

PUBLIC SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY February 5, 2007

ATTENDEES:

Bill Pritchard, Chair
John Barnes
Blaney Harper
Costas Toregas
Arthur Schatzkin
Lance Hoffman, Town Council Liaison

Absent: Tracy Denning, Paul Blutter, Larry Lannom

Guests:

Scott DeCain, 7715 Chatham Road
Jim Horan, 7704 Chatham Road
Amanda Kinnaird, 4100 Aspen Street
Bill Minicozzi, 7705 Chatham Road
Sandy Sterrett, 7709 Chatham Road
Audrey Yen, 7706 Chatham Road

The meeting was called to order.

There was no public comment other than discussion of traffic on Chatham Road.

Traffic on Chatham Road

The Town has received several complaints from residents regarding speeding of vehicles on Chatham Road poor visibility for drivers at several points on the road.

Residents of Chatham Road and Aspen Street expressed the following views:

The main issue is speed of traffic apparently representing cut through traffic from East-West Highway bypassing the intersection of E-W Highway and Connecticut. In addition, because Maple is blocked northbound during the evening rush hour, traffic to East-West Highway diverts up Aspen and onto Meadow or Chatham, the latter being downhill contributing to speeding. Residents noted many children living on the street, many under 10 years of age, and concern for their safety.

Specific items mentioned by the residents of the street include:

- Obstructed view of the stop sign, southbound on Chatham at Blackthorn
- Obstructed view of the restricted entry sign at the west side of the intersection of East-West Highway and Chatham
- Obstructed view at the stop sign east bound on Aspen St. at Chatham
- Poor visibility for drivers southbound on Chatham or east bound on Aspen at the intersection of the two due to shrubbery at the northwest corner of the intersection and the acute angle of the intersection

- Lack of stop signs along the road other than the one southbound at Blackthorn and northbound at East-West Highway.

There were also concerns expressed about the safety of exiting from Chatham onto East-West Highway and the rationale for Maple Avenue being blocked at rush hour. Residents did note increased police presence recently.

Solutions suggested by the residents:

Speed bumps on Chatham

Additional stop signs:

Southbound on Chatham at Aspen

Northbound on Chatham at Blackthorn (the downhill direction)

Improve visibility at sites mentioned above

Expand the hours of limited entry from East-West Highway (evening rush)

Signage: Children at play

Reduce speed limit to 15 mph

Police enforcement

Control of speed on East-West Highway

Committee action:

The Committee voted to request a traffic study on Chatham Road and Aspen Street. Residents suggested the Chatham Road location at approximately 7709 Chatham Road (mid block)

The minutes of the January 8, 2007 meeting were approved “as is”.

Committee organization

Larry Lannom was appointed Chair of the Sidewalks subcommittee with William Pritchard as a member. Larry Lannom will also serve on the IT sub-committee. Current committee assignments:

Electric

John Barnes (chair)

Blaney Harper

Tracy Denning

Water

Blaney Harper (chair)

Arthur Schatzkin

Traffic

Bill Pritchard (chair)

Sidewalks

Larry Lannom (chair)

Bill Pritchard

Security

Paul Blutter (co-chair)
Arthur Schatzkin (co-chair)

IT

Costas Toregas (chair)
Larry Lannom

Reports/Planning:

Public Services Survey: the detailed results and specific resident comments on Public Safety and Streets and Sidewalks have been distributed to the PSC. The chair asked the PSC to review the report for comments relevant to the main tasks of the sub-committees.

Traffic:

Copies of the report, "A Comprehensive Traffic Plan for the Town of Chevy Chase Presented by the Traffic Committee, November, 2003" were distributed to the Committee members. This also included a listing of the recommendations and an indication of the state of consideration by the Town Council. At the next two Council meetings, the Council will discuss possible installation of pedestrian crosswalks at various intersections (February 13) and raised intersections and entryway barriers (March 14).

Although no action by the PSC is required regarding the Comprehensive Traffic Plan at this time, the PSC should be aware of the issues and state of implementation. The Chair reviewed the motivation for the undertaking (coordinated rather than piecemeal approach to traffic control, traffic/pedestrian safety, unintended consequences of changes in traffic regulation); the Traffic Assessment by Street Traffic Studies, Ltd., (submitted to the Town on May 10, 2002); and, the subsequent preparation of the comprehensive plan by the Traffic Committee.

Water:

Committee is reviewing documents related to water issues.

Lance Hoffman reports (1) that the State is being encouraged to address water runoff on surrounding roads and (2) the Visioning Committee will include a timeline for PSC review of the Water Ordinance, 12-15 months after implementation.

Electrical:

Committee proposed and will draft an educational article for the Town Forecast reporting on electrical outages that may include information on the Town's interactions with Pepco on outages in the Town.

Security:

Committee will meet with Todd Hoffman to discuss:
Allocation and role of security resources: two private firms and
Montgomery County Police;

Elm Street Park (lighting, police presence, surveillance cameras)
Surveillance cameras in general
Neighborhood Watch
Parked cars left unattended for days.

Sidewalks:

Chair distributed a summary of Montgomery County policies on installation of sidewalks for consideration by the Committee for future discussion.

Information Technology:

The members agree strongly that our Town should be careful not to undertake technology initiatives if there is no compelling municipal service, economic development or digital inclusion reason behind it. The committee will consider all technology opportunities as they arise and match them to a policy or management initiative that is currently on our Town's agenda. The committee may also initiate technological efforts given political support and financial means. As a forward-looking approach, the committee suggests the following as our road map of action:

1. Review the identified articles on WiFi and see how they match on going Town issues;
2. Request a meeting with Town staff to better understand the current use of IT for administrative and citizen service purposes, and see if we can advise (where invited) as to ways IT can improve performance;
3. Review the citizen's survey and any policy statements of Council for expressions of policy or service demand where technology can help, and report to the full committee with suggestions as to how that can be done.

Perhaps if there is a session where Council members discuss desired future Town goals, we might observe those discussions and our committee could ultimately respond with a technology program crafted by our subcommittee that can accomplish those goals

The meeting was adjourned.