

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

February 12, 2024

Members in Attendance:

Amy Gallagher
Ian James
Ariane Presser

Members Absent:

Robert Leary
Leon Thompson

Also in Attendance:

Lt. Martial Belinsky, Township of Falls Police Department
Sgt. Raymond Fanelli, Township of Falls Police Department
Josh Seeherman, Remington & Vernick Engineers, Inc. (RVE)
Woolston Drive and Makefield Turn Residents

Lt. Belinsky opened the meeting at 6:33 p.m.

The minutes from the January 8, 2024 meeting were approved with no changes.

An email complaint was received from Kelli Kerner of 26 Makefield Turn regarding traffic on Woolston Drive, specifically tractor trailer trucks. She attended a Morrisville Borough meeting regarding enforcement of a truck ban and PennDOT was there also. Several residents from Woolston Drive and Makefield Turn attended this meeting to discuss the large truck volume going through this neighborhood recently. A lot of these are Britton Industries trucks. The reason this is happening is because when they come from New Jersey, they can't get off at Pennsylvania Avenue and make the left up Bridge Street. Also, there is a bridge by the old Jules Tires with a weight class on it. They can't turn around at Route 13 now because the state put that blocking shoot in. When they are coming from Route 13 onto Route 1, they can't go across the three lanes into Morrisville anymore. So, the next place to turn around is near their houses at Stony Hill Road and get back on. They should stay on the highway and go up to Oxford Valley and turn around and come back. One neighbor suggested that to Britton Industries, but they weren't interested. It would require more mileage.

This increased truck traffic and the poor road conditions cause their houses to shake and things even fall off the walls. The road has been extremely neglected. Their own vehicles rumble on the street, but an empty tractor trailer just bangs and rattles horribly. The 35-mph speed limit is not being adhered to either. The residents need to have something done. They have complained to Britton Industries and to PennDOT, but to no avail.

It's not just trucks that are speeding, it's vehicles also. There is a lack of speed limit signs. One resident had two accidents at her house alone. One vehicle hit her house and another time a vehicle hit a sign that pierced its gas tank and set the vehicle and its occupants on fire. After those two incidents, she was told she cannot put huge boulders on the front of her property because it would create an unsafe condition. She would be allowed to put concrete pillars, however.

Vehicles also pass the school bus on the right side. It's so dangerous that one resident's child no longer takes the bus to school. Sgt. Fanelli informed the residents that all the buses are now recording vehicles that don't stop and they are being sent tickets.

The PennDOT map shows approximately 13,000 vehicles per day on Woolston Drive. They understand it is on a ramp to Route 1, but the truck traffic just keeps on increasing. The trucks start running at the crack of dawn, and the truck traffic increases in the warmer weather. They all drop mulch and leave a mess because they have no tarps.

Another complaint is that at Makefield Road turning right to go down Woolston, no one stops at that stop sign.

Sgt. Fanelli said his three-prong approach to this problem is: Engineering, Education and Enforcement. They had the speed trailer out there for 3 days. The average was 6 – 7,000 cars per day. The police use the 85th percentile for speed. The average speed was 41 – 42 mph, which isn't that high. Sgt. Fanelli said he spoke to PennDOT and had the same lukewarm response as the residents. He went to the PA Representative John Galloway, but that office is in flux until the new Representative is in place. He introduced Mr. Seeherman, the Township traffic engineer from RVE, to the residents. Mr. Seeherman said trying to change the speed limit to 25 mph from 35 mph is a pretty involved process. A resident said at the Morrisville meeting they were discussing vertical speed humps and signage. Mr. Seeherman said residents end up hating the vertical changes, even though very effective, because they have to go over them for the rest of their lives. And the trucks would make even more noise going over those humps. The residents also said they don't want a traffic light at Makefield and Woolston. That would cause a constant backup around the clock. If the road is fixed and smoothed, then speeds increase. But one resident said the noise would be lessened. One resident asked if the Woolston traffic light can get louvers so you can't see the color of the light until you are closer to it. That slows traffic down. Mr. Seeherman said the light does have a back plate, so you don't get blinded by the sun. A resident said at midnight the signal turns to flashing.

The residents are also concerned because there is a 30" natural gas line pipe under the road. What is all this rumbling doing to that line? It's the open-hearth pipe.

A Woolston resident inquired about putting the small vertical bumps or temporary posts on the sides of the road where it's wide on Woolston Drive. It deters vehicles from going around buses, etc. Another resident said the downside to that is you then lose your acceleration lane. Sgt. Fanelli said the shoulders should be open to be used on state roads for cars to go around left turning vehicles.

Sgt. Fanelli said he can do more enforcement out there but the minute they pull away the negative actions start again. He would like to also have Mr. Seeherman investigate the engineering aspect of this problem. He will also speak to Britton Industries and ask them to be a good neighbor and help us reduce this problem.

Mr. Seeherman said there are three distinct problems here. One is the terrible condition of the road. There is a concrete road underneath and they only keep adding materials instead of truly fixing the problem. So, fixing the road is task #1. The second problem is the original design speed is too fast for a residential neighborhood. We probably cannot fix this problem. The third problem is the increasing truck volume. This road was not intended for these size trucks. PennDOT would probably allow blinking LED lights on the stop signs, but Mr. Seeherman doesn't seem to think that would help. He will be looking into possible solutions for the residents. Mr. Seeherman said Britton may be doing some type of development and he's not sure of what stage they are in, but it may pay for the residents to go to a planning commission meeting to inform the commission about this problem.

A resident also wanted to know why the huge sinkhole in the front yard of The Commons at Fallsington at West Trenton and Woolston Drive has never been fixed. It's in front of the newer apartment building against Woolston almost across from Glenwood and is surrounded by orange safety netting. It's been there a long time. The hole is chest deep and the blacktop is now falling in. Sgt. Fanelli will have Code Enforcement go look at it.

Sgt. Fanelli asked if the committee members had anything to add. Ms. Gallagher said she thinks truck inspections, putting the speed trailer out there, and getting the road fixed are good ideas. Sgt. Fanelli said he will keep in contact with Ms. Kerner. He will do a couple of details there for the stop sign issue, and he will put the speed trailer out there. He is going to have the Chief speak to the new state representative once they are settled into the job. The election is tomorrow. Hopefully they will have more pull with PennDOT.

The residents thanked the committee and then left the meeting.

Lt. Belinsky asked if there was a way to limit the trucks by weight. Mr. Seeherman said that is a possibility.

Lt. Belinsky said the Chief approved up to 3 different signs to be purchased. He passed out the sign samples to be picked. The three top choices among the committee were the yellow 'CAUTION – CHILDREN AT PLAY', the green 'KIDS & PETS AT PLAY – SLOW DOWN', and 'SLOW DOWN THIS IS NOT A RACETRACK'.

Lt. Belinsky discussed a speed study at Devon and Chelsea Roads. The study shows there is not a speeding problem there.

There was another complaint regarding traffic on Penn Valley Road blocking the highway during Manor Elementary School dismissal. It's unsafe to stop in the lane of travel because the car line comes out into the roadway. Sgt. Fanelli said one of the other lieutenants is working on a

redesign plan and until that's finished an officer will be there every day (if available). This is because cars are now passing on the grass shoulder. The white delineator sticks are all knocked down now.

There was no other business, so the meeting was adjourned at 8:21 p.m.