

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

November 14, 2022

Members in Attendance:

Amy Gallagher
Ian James
Robert Leary
Ariane Presser

Members Absent:

Leon Thompson

Also in Attendance:

Chief Nelson Whitney, Falls Township Police Department
Josh Seeherman, Remington Vernick (traffic engineer)

Chief Whitney opened the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

The minutes from the October 10, 2022 meeting were approved with no changes.

Chief Whitney welcomes everyone and hands out a chart containing crash data for the Township for the last ten years. It shows reportable, non-reportable and fatal crashes. We are looking to make these figures better. We did participate in a PennDOT funded aggressive driving survey. We targeted Route 13, U.S. Rte. 1 and Lincoln Highway. We had enforcement details out there to enforce aggressive driving, speeding and the move over law. Josh and I had some good discussions on traffic calming for the Township and discussed examples of signs. The promising item was the idea of conducting a Township wide traffic calming study. It would provide a blueprint for us to advise the Township of what we think we can accomplish in terms of a strategic traffic calming plan for the community.

Josh Seeherman elaborates and states most of the grants awarded by PennDOT are not applicable for a feasibility study because they consider studies to be planning – not implementation. Implementation would be related to the red-light camera money and some of the other things like that. Delaware Valley Planning Commission does sponsor planning efforts if you apply. Remington Vernick applied for a planning grant and obtained it for Newtown Borough. It was a safety walkability review study and the amount was \$65,000. The Borough must put it out to bid so Remington Vernick hasn't been awarded that yet.

Member James asks if it is a state grant?

Mr. Seeherman responds it is federal grant. It is from the Regional Planning Commission. Looking at the types of grants they have approved, I think it would be something to consider at Falls Township in April / May of 2023.

Chief Whitney says he thinks it's a great idea.

Discussion occurs around how to apply (Remington Vernick could assist in applying).

Discussion occurs about the crash data (most are speed related).

Chief Whitney wonders if we could also include as part of the study the accessibility of residents to walk and bike throughout the Township. It is something to consider and add into any planning discussion.

Mr. Seeherman responds Falls Township has a master transportation plan.

Chief Whitney says it is something we can look at between now and next meeting.

Mr. Seeherman states that Bucks County is re-doing their plan.

Chief Whitney asks how the county forms their plan – do they have a committee that advises them? Are there representatives from the municipalities?

Mr. Seeherman responds Bucks County has a Planning Commission, but I'm unsure of their representation.

Chief Whitney says he's working with Public Works for more stop signs. He also says he has made contact with our school bus program – we have issued close to 200 citations at this point – all of them are civil citations, not state citations (which would make a mandatory 60-day suspension of your driver's license and 5 points on your record). Hopefully, if issued a civil fine, it will give people an opportunity to amend their driving behavior without losing their license.

Member Leary talks about his experience with drivers not stopping for school buses. He asks who has put up the traffic cameras?

Mr. Seeherman says he doesn't know – if it's a state highway, it would be PennDOT. It could be the DVRPC – they do generic counting as well as Bucks County could be counting.

Member Leary asks how we could go about getting a left turn arrow in the traffic signal into the school coming off Hood Boulevard East. In the morning it backs up terribly.

Discussion occurs on this point pinpointing the exact location (down Hood Blvd turning into the high school making the left at the light). It is a state highway. We could do timed lighting during peak hours (5 seconds of protected left-hand turn). The request would be made to PennDOT after providing some counts to them. Discussion occurs on how to do the counting.

Chief Whitney agrees it is something to investigate.

Public Comment

Daniel Paschke and Margaret Marino.

Mr. Paschke says they are here as a follow-up for the traffic study done on Thornridge Drive. We are looking to get a stop sign on Thornridge Drive by Teaberry and Twin Leaf. When approaching Thornridge Drive, there are four curves before you hit the straight-away. The curves impact visibility. We are trying to get a stop sign installed. Two months ago we were here, and one of the “slow down” signs were installed at that point. We haven’t seen the numbers; we were told you could share the numbers with us. Also, we heard there are ten new stop signs, and we would like to request two go into the Thornridge section.

Ms. Marino states she emailed Chief Whitney in 2020 about this issue and a traffic study was done. However, they never received the results. A few months ago, Lt. Ward was at this meeting, and he also said a traffic study would be conducted. He did and placed it in a different area and did stealth monitoring on the light poles. We haven’t received any results. In North Park they have seven stop signs on their drive; Thornridge has only one.

If the traffic study doesn’t support our case, perhaps the posted speed around the curves could be reduced (perhaps to 15 mph) and then do another traffic study.

Chief Whitney says he will be happy to share the results of the traffic study with you. Our staff member who does this is our animal control officer who deploys the equipment. All equipment is owned by the Township, so the data is readily available.

Mr. Seeherman seeks clarification of where the stop sign would be located (on Thornridge coming up Twin Leaf). He asks if you would like a 3 way stop instead of one way (yes). From the data I saw, it did not support a stop sign. However, that is separate from the community wanting one. If it’s something very important to you then it’s a different path than just following the rules. Stop signs are looser in warrants than traffic signals.

Chief Whitney again states he will produce the traffic study results. He thinks Thornridge Drive would be one of the areas we want to address for traffic calming when we investigate Township wide traffic calming measures.

Discussion occurs further about the history of accidents, traffic, buses, safety of children.

Chief Whitney asks if there is additional data we need to collect regarding Thornridge?

Mr. Seeherman states if that wasn’t included in the original study, then crash data should be included.

Chief Whitney says he will pull up the crash data for that area in Thornridge.

Discussion occurs about further measures (like restricting parking in certain areas near the Thornridge problem area) and Board members look at the specific intersection on Mr. Seeherman’s computer.

Member Gallagher asks if there was any progress with putting “slow down” signs on residents’ yards on N. Olds Boulevard.

Chief Whitney says yes. He will forward to Board members the email from Mr. Seeherman detailing all the options for these types of signs. Discussion occurs in this regard. The intent would be to get the signs and advertise to the residents to come pick them up (like the Push the Pusher signs a few years ago).

Member Gallagher would like to see the blinking speed sign back on N. Olds Boulevard as a reminder to people to slow down. She sees speed limit signs in New Jersey that have blinking lights on the actual signs. Do we have something like that?

Chief Whitney says we discussed last meeting about the solar panel signs mounted to a pole, and they can be blue toothed to connect to a laptop to obtain data. I think they should be all over the Township. If we can get the Township wide study done, I think what we will do is get a combination of radar signs which collect data, tunneling the streets in certain areas, stop signs, etc. We are going to see a study which recommends different things in different areas.

We need to develop a Township wide strategic plan to address traffic calming as an ongoing problem. The crash data chart does not change from year to year, and a Township wide traffic calming plan would hopefully see a decrease in this chart.

Member Presser asks about flashing lights around a speed limit sign – can we do that here? Perhaps we could do something like that around the school.

Chief Whitney says that is something we could mix into solutions.

Mr. Seeherman states you just need to make sure they are PennDOT approved flashing lights. You are only allowed to have the same color LED lights as the sign around the signs and have it flash under a specific brightness on the perimeter of a sign.

Chief Whitney says there are all different kinds of solutions out there which is why it is helpful to have a Traffic Engineer with us for our meetings. Once we develop a plan, we figure out the cost. Once that is done, we can apply to PennDOT for an implementation grant.

In response to Member Presser’s question about the walkability and accessibility study, Chief Whitney says it can possibly be worked into the other study. Mr. Seeherman states it would also strengthen the grant application.

There was no other business.

Meeting adjourned 7:35 p.m.