said that on high volume days there is an average of four to five near misses in an hour.

Mr. Jones stated that the Garner Street corridor is a problem. He explained that Prospect Avenue has the highest volume of cars since it is the first access from University Drive. Mr. Jones also stated that pedestrian traffic has increased. He added that 90% of the time it is traffic going westbound on Prospect Avenue where people stop but don't look before pulling out or they don't stop at all. His hope is that there would be a series of steps to take before there was a study, such as, more signage or stop signs with flashing lights. Mr. Jones would like something done now.

Mike Blanco, 126 Hartswick Avenue. Mr. Blanco stated that at the McKee Street and Park Avenue crosswalk a death happened there. The area is being looked at. Mr. Blanco stated that he has to cross that intersection every day for work. He said that it seems that the biggest problem is that motorists don't pay attention to pedestrians. Mr. Blanco stated that he thinks that motorists are not aware that a crosswalk demands that they stop. He asked if it would be possible to put a pedestrian crossing with the bike crossing. He stated that this area needs a long term solution but wondered if, in the meantime, there was a short term solution. He stated that this is obviously a problem area.

Mr. Whitfield stated that PennDOT recently changed the regulation to the pedestrian channeling devices. Up until to two months ago, the Borough was required to do a pre-study and a post study before putting these devices out and then a second study had to be done after the devices were out. He stated that these devices were required to be brought in at nighttime which had some logistical issues. PennDOT will now allow them to be out at night. Mr. Whitfield said the Borough will try these devices at the Park Avenue intersection and the Atherton Street and Fairmount Avenue intersection. This will be an interim solution for now until the project can be done. The Borough has applied for two different types of grants and they are hoping to get most of a pedestrian island funded through grant money. However, the pedestrian islands are in next year's Capital Improvement Plan and are to be a fully, funded Borough project in case we do not get the grant money. Mr. Whitfield stated that it is the intention of the Borough to have that island put in sooner rather than later.

Mr. Whitfield presented the following findings, over a five-year period, for the Garner Street Corridor.

#### Prospect & Garner Accidents

2011 – 1  
2012 – 2  
2013 – 3  
2014 – 0  
2015 – 5

Mr. Whitfield stated that a traffic study was just done in the Highlands and they took a look at traffic volumes.

#### Garner Street from (Fairmount to Prospect)

- No appreciable increase in volume or speed
- Speed did pick up on Garner Street from Prospect to Easterly
- Volume and speed are fairly consistent to what they had been back in the early 2000s.
- Of the 20 accidents in 2015 and 2016, 9 accidents were reportable – towing or injuring. Reportable accidents are anytime a vehicle needs to be towed or there is an injury.
- There were 13 daylight accidents.
- Two of the accidents happened at night and were both pedestrian accidents. One of the accidents was a DUI.
- Eight of the accidents involved cars traveling southbound on Garner & westbound on Prospect. This is what is being looked at as part of the problem.
- According to the police report they all did stop at the stop sign according to witnesses and speed was not an issue.

Mr. Whitfield stated that because there were more than five reportable accidents in a 12-month period the next step was to look at this intersection and contract with our traffic engineering consultant to take a closer look to complete the traffic study and see what is recommended from the study. Mr. Whitfield noted that all of the traffic data and accident data will be turned over to the consultant.

Ms. Venegoni would like them to take into consideration that the population density has increased as well. She stated that there are more people living in the neighborhood and walking, so she would like them to include that in the study and not just the speed and number of cars.

Mr. Halpin agreed that Garner Street is difficult to cross.

Mr. Jones asked if it would be possible to have selective enforcement in the mornings at the intersection of Park Avenue and McKee Street.

Mr. Halpin stated that Park Avenue is also difficult to cross. He suggested the use of crossing guards.

Mr. Whitfield stated that crossing guards are typically paid for use at elementary school crossings. The islands help to make crossing safer and you are only dealing with half the intersection once you are in the center. This was spurred by someone having a guide dog that would not leave the curb with traffic coming but the guide dog would go half way across.

Mr. Rito asked if the flashing lights were on all the time.

Mr. Whitfield answered yes. Mr. Whitfield had been asked if it could be push button activated, but it was unclear what the Borough permit is and how that works with PennDOT but that they could find out. Mr. Whitfield stated that push buttons can be a problematic issue, but that we would first need to look at whether it is permitted and secondly, what the cost would involve.

Mr. Jones had asked why the Park Avenue and McKee Street intersection only says bike crossing. Mr. Whitfield stated that McKee Street is a designated bike route and that is how the Borough got the funding to put the sign and signal there.

Mr. Najjar stated that most people don't realize that you have to stop at a crosswalk. He pointed out that there is a larger issue and suggested having more signage that notes that pedestrians have right of way to cross street and cars must stop.

Mr. Najjar thanked the citizens for coming out and speaking on this issue and he added that it empowers the case more when citizens come out and speak.

## **Discussion Items**

### Easterly Parkway Reconstruction

As part of the 2017 – 2021 Capital Improvement Plan, staff is recommending the reconstruction of Easterly Parkway from South Allen Street to South Garner Street. The reconstruction will provide opportunities for safety, drainage, and pedestrian and bicycle improvements. Ms. Kerner will present a preliminary plan for the section. Input from the Commission on the proposed improvements is requested.

Ms. Kerner presented the Easterly Parkway Reconstruction Plan. She divided the presentation into four photos since it is a long stretch of road.

Ms. Kerner stated that this project is on for next year, so the Borough needs to be in the design process. They need to decide what the goal is for this corridor so the design issues can be incorporated. There are several issues that need to be addressed.

- Creating a 10 foot shared use path on the south side of the street.
- There are tree and sidewalk conflicts.
- Two homes only have driveways onto Easterly so impacting their ability to park between the sidewalk and the street is something that will need to be considered.
- There is an overhead flashing school zone sign.
- A pedestrian node on Pugh Street on the northwest side.

The goal is to get ideas and discuss your concerns and suggestion.

- Pugh Street, east of the school, will continue the shared 10-foot path. It was discussed whether it would be logical to put in a school drop off or bus pull off. There is a very wide right of way in this area where everything would be located.

We talked about pedestrian level lighting around the school and other overhead flashing warning devices.

- To the East there is a center lane in this section. Since we would be reconstructing it, we could do an inverted crown and to have a bio-swale here would be a real boost for our stormwater requirements. There have been no designs done yet so the length and width of the bio-swale would be determined by design. This would prevent left turns. It would be a change with a right in and right out of the driveways
- Constructing a roundabout at the Pugh Street and/or Garner Street intersections. There is a little bit of an encroachment onto properties and this was talked about before. We wanted to see if the traffic circle should be considered. The triangle piece to the southeast of the roundabout is property owned by Borough and we may decide to do a very large rain garden style detention which is helpful for our stormwater requirements. This would be another project and not included in this project. Ms. Kerner asked for any discussion or other considerations.

Ms. Malcolm asked if a roundabout was for slowing traffic down.

Ms. Kerner stated that it was more about removing stop signs for better traffic movement verses a traffic signal.

Ms. Kerner asked Mr. Whitfield for more input.

Mr. Whitfield stated that they looked at two locations. One location was at Pugh Street and the other one was at Garner Street. Mr. Whitfield said some of it was for traffic flow and accident reductions which are less on a roundabout than with a regular stop sign intersection. Pugh Street had been studied for a signal but it has never met the warrants of necessitating a signal there and a roundabout was looked at as an alternative to a signal.

Ms. Malcolm stated that a roundabout seems like a better idea for Garner Street in terms of school pick up and drop off. She asked Ms. Kerner why it was not going all the way to the pathway on University Drive.

Ms. Kerner stated that at some point it will go all the way to University Drive but funding is keeping us at this section of roadway. Ms. Kerner added that this is a long section of roadway for reconstruction and there were budgetary reasons to break it up into sections but eventually it will all be completed.

Ms. Malcolm asked if a bio-swale was studied for speed.

Ms. Kerner stated that she believes anytime you have channelized mechanisms it helps to calm the traffic down because of the perception of lanes being narrower.

Mr. Whitfield stated that the initial thought is to connect Orchard Park bike path to the Garner Street bike path and have the two schools connected.

Mr. Najjar stated that he is torn between shared use paths and bike lanes. He believes that bike lanes are good for adults and bike paths are good for kids.

Ms. Kerner stated that shared use paths have driveways that are crossed and lanes on road prohibit being able to do some other things because you are using more of the road. The usage would be mostly students using the path to go to the schools.

Mr. Halpin asked how wide the sidewalk near the school is because it seemed wider.

Ms. Kerner stated that the sidewalk is five feet wide, so they would be doubling the width of sidewalk.

Ms. Malcolm asked if there would be paint to direct the people if the shared use path was asphalt.

Ms. Kerner stated that it was not typical unless there would be some issues that would come up, but she does not anticipate using paint.

Mr. Jovanis asked how far along in the thinking of a roundabout and if they had any data collection planned.

Ms. Kerner stated that there are two circles on plan. They have the vehicle counts, so they know what the volume of the traffic is and class of traffic.

Mr. Jovanis recalled some publications on the safety of roundabouts and the toughest issue concerning a roundabout is pedestrian safety issues.

Mr. Rito asked what would be in the middle of the roundabout.

Ms. Kerner said that because of its location and it is smaller than the inner circle concrete apron they may be able to have some low growing plants but that larger vehicles in the roundabout would have to be able to go over the apron.

### Atherton Street Reconstruction

PennDOT officials have given design updates to Borough Council and the College Heights Neighborhood Association on the Atherton Street reconstruction project slated for Fall 2017. Mark Whitfield provided an update on the project.

Mr. Whitfield gave an update on the project. He stated that the project will run from Aaron Drive to the Nittany Lion Inn on North Atherton Street. The main purpose is because of inadequate drainage under the roadway and for storm water to get into the system. Mr.

Whitfield pointed out that there is one section of roadway that will be reconstructed from Woodland Drive to just below Hillcrest Avenue. All pedestrian islands will be maintained and be reconstructed.

The Borough requested the installation of curb gutter because it helps with drainage and because we do street sweeping with a steel broom degrades asphalt unless it abuts a concrete gutter. Also, traffic typically will not drive on a gutter and it gives a buffer between the sidewalk and where people will be traveling.

The overall project had to do with the pipes that are there now which are in very poor condition. In the early 80s, there was a project in which they offset an inlet. This worked somewhat but we were unable to get in and clean it, so the pipes have not been cleaned for a number of years. The inadequacy of drainage leads to roadway flooding and getting water off the roadway and into the pipe is one of the main goals. The final design will be done by next summer, the project is to be bid in August of 2017 and construction will begin in the fall of 2017 which will be mainly utilities. The main part of construction will begin in the spring and summer of 2018. Total completion will be in the fall of 2018.

#### Project Details:

- There will be 61 inlets installed.
- Replacing storm drainage piping
- Reconstructing pavement for 100 feet south of West Mitchell Avenue to 100 feet south of Woodland Avenue.
- Place drainage gutter to improve drainage performance and safety.

#### Proposed Widths:

- Maintain 10 foot lanes.
- Maintain 8-foot pedestrian island
- 1-foot gutter for drainage
- Curb to curb 52 feet at Hillcrest Avenue

There are two sections in the Borough for proposed roadway options which include Rodeway Inn to Hillcrest Avenue and Hillcrest Avenue to Park Avenue. PennDOT had to work around retaining walls and steps at residential properties. They also have to maintain the grades around the retaining walls and the driveway grades so it would not impact access in and out of driveways due to a steep slope.

#### Hillcrest Avenue to Park Avenue

There are 10-foot-wide turning lanes which would require taking some right of way in the section between Woodland Drive and Arbor Way. There would be a slight amount of right-of-way taken to move the sidewalk back for a turning lane.

There are four options for Park Avenue. New traffic signal mast arms are proposed. The existing ones are not big enough right now to hold the load for a dedicated signal, no turn on red sign, maintaining raised medians for pedestrians and time for pedestrian crossing will be increased. The project is anticipated to start in the fall of 2017 and completed in the fall of 2018.

Chairman Rito stated that other than the need for drainage improvements he cannot see widening Atherton any more. He stated the community will be impacted and he sees nothing positive to widening the corridor. He questioned whether we want a five lane highway into State College. The increase housing in Ferguson Township and Patton Township is benefitted but it impacts us. Widening the road will increase traffic flow into State College and he cannot support that.

Mr. Whitfield stated that during construct they will only be able to maintain two lanes in one direction and one lane in the other direction. The hope is that people will use the bypass.

Chairman Rito stated that, in his opinion, the problem is bigger than Atherton Street itself and not just that corridor.

Mr. Halpin agreed that in 10-15 years we will need to look at another alternative.

Mr. Jovanis asked what the College Heights resident's reaction was.

Mr. Whitfield stated that the next agenda item interested them more. They would have liked to have seen sidewalks pushed back but they understood the impact of loss of property.

Mr. Whitfield noted that looking at all signals between Hillcrest Avenue to bus terminal, we have done all that can be done at the Park Avenue intersection. Stahl Shaffer is looking to see if an all walk phase can be put in at Curtin Street and at the White Course. We found that almost 83% of the people using Park Avenue intersection were going to a core part of campus.

Mr. Jovanis asked about the walkway between Rodeway Inn and Hillcrest Avenue and can it be taken out of median space instead of property. Is it possible to have a 6-foot median instead of a 5-foot median and then you can save having to buy property. On Arbor Way the walkway going through a left turn lane seems to be a safety hazard and not an improvement.

Mr. Whitfield stated that having a T-intersection makes it fairly easy to do and we can discuss it with PennDOT.

Ms. Kerner stated that this did start as a drainage project but they found the pipes throughout the corridor were corroding and collapsing causing sinkholes. PennDOT found funding thru federal money and when using federal money, you have to follow their

standards. They looked at different scenarios to find the least intrusive and an 8-foot median is a requirement of that.

Mr. Whitfield stated that 10-15 years from now PennDOT is happy to have us take over the roadway. The municipality can consider this. The downside is we would have all future maintenance of that road, but it is a way to have control.

#### Atherton Street Signal Timing Update

Borough staff and Stahl Shaeffer Engineer Aaron Fayish met with the PennDOT engineers on April 19 to discuss traffic signal timing changes along the North Atherton Street corridor. The proposal consists of:

1. Maximize pedestrian crossing times at Hillcrest
2. Maximize pedestrian crossing times at Park (implemented 1/2016)
3. Implement ALL WALK phase at Curtin and White Course
4. Maintain existing timings at Bus Depot signal

Mr. Whitfield will provide an update to the Commission on the meeting with PennDOT.

Mr. Whitfield gave a brief update. We did meet with PennDOT and Mr. Fayish is continuing to do the study.

#### Highlands Traffic Counts

Ms. Kerner will provide a preliminary report on the traffic counts taken in the Highlands neighborhood in the Spring 2016. A draft report of the counts has been attached.

Mr. Whitfield stated that they have not yet gone through everything but Ms. Kerner has taken a look at it and can highlight it.

Mr. Jovanis stated that there are three time periods and in the middle a new consultant was hired.

Mr. Whitfield stated that they just supplied the raw data and did not do any analysis.

Ms. Kerner stated that we do have to quote this out. She noted that there was a different company that captured the data, but there was a strict criterion that they had to follow. Ms. Kerner noted that it does have to be a Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday, and they have to look at that Penn State and the school district are in session. Ms. Kerner added that they must count for a 24-hour period on each day.

Mr. Jovanis questioned the measurement differences of the data periods.

Mr. Whitfield stated that data is invaluable to look at problems and identifying locations.

Ms. Kerner stated that the spreadsheet has the last three rounds that were done. She noted that the volumes either stayed the same or went down a little and speed stayed the same or went up a little.

Mr. Jovanis stated he did see that speed really went up and it could be a little misleading because of the percentages.

Mr. Whitfield stated that in the past we identified those segments and did a second count in the fall to determine whether there was something wrong with the counter.

### Project Update

Mark Whitfield will provide an update on the various construction projects the Public Works will be overseeing during 2016.

Mr. Whitfield also gave a snapshot of the projects on the books and what will be worked on over the summer months. The CIP plan will be given at the July meeting,

#### Listing of all projects for 2016

- Street and Sidewalk projects
- Parking projects
- 2 stormsewer projects
- 1 park improvement project

Mr. Whitfield noted that for the street and sidewalks, we are doing our annual sidewalk inspections this year. The sidewalk project this year is in the Highlands neighborhood. The streets run from Old Boalsburg Road to South Atherton Street to East Whitehall Road; South Gill Street from West Foster Avenue to Hawk Alley; McCormick Avenue from South Pugh Street to University Drive; South Barnard Street from Sparrow Alley to West Fairmount Avenue; West Prospect Avenue from South Atherton Street to South Gill Street; New Alley from South Burrowes Street to Miller Alley.

Mr. Whitfield also stated that one of the big projects this year is the Smithfield Street Reconstruction Project. For this project, all of the curbs and storm pipes will be replaced as well as the reconstruction of Smithfield Street. He noted that we are partnering with the State College Borough Water Authority and Columbia Gas for replacement of their utilities.

Mr. Whitfield talked about the Central Business District Streetlight Replacement Project. This project will involve the replacement of new foundations, fixtures, and poles. He noted the south side of West College Avenue between South Atherton Street to South Fraser Street is scheduled from August to September. Mr. Whitfield added that South Burrowes Street from West College Avenue to West Beaver Avenue has been completed.

Mr. Whitfield stated that a project for the West End improvements will extend the new streetlights along both sides of West College Avenue from South Atherton Street to South Barnard Street.

Mr. Whitfield also updated the following projects:

- A bicycle connection from North Gill Street to Penn State and the IST building using money from a PennDOT grant and we are working with Penn State on this project.
- The Signal Pole Replacement project at the intersection of Westerly Parkway and South Atherton Street will replace the damaged pole, relocate control cabinet and replace the overhead electric feed with an underground electric feed.
- The Memorial Field Stormceptors have been installed.
- The canopy on the Fraser Garage will be removed and there is an opportunity to place his speech that he gave at Penn State.

Future projects – Park/McKee Ped island

### **Liaison Reports**

MPO/CRPA/COG Transportation– Ms. Meek reported the MPO public meeting tomorrow in Room 220, 5-7 pm, on the upcoming transportation program. North Atherton Street reconstruction boards will be there. PennDOT is delaying the Branch Road construction until next year because the bids came in extremely high.

Borough Planning Commission – Ms. Courtney Hayden introduced Jenna Wargo the new Planner and stated that Jenna Wargo will be working with the Transportation Commission.

Environmental Coordinator – Mr. Sam stated that the trail at Highpoint is currently under construction and will be finished early summer. Four bike repair stations were purchased with PennDOT grant.

Ms. Kelly Doyle reported that May is bike month and Centre Bike is encouraging bike to work on Fridays. On [centrebike.org](http://centrebike.org) details on the family fun bike ride on May 21 are available. Ms. Doyle stated that they are working on the bike friendly community application. State College is currently honorable mention. They are working on the new sustainability plan. We would like feedback from the community on the Borough website. We completed 1st year Driver's Ed share the road safely and it was a success. Ferguson Township is holding bike rodeo on June 4. We are closing up the anti-idling program. Ms. Doyle taught students about air quality at Easterly Elementary School and Radio Park Elementary School.

State College Police – Officer Smith had nothing to report. Officer Smith wanted to add that pedestrians cannot step into crossing until it is safe to do so to expect cars to stop. He stated that it is hard to enforce certain laws.

Chairman Rito questioned when it is legal.

Officer Smith stated that pedestrians cannot leave a position of safety and step into crosswalk if it would cause a hazard. Pedestrians cannot step into crosswalk if the pedestrian impedes the car. The problem is that pedestrians do not obey the pedestrian signal and the police cannot issue citations for not obeying the signal.

PADOT has a website on Just Drive PA for bike and pedestrian safety.

## **Items of Information**

### Future Meetings

1. The next meeting of the Commission will be July 12, 2016 at 12:15 pm
2. The ABC Dinner will be held at 6pm on May 12, 2016 at the Ramada Inn

Public Works will celebrate the completion of the construction of the new Service Facility with an open house next week at the Osmond Street facility May 16 from 1-6 pm.

## **Adjournment**

With no further business to discuss, this meeting was adjourned at 1:50 p.m. by Chairman Rito.

Respectfully submitted:

Sandra Lieb  
Staff Assistant