

**BOROUGH OF WEST READING
TRAFFIC & INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE**

APRIL 9, 2025

The Borough of West Reading Traffic & Infrastructure Committee met on Wednesday, April 9, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. at Borough Hall with the following persons present: Chairman Christopher Lincoln; Council Member Patrick Kaag; Chief of Police Richard Tornielli; Mayor Samantha Kaag; Public Works Director Kerry Grassley; Borough Manager Randall Miller; and Borough Secretary Cynthia Madeira.

Visitors:

Karen Livingood, Resident
Michael Witmyer, Resident
Jean Witmer, Resident
Lourdes Citronelle, Resident
Michele London, Resident

James Rogers, Resident
Samuel Goldberg, Resident
Marcy Wilkes, Resident
Justo & Josephine Sanchez, Residents

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Lincoln at 6:01 p.m.

Public Comment

Mrs. London spoke of her inability to obtain a parking permit with a home address in the 400 block of Sycamore Road and recommended the removal of permit parking from the south side of Sycamore Road within the 500 block adjacent to the park area that is rarely used by residents. Mr. Lincoln spoke of the original intent of the permit parking program that was established nearly thirty years ago in the vicinity of the Reading Hospital to deter staff from using residential parking spaces and the need to update these regulations borough wide. Grant funding has been applied for to perform a permit parking study.

Motion to recommend the removal of permit parking on the south side of Sycamore Road between Museum Road and South Fifth Avenue. **Moved** by Mr. Grassley and seconded by Mayor Kaag. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Mr. Rogers requested clarification of a discussion last month that pertained to parking in front of garages. Chief Tornielli reported that parking in front of garages is not allowed, and any preceding special arrangements will not be honored moving forward.

Mr. Rogers alerted the committee to parking within the right-of-way in front of garages on Boot, Dusk and Twilight Alley's as well as the 500 and 600 blocks of Cherry Street. An additional parking space on the west side of Fourth Avenue at Penn Avenue was tested by Mr. Rogers for interference with the traffic signal loop and he did not believe that a vehicle parked within that space interfered with the signal cycle. Mr. Lincoln was concerned with vehicles parking a distance from the curb causing interference and offered to review this further.

Mrs. Wilkes recommended the installation of a "Children at Play" sign to be installed in the 400 block of Grape Street to slow traffic. It was noted that this is a one-way direction of travel, west to east, and it was thought that a posting surface could be located near the Volunteer Fireman's Beneficial Association building.

Ms. Witmer recommended that the borough mail letters to individuals affected by the change in enforcement of parking in front of garages. Chief Tornielli indicated that warnings have been issued to the affected individuals.

Mr. Rogers spoke of his experience on two occasions in reporting street light outages, as listed in the borough newsletter, and a live person, even on a Saturday and Sunday evening that took the information. He recommended that outage information be provided to him for review and reporting to Met-Ed.

Mr. Sanchez requested the permit parking program to be expanded to include all residents, noting that vehicles with parking permits use the spaces in front of their home on South Fifth Avenue. Mrs. Sanchez shared that the deli located around the corner on Franklin Street brings further parking complications such as double parking and the use of residential parking spaces.

Ms. Citronelle spoke of a handicapped parking space established on the 100 block of South Fifth Avenue for her son and the deli customers use of the handicapped parking space for takeout orders. She recommended that a parking lot be established for business use.

Mr. Goldberg thanked the borough for installing additional pedestrian crossing signs at the Third and Penn Avenue intersection. He thanked Mayor Kaag and Council Member Kaag for joining him at this intersection to experience the ongoing difficulties of crossing this intersection even after the installation of pedestrian signs, and he thanked Chief Tornielli for his lengthy email in response to some of his questions. Mr. Goldberg inquired as to any changes in policing strategies for this intersection. Chief Tornielli indicated that the maximum amount of effort is being placed into monitoring this intersection. Mr. Grassley shared that a grant application has been approved by Borough Council to potentially install a Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB) at both the Fifth Avenue and Pine Street intersection and Third and Penn Avenue intersection. Mr. Goldberg spoke of the reported 23 citations issued at this intersection and 53 traffic checks totaling 76 total actions taken during a six-month period. Chief Tornielli reported that the ratio of actions taken at this intersection are significantly higher than other intersections within the borough. Mr. Goldberg requested the Kaag's to recount their experience crossing this intersection, specifically when his wife was crossing with their child in a stroller. Mayor Kaag indicated that drivers were blocking or not respecting the crosswalk and reported that no signs are posted indicating that drivers must stop for pedestrians within the crosswalk, and shared PennDOT's recommendation to remove the crosswalk from this dangerous intersection. Mr. Kaag shared how striking it was as to the number of drivers that were in disregard of pedestrians. Mr. Goldberg estimated conservatively that 1% of drivers did not yield to pedestrians in the crosswalk. Out of approximately 10,000 vehicles that traverse this roadway on a daily basis, and the last 160 days of data, he felt that 16,000 actions should have been taken during the last six month period. The data does not match the experience. Chief Tornielli indicated that based on crash data there should not be a need for enforcement at this intersection. There have been no pedestrian crashes in ten years and this intersection has the lowest incidence of vehicle crashes on Penn Avenue. Efforts have been focused on this intersection based on complaints received from residents such as Mr. Goldberg. Mayor Kaag asked Mr. Goldberg to allow a three-month period to monitor the intersection with the added signage and police efforts before deciding to remove the crosswalk as recommended by PennDOT. Grant awards for the installation of an RRFB won't be announced until early next year. Mr. Goldberg shared an idea used at the shore where flags are used to promote visibility of pedestrians to drivers.

Mr. Witmyer shared details relating to an incident his wife experienced crossing Reading Avenue while an officer was in the area when she was almost hit by a vehicle. Chief Tornielli indicated that if the officer had witnessed this incident he would have responded. Pedestrian crossing safety is the department's biggest concern. Mr. Witmyer spoke of raised crosswalks that may bring better driver awareness to these intersections.

Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the Traffic and Infrastructure Committee minutes of March 12, 2025. **Moved** by Chief Tornielli and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 6-0.**

New Business

20-Minute Parking Space Timeframe – Following a review of 20-minute parking space designations staff identified various timeframes implemented in various locations. It was thought from an enforcement standpoint that a uniform timeframe matching Penn Avenue's 3-hour time limit, parking from 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Monday through Saturday would be beneficial, with an exception to the 300 block of South Seventh Avenue where weekday designations would be more fitting.

Motion to recommend an update to 20-minute parking from Monday through Saturday, 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. **Moved** by Mayor Kaag and seconded by Chief Tornielli. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Mr. Goldberg, Ms. Witmer, Ms. Citronelle, and Mr. & Mrs. Sanchez departed the meeting.

Old Business

Experimental Parking Regulations Update – The ninety-day experimental parking regulations were reviewed noting that no complaints have been received to date.

Mr. Rogers indicated that an additional parking space could be added to North Fifth Avenue, on the east side. Mr. Grassley expressed concern regarding tractor trailer access from Penn Avenue. Mr. Rogers also recommended that an additional parking space be added to North Sixth Avenue on the east side.

Motion to recommend Borough Council to permanently adopt experimental parking regulations within Resolution 2025-8. **Moved** by Mr. Grassley and seconded by Chief Tornielli. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Motion to recommend Borough Council to permanently adopt experimental parking regulations within Resolution 2025-10. **Moved** by Chief Tornielli and seconded by Mr. Grassley. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Wayne Avenue and Lakeview Drive Intersection – Mr. Lincoln shared recommendations from an intersection study performed by the Pennsylvania Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP) that was requested following two crashes, including a rollover within the past year. The intersection does not meet the criteria for a four-way stop but instead recommended improving the line-of-sight distance by removing trees and parking spaces. The Shade Tree Commission will evaluate the health of the trees in question and Mr. Grassley will evaluate the possible reconfiguration of parking stalls. Chief Tornielli will provide crash data for the last two years since the LTAP report evaluates the five-year span of 2019 through 2023 that referenced two reportable crashes.

Multi-Modal Grant Opportunities – As discussed earlier this evening, Borough Council granted authorization to apply for two RRFB grants for the intersections of Third and Penn Avenue, and Fifth Avenue and Pine Street.

Sunset Road Speed Data – Mr. Grassley shared a resident request for speed data again on Sunset Road. A small nondescript device had been placed on a pole that gathered data during the course of three weekdays, March 25-27th on the one-way section between Third and Fifth Avenue. Mr. Lincoln noted the posted speed of 25 miles per hour, and the average speed of 27.7 miles per hour. The highest speed was one vehicle in the 50 to 55 miles per hour range. The number of vehicles traveling on the roadway during the three-day span was 7,300 vehicles, the highest concentration of vehicles occurred during the hours of 2:00 p.m. through 5:00 p.m. Chief Tornielli appreciated the time-of-day reference to direct patrols.

Towing Contract – Chief Tornielli reported that appointment of a towing company has not taken place since 2009 when V&M Towing was approved as the tower and storage facility for the borough. Information has been gathered from three qualified towing companies, V&M Towing, Matos Towing, and Bill's Towing. The towing companies were provided with two scenarios frequently encountered

where vehicles are towed for parking violations and recovered within 24 hours. Chief Torielli recommended annual updates or appointments of a towing contractor to ensure a current fee schedule is on file. The drop fee is a pet peeve of Chief Torielli's where the owner of the vehicle arrives prior to removing the vehicle and is charged a cash fee to drop the vehicle. He intends to negotiate a contract that prioritizes customer service, ensuring that individuals can conveniently recover their towed vehicles while being treated fairly and transparently with regard to towing and storage fees. The packet of information provided to committee members was requested to be reviewed and any questions forwarded to Chief Torielli prior to next month's meeting for further discussion.

Motorcycle / Compact Car Parking – Mr. Miller provided draft language to allow more than one motorcycle to park within a single space and establish shortened stalls for use by compact vehicles. Paid parking would be available through the current ParkMobile system that is based on the license plate. The number of motorcycles that could comfortably fit within one space would be a maximum of three. The stipulation of prohibiting a vehicle and motorcycle from sharing a single parking space was requested to be added to the draft language. Mr. Miller indicated that he could not locate a definition for compact vehicle and suggested a reference for the vehicle in question that must wholly fit within the parking stall. The recommended length of the shortened stall was seventeen feet. Draft language was requested for review next month.

Delaney Circle Update – Mr. Lincoln shared his concerns on creating parking along the outer edge of the traffic circle. The original plan defined through pavement markings a narrower travel lane thereby slowing the movement of traffic. A revised conceptual plan had been created to allow parking along the outer edge of the circle with additional parking spaces at the entrance to Buttonwood Street. Vehicles traveling in a circular motion while navigating around vehicles moving in different directions to park could be problematic. The maneuvering lane would more than likely be used as a second travel lane and cause confusion. Chief Torielli expressed concerns about introducing a new hazard to a difficult environment. Mr. Miller shared that the road project bid opening is scheduled for Tuesday and will include an alternate bid to stripe the circle with parking spaces. The consensus from the committee was that the original plan was more pedestrian friendly and avoids driver confusion as to which lane to occupy. Mr. Lincoln will communicate with the engineer to fine tune the original plan prior to implementation. The final plan could be presented during a preconstruction meeting. A modern roundabout would be preferred but would be a costly endeavor.

Public Comment

Mr. Rogers shared that approximately seventy years ago his dentist was a member of Borough Council who pursued the installation of a traffic signal at the Third and Penn Avenue intersection. The request had been denied based on the slope of the intersection and navigation during winter weather.

Adjournment

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 8:03 p.m. by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Mayor Kaag.

Motion carried 6-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Madeira
Borough Secretary