

Meeting Minutes
State College Borough Transportation Commission
Regular Meeting
October 11, 2016
12:15 p.m. / Room 304

The State College Borough Transportation Commission (TC) met on Tuesday, October 11, 2016 in Room 304 of the Borough Municipal Building. Chairman Rito called the meeting to order at 12:20 p.m.

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

Others Present: Charles Jones, Interim Public Works Director; Amy Kerner, Borough Engineer; Alan Sam, Environmental Coordinator/Arborist; Anne Messner, Zoning Officer/Planner; Jackie Sheader, CATA Public Relations Manager; Officer Barrett Smith, State College Police; Autumn Busbee, AmeriCorps volunteer; Josh Turner, AmeriCorps volunteer; Sandra Lieb, Staff Assistant and other interested parties.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes were approved with the following changes. Mr. Najjar stated that he disagreed with some of the statements in the previous minutes about the Pedestrian Law and he would like that added to the minutes.

Public Hour

There were no citizens present.

Discussion Items

Mid-block Pedestrian Crossing on Waupelani

Ms. Kerner stated she was contacted by The Retreat because they have a handicapped resident who needs better access to the bus stop across from The Retreat. Ms. Kerner explained that there is a bus pull-off on The Retreat side but on the opposite side of the street it is just a post on the side of the road. Ms. Kerner stated that the resident does not have easy access to get back to The Retreat from across the street and the resident currently uses the driveways of neighboring properties to get across the street from the bus stop. Ms. Kerner added that even if the bus stop is moved across from the entrance there was still an issue regarding the stairs in the sidewalk leading into The Retreat. The resident would have to use the sidewalk in front of The Retreat to go back up the hill. Ms. Kerner met with the Borough's Operations Manager and CATA and reported that a crossing could be placed on the eastern edge of The Retreat property which would line up with the sidewalk along that side of The Retreat. A pad could be placed on the north side of the street for the bus stop. Ms. Kerner stated that everyone who lives in The

Retreat is offered a bus pass. Everyone who rides the bus, inbound and outbound, must cross the street at some point.

Chairman Rito asked if the Pedestrian Crossing would be signalized. Ms. Kerner replied that it would not be signalized, but it would have depressed curbing and painted crosswalk lines.

Mr. Jovanis asked if there was any evidence of pedestrian accidents in the area. Ms. Kerner answered no.

Chairman Rito asked if the speed limit was 25 mph. Ms. Kerner stated yes.

Mr. Najjar stated that this brings up pedestrian rights. Mr. Najjar said that it seemed like drivers do not stop at mid-intersection crosswalks. Mr. Najjar asked if there was a way to signal vehicles that they need to be aware of the crosswalk. Ms. Kerner stated that by state law there is a crosswalk at all intersections that are marked or unmarked. Ms. Kerner said that there would be pedestrian crossing signs mounted in advance of the crosswalk. Ms. Kerner added that a flashing beacon does require PA DOT approval.

Mr. Jovanis asked if the crossing would be constrained by the trees. Ms. Kerner answered that Mr. Sam was not concerned that the trees would be impacted. Ms. Kerner added that CATA would like a 30-foot concrete pad and the pad would line up with the crosswalk. Mr. Jovanis stated that the crossing should be as far to the left as possible away from Oneida Street.

Chairman Rito asked if CATA would install the stop. Ms. Kerner explained that the Borough crews would install the handicap ramp and paint the crosswalk and CATA would pay for the installation of the concrete pad.

Mr. Najjar stated that the stairs at The Retreat do not seem to be ADA compliant. Ms. Kerner said she does not disagree but that there are some ADA accessible areas. Ms. Messner stated that the Land Development Plan process does not include that kind of review. Ms. Messner added that the review is site specific or location specific as to whether the route could be or could not be an accessible route.

Ms. Kerner asked for a vote. Mr. Garis moved to send it to Borough Council. Mr. Jovanis seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor.

Pennsylvania Pedestrian Laws

Officer Smith stated the Pedestrian Laws in Pennsylvania are very subjective. He explained that the Vehicle Code is very clear where a car must be when the traffic light turns red. Officer Smith explained that the vehicle shall yield the right-of-way to a pedestrian crossing the roadway within any marked or unmarked crosswalk at an intersection. He added that a pedestrian should not leave a position of safety that would cause a hazard. Officer Smith stated that the laws in California are different

because their law said the pedestrian should not leave a position of safety and move into the path of the vehicle that would cause an immediate hazard. Officer Smith said that the California law was easier to interpret if the pedestrian stepped out and was not immediately in the way of the vehicle it is clear the vehicle must stop. Mr. Najjar asked if the word suddenly has the same effect as immediately. Mr. Najjar stated that Officer Winkelblech said that if a pedestrian can't reach the other side of the road by the time the vehicle, traveling at the legal limit, gets to the crosswalk the pedestrian is in violation. Mr. Najjar remarked that it seemed inconsistent with the words suddenly and yield if the vehicle does not have to do anything. Officer Smith acknowledged that this is the problem with the law and that it is subjective. Officer Smith added that most of the decisions have to do with civil cases and not criminal, so they allow for partial fault. Officer Smith stated that no one defined what was suddenly or a hazard in any of those cases. Officer Smith said that every event has to be taken individually. Mr. Najjar asked what is the meaning of yield. Officer Smith answered that you have to give up the right-of-way. Mr. Najjar stated that the law is not ambiguous. Mr. Najjar added that if a vehicle can come to a stop then it should, and it seemed that vehicles have the right-of-way and that is unfair. Mr. Najjar stated without some signaling to pedestrians and vehicles, that the vehicle needs to yield to the pedestrian, the vehicles will always exert their strength. Mr. Najjar said that he believed the law is clear that vehicles should yield but most people do not know they should. Officer Smith stated that at an intersection with a traffic control signal it is clear. Mr. Halpin said that as a pedestrian he thought that he had the right-of-way. He stated that he does stop at a marked crosswalk when someone is waiting to cross, but when it is unmarked and vehicles are coming in the opposite direction, he does not stop. Officer Smith responded that there is no duty for a vehicle to stop for pedestrians waiting to enter a crosswalk. Officer Smith stated that the duty is on the vehicle when the pedestrian has already entered the crosswalk. Mr. Najjar agreed with that but the issue is when the pedestrian has entered the crosswalk. Mr. Najjar added that if the pedestrian does not cross at an intersection or suddenly stepped out in front of a vehicle, the pedestrian is clearly at fault. Officer Smith stated that the law is subjective not vague because people can define hazard differently than other people or some people need more time to stop than others. Mr. Halpin asked if the TC could write a letter to legislators. Chairman Rito stated that he would draft a letter to the legislators. Officer Smith stated that the addition of the word immediate can make a difference.

Liaison Reports

Centre Area Transportation Authority—Jackie Sheader, Public Relations Manager for CATA, stated that CATA has put solar lights in some the bus shelters. Some of the solar lights have been installed in the bus shelter by The Retreat. CATA received a grant from PA DOT to test solar lighting in two of the municipalities. If the testing goes well, CATA would be able to get capital funding in the future for solar lights.

Borough Planning Commission—Ms. Messner stated that they have received a couple of Land Development Plans. Ms. Messner said that one was a minor expansion plan of a fraternity in the Holmes-Foster/Highlands Historic District and the other one was for

254 East Beaver Avenue. Ms. Messner stated that this one would be comparable to The Rise and would be a mixed-use building.

Borough Engineer—Ms. Kerner reported that the Easterly Parkway Reconstruction has been pushed to 2018 to make sure the Borough has enough time to gather input from the neighborhood and develop a proper design and get all the permitting.

Chairman Rito stated that the section of Pugh Street from Easterly Parkway to McCormick Avenue is in bad shape, and he asked if there would be any patching done in this area. Ms. Kerner stated that there are crews that do routine maintenance including patching. Ms. Kerner added that the streets are evaluated every two years. Ms. Kerner said the streets are rated and from the rating it is determined whether a street will be included in the Capital Improvement Plan.

Ms. Kerner stated that Ms. Busbee and Mr. Turner will be counting bicycles from 7:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. to see how many are using lights.

Environmental Coordinator--Mr. Sam stated that Ms. Busbee would give a report. Ms. Busbee said she assisted teaching the bike awareness section of the Driver's Education course at State College Area High School. Ms. Busbee stated that the students were given a pre-quiz to test their knowledge of the bike laws. Ms. Busbee reported that 94% learned something new and 98% felt more prepared to share the road with cyclists. Ms. Busbee added that 55% felt that as cyclist they were more comfortable sharing the road with motorists, 37% said no and 7% said it did not apply to them. Ms. Busbee stated that the students said it was beneficial to have access to the PA Bike Drivers Manual.

State College Police—Lt. Smith, State College Police, had nothing to report.

Adjournment

With no further business to discuss, this meeting was adjourned at 1:05 p.m. by Chairman Rito.

Respectfully submitted:

Sandra Lieb
Staff Assistant