

**Minutes
Township of Falls
Neighborhood Traffic Advisory Committee**

December 11, 2023

Members in Attendance:

Amy Gallagher
Ian James
Robert Leary
Ariane Presser

Members Absent:

Leon Thompson

Also in Attendance:

Chief Nelson Whitney, Township of Falls Police Department
Lt. Martial Belinsky, Township of Falls Police Department
Josh Seeherman, Remington & Vernick Engineers, Inc. (RVE)
Eric Person, Falls Township Resident

Chief Whitney opened the meeting at 6:39 p.m.

The minutes from the October 9, 2023 meeting were approved with no changes.

Chief Whitney told the committee that Lt. Martial Belinsky would be conducting the meetings going forward.

Chief Whitney discussed Mr. Watson's no parking concerns in front of his house at 66 Vermillion Way. The Chief said that area is in a township ordinance that lists **permanent** no parking areas. The ordinance would have to be changed to take the signs down and the Chief did bring this to the attention of the township manager. The Chief also informed Mr. Watson about this through an email and has not heard back from him. Lt. Belinsky said that area is on a curve and there is not a lot of space, so that may be why it is in the ordinance.

The Chief reported he got a letter from the Planning Commission about VISION ZERO HIGH INJURY NETWORKS. Mr. Seeherman said VISION ZERO is an ongoing national action program to eliminate traffic fatalities and there are grant applications for it.

For item #3, Chelsea and Devon Roads, the Chief asked Brian McShane to see if there is a speed study from this location. Perhaps by the next meeting, we will have a study.

The Chief tabled item #4, new signs, and hopefully by the next meeting, Lt. Belinsky will have some more information.

Regarding item #5, the Chief reported that we did not have an Aggressive Driving Wave in October or November. We did have several traffic enforcement details up on Route 1, since we had several serious crashes there. Maybe in the first quarter we will see an Aggressive Driving Wave.

The Chief is starting a Traffic Safety Unit next year. We are starting with one officer – Sgt. Ray Fanelli. We may assign additional officers to the unit as allowed. This is because traffic fatalities have now surpassed fatal drug overdoses in the township.

The chief also reported Sgt. Killeen (who deals with commercial traffic) did 9 inspections that included out-of-service violations, 6 that had drivers without licenses and 2 where the driver didn't have the proper class of license. His year to date numbers are 135 inspections, 344 citations, \$451,316 in fines, and 52 inspections that included out-of-service violations.

The Chief informed the committee that on November 18 at 2:50 p.m., we had another fatality between a vehicle and a motorcycle. The motorcyclist died in this crash. This was on West Trenton Ave. and Pine Grove Road.

Regarding item #6, Mr. Eric Person of Burgess Avenue spoke about the speed study that was conducted at Hamilton and Burgess Avenues. It's a 25-mph zone and the 85th percentile was 28 mph. He asked if most speed studies are less than 24 hours. Mr. Seeherman said that there is no strict guidance, but the study should have a big enough sample size. In this case, there were 113 vehicles and that is more than enough. The guidance is also to avoid only the peak period because people drive slower when there are more cars on the road. But the study does not have to be 24 hours.

Mr. Person asked if the 85th percentile was over 31 mph, what would the township do. Mr. Seeherman replied that multi way stop signs are not to be used to slow vehicles down per Federal guidelines.

One of the criteria for placing a multi-way stop is if there have been 5 or more crashes in a 12-month period. Another criterion is if the minimum vehicular volumes entering the major street intersection (Hamilton) would average 300 vehicles per hour for any 8 hours of the day. The second part of that would be if the minor street intersection (Burgess) has vehicular/bicycle averages of 200 with an average delay of 30 seconds. The third part is if the 85th percentile approach speed exceeds 40 mph, then the minimum vehicle volume number goes down from 300 to 210 vehicles.

Other criteria are if there are a lot of left turn conflicts, a lot of pedestrian volume, sight distance issues, and if at an intersection of 2 residential through streets of similar design there would be an improvement of the operational characteristics of the intersection. This last one would not apply because Burgess is a cul-de-sac therefore not similar in design to Hamilton.

Mr. Person said they probably don't want crosswalks to be painted. Is there any other signage we could try. Mr. Seeherman said an R1-5 sign can be put in the middle of the road. Mr. Person

asked if the road was wide enough because it seems narrow. Mr. Seeherman said 24' wide is preferable but he wasn't sure how wide Hamilton Avenue is. Parking is a sure way to slow down traffic. A speed table can also be used. There are 2 PennDOT approved speed tables out there. Falls Township has an ordinance regarding traffic calming. The ordinance (#203-53 through 203-59) says the street's speed limit must be less than 35 mph which Hamilton is. It has to be primarily a residential street which it is. The length of the street must be at least 1,000 feet which it is. The 85th percentile must be at least 10 mph over the legally posted speed limit, which it's not. The 85th percentile was only 3 mph over the speed limit. The ordinance says you must meet 'some' of these conditions which Hamilton does. Most of these traffic calming measures must be mid-block and not near the intersections. The ordinance says the traffic calming measures must meet PennDOT conditions listed in Chapters 5 and 6 in PennDOT Publication 383. Anyone can read this publication.

PennDOT says you must do a neighborhood survey and have a 70% quorum on the block. There are flowcharts for guidance on the procedure and numbers. Mr. Person then thanked the committee and left the meeting.

The Chief had a complaint from a resident that around Walton and Lions Drives and Lions Drive and Elbow Lane vehicles are running stop signs. Although he believes this is very true, there are few crashes reported there. So, with limited resources we cannot keep a sustainable presence there.

The Chief also received a speeding complaint on Louise Drive. It's a long street and we can probably do a speed study there.

Ms. Presser saw someone blow past the STOP MEANS STOP sign in Vermillion Hills. The Chief said this is very disappointing. It's a nice reminder but no guarantees about changing habits.

Mr. Leary inquired if we could get a number next month of the vehicles running past stopped school buses. The Chief said we could do that.

There was no other business, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:25 p.m.