

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

October 14, 2024

Members in Attendance:

Ian James
Robert Leary
Ariane Presser

Members Absent:

Amy Gallagher
Leon Thompson

Also in Attendance:

Lt. Martial Belinsky, Township of Falls Police Department
Sgt. Ray Fanelli, Township of Falls Police Department
Josh Seeherman, Remington & Vernick Engineers, Inc. (RVE)
Frank Jones, Falls Township Resident
Ruth Michener, Falls Township Resident

Lt. Belinsky opened the meeting at 6:31 p.m.

The minutes from the September 9, 2024 meeting were approved with no changes.

Ms. Michener lives between US1, Oxford Valley and Trenton Roads. She said there is all this commerce nearby, but it is not accessible for walkers. She also mentioned that some ramps don't have sidewalks attached. She once tried to take her husband in a wheelchair to the senior center, and was surprised to see how difficult it was to maneuver. She realizes that some streets are state roads, but some corners have a switch for the light, and you have to get off of a paved surface to get to the switch.

On some parts of Oxford Valley Road, the homes are very old and don't have sidewalks, but SEPTA has bus stops along there. It could be very dangerous crossing the road. The roads are not walkable.

Ms. Michener also mentioned the intersection at the WaWa near Lincoln Highway and Oxford Valley Road. The PennDOT project is slated to start in January 2025 after many years of delays. Lt. Belinsky said this is going to be a big mess, because the road will be closed for a minimum of 4 months, and the whole project will take at least a year.

Regarding the lack of sidewalks, Mr. Seeherman said that sidewalks should be put in when something new is built, but the builder can request to pay a fee to the township in lieu of

installing sidewalks. Ms. Michener said she wishes going forward that sidewalks become more of a priority. Mr. Seeherman agreed.

Mr. Seeherman informed the committee that traffic signals are owned by the Commonwealth but maintained by the township. Right now, the township is designing and improving 3 signals. They will be under construction next summer. One is Olds Blvd. at Queen Anne by the high school, one is at Trenton and Big Oak Road, and the third is at Trenton and Andover Roads. They are being upgraded with pedestrian infrastructures like the push buttons, etc. There are very strong ADA rules **now**, such as the button has to be a certain distance from the ramp, etc. These improvements are being paid for by a grant. Townships make improvements to sidewalks all the time. When a township repaves a road, all the ramps must be redone. Falls has a repaving program every year and those selected streets in the program get all the ramps redone at that time. If the ramp lacks the DWS strips (the bumps) then they are old and not in compliance. The majority of ramps in PA are non-compliant. The average ADA ramp costs between \$5,000 - \$7,000.

Mr. Jones spoke about his accessible rear entry van. He said they don't make them anymore. The new vans are only side entry. A lot of spots are not wide enough for side entrance/exit vans, even if it's marked for vans. Mr. Seeherman said that van aisles are required to be 5'. Mr. Jones said it's not a problem pulling into spots. With his van, he can even use a regular spot. At doctor's offices, the handicap spots are usually all taken. He was impressed that the handicap spot here at the temporary township building was nice and wide. He usually doesn't see that. Lt. Belinsky said hopefully at the new building the accessible spots will be just as wide.

There was a complaint about the school crosswalk at Manor Elementary School. Sgt. Fanelli said a resident was interested in a crossing guard, flashing lights and a pedestrian crossing sign for the double yellow lines at Birch Valley and Birch Drive. The resident said she had seen this used at a middle school in Lower Makefield. There is a designated student cross walk with piano keys across from the entrance at North Park Way. The resident wanted these reflective signs, but they would stick out into the road a little. It's a very tight road as it is. When the school is backed up at pick up time, it backs up into the roadway. Some drivers just want to get around all this and they just drive right down the center. The school district and the police department are still trying to figure out a solution for this. We have the signs, but the wide base sticks out and makes the road even smaller. They would get hit so we cannot leave the signs out all night, so they would have to be moved in and out every day. The signs are heavy metal, so we cannot count on the crossing guards to be able to do that. Lt. Belinsky said these signs would for sure be hit. He has given some plastic A-frame SCHOOL CROSSING signs to the crossing guards, and they are being hit by cars too. He has had to replace several so far. So hitting a metal sign would definitely be an issue.

Lt. Belinsky reported that they had a complaint about speeding on Makefield Road where there is a crossing guard. The guard has not complained to him about speeding. So its difficult to deal with these situations. Residents want crossing guards at every corner in the township, but there is no funding for that. Sgt. Fanelli sat out at Birch Valley for a few days, and only 5 kids cross there. There's a crosswalk painted, there are signs on each side. We just can't put guards at each corner. It's not feasible. The problem is these schools are older and close to the road.

They need bigger parking lots to serpentine the cars in and out, but it is what is for now. There is always traffic. It's a nightmare, but there is no easy fix. Since Covid, more children get driven to school. Next year, the starting time for the high school is changing. It will be 8 or 8:15 a.m. Hopefully this will alleviate some of the accidents there.

In regard to old complaints, Sgt. Fanelli reported that the Public Works Department was able to paint a stop bar and the word STOP and the reflective vertical striping on the signs in Vermilion Hills in two sections. This will bring more awareness to drivers in that section.

He also reported that speed trailer #2 is still broken. The speed trailers are also important to raise awareness, especially approaching schools.

The revving engine complaint is still ongoing with the night patrol addressing it.

Last meeting we discussed the scale house and the truck traffic. The other day, the PUC, Falls Township, Bristol Township, the DEP, and PA State Police were all down there with a lot of inspectors. But after 20 minutes, the truck drivers all notified each other not to come there and then the truck traffic basically stopped. The State Police have been going there more often. But you need to work in pairs for safety reasons. Morrisville Borough has done a good job not having trucks on certain of their roads. That means Falls gets the overflow. In anticipation of that, Sgt. Fanelli is trying to address any deficiencies and address them early on. The waste trucks are only supposed to be on certain roads. If they are not, that is called 'being off route' and that's a \$1,000 fine. Last week he gave 3 drivers fines for being off route. He noticed some speed signs are missing, and PennDOT has to put them up if the speed limit is over 35 mph. There are also some bad potholes to be repaired too. Unfortunately, PennDOT is slow to respond. Lt. Belinsky and Sgt. Fanelli may make a list of these items and try to go to PennDOT's District 6 and try to get an in-person meeting.

Ms. Presser asked about the STOP MEANS STOP signs. Lt. Belinsky will inquire with Mr. Arnao of Public Works to see if he has anymore.

Lt. Belinsky said they had several NO PARKING and PARKING BY PERMIT signs removed from Vermilion Way and Birch Valley. He had the township solicitor put a change in the ordinance. The original complainant called to thank him because he can now park at his house. Two hours later, he also received a complaint about someone parking there. It takes a few days for the ordinance updated.

There was no other business, so the meeting was adjourned at 7:27 p.m.