

PUBLIC SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday June 10, 2008

ATTENDEES:

Bill Pritchard, Chair
John Barnes
Larry Lannom
Susan Milner
Arthur Schatzkin
Monique Shimm
Al Lang, Town Council Liaison

Absent: Blaney Harper, Costis Toregas

Guests:

Joseph Cutro, PE
Nick Anderson, 7101 Oakridge Avenue
Rose Miller, Valley Pl
Andy Freimuth, Underwood St.

The meeting was called to order at 7:30pm.

There were no public comments.

The minutes of the April 15, 2008 meeting were approved.

Leland Center playground equipment:

Susan Milner reports that the playground design is proceeding. She provided resident recommendations to the designer and will follow-up with the PSC and the Council to secure funds for enhancements to the design beyond what is budgeted by Montgomery County. This is expected to be approximately \$15,000 from the Town to supplement the county budget of \$60,000. Proposed designs may be posted with residents notified by postcard or perhaps with publicity at the July 4th picnic. The equipment should be a blend appropriate for ages up to 12 yo.

Sidewalks:

Councilmember Lang reviewed the status of the development of sidewalk plans for Thornapple Street and Oakridge Avenue. The advantages/disadvantages of 1-side parking, same or different side as the sidewalk and 2-sided parking were discussed with Joseph Cutro, as well as the width requirements for 2-sided parking.

One issue is determining what is required to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act as generally required by the Town's policy. The PSC, having provided general advice on the need for sidewalks as a matter of public safety, felt that the specific details of installation are beyond its expertise. A second issue is the advantages/disadvantages of installing permeable

sidewalks here or as a matter of general policy within the Town, a matter the PSC has not considered.

Chevy Chase Elementary School (CCES) Traffic Plans:

In response to the principal's concerns about increased traffic and child safety around CCES, the Montgomery County Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPWT) developed a proposal for traffic restrictions around CCES as part of a standing committee that addresses such issues. The PSC discussed that proposal with Mr. Cutro, as well as an additional proposal that would establish counterclockwise flow around the school (Rosemary Circle, Meadow Lane, Valley Place, Beechwood to Hillcrest).

Regarding the proposed change in traffic flow, Mr. Cutro expressed concern about (i) complex signage and enforceability; (ii) that the change may not address the core problems of Rosemary Street (buses and traffic meeting head on in a single lane of traffic) and parking; and, (iii) the risk of unintended consequences resulting from a major change in traffic flow.

The PSC reviewed the plans and recommended that the Council adopt most of DPWT recommendations, some with modifications, as delineated in the attached text. The recommendations represent new parking restrictions as well as clearer signage for existing restrictions. The PSC is unwilling to endorse major changes to traffic circulation as a first step in improving safety around the school. The new restrictions may be implemented with the expectation that the situation be re-evaluated later in the school year. Further steps may need to be taken to address the problem of school buses on Rosemary Street.

The next meeting will be on Tuesday, July 7, 2008.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30.

PSC recommendations to the Council on CCES traffic:

Subject: Traffic safety in the vicinity of Chevy Chase Elementary School (CCES)

In response to concerns about traffic safety and risks to CCES students in the vicinity of the school, Jean Gries of the Montgomery County Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPWT) proposed a plan to improve traffic safety and circulation. The plan was developed in concert with the CCES principal, Montgomery County Public Schools staff, and a Montgomery County Police community liaison officer. The proposed plan is composed of 9 separate recommendations. In conjunction with a review of the plan by Joseph Cutro, P.E., the PSC reviewed the plans and recommends that the Council adopt most of DPWT recommendations, some with modifications, as delineated below. The recommendations represent new parking restrictions as well as clearer signage for existing restrictions. The PSC is unwilling to endorse major changes to traffic circulation as a first step in improving safety around the school (e.g., #1 of the DPWT proposal).

Since the introduction of the magnet program at the Chevy Chase Elementary School, there has been an increase in the number of children arriving at school by car, rather than by bus or walking. This has increased the problems of (1) child drop off, with cars traveling both north- and south-bound using the drop-off lane on the east side of Hillcrest and (2) difficult passage of cars and buses along Rosemary Street between Meadow Lane and Rosemary Circle. In addition, there are parking restrictions in effect that are poorly signed and therefore ineffective.

Definitions per Maryland Vehicle Law:

“No Parking” prohibits parking but allows standing or stopping

“No Standing” prohibits halting a vehicle except for loading/unloading passengers

“No Stopping” prohibits halting a vehicle even for loading/unloading passengers

Therefore, “No Standing” eliminates parked vehicles as well as vehicle waiting/idling, but does allow passenger loading/unloading. “No stopping” eliminates student loading/unloading, which should take place in other areas where they do not create traffic safety problems.

In December, 2007, the PSC forwarded the following recommendation to the Council:

The area around the Chevy Chase Elementary School should be cordoned off with signs identifying it as a school zone. There should be separate conditional 15 mph speed limit signs at the approaches to CCES placed after the school zone signs.

The Public Services Committee recommends adoption of the following restrictions. The numbering is based on the DPWT recommendations and Mr. Cutro’s review for ease of comparison:

1: Paint a double yellow centerline on Hillcrest Place for the entire block between the Circle and Beechwood. (suggestion by Mr. Cutro in response to DPWT item #1. The intent is to inhibit southbound drivers from crossing to the east side of Hillcrest for drop-off/pick-up.) This would be paired with **an education effort (a school flyer?), requesting CCES parents to approach the school’s Hillcrest dropoff lane in the northbound direction only, and with right wheels to the curb.**

2: On the east side of Hillcrest Place, install NO STOPPING ANY TIME from the Circle to the start of the added curbside drop-off lane, and from the end of the drop-off lane to Beechwood Drive. For the drop-off lane itself, install NO STANDING SCHOOL DAYS 8 AM – 4 PM. (The start time changed from 8:30 AM proposed by DPWT to 8 AM for simpler sign text)

3: On the west side of Hillcrest Place, install NO STOPPING ANY TIME from Beechwood Drive to 35' southward, and from 50' north of the Circle to the Circle. (Note: this does not affect an existing segment of TOCC permit parking and still allows some open on-street parking)

4: On the outer edge of the Circle, install NO STOPPING ANY TIME from the north leg of Hillcrest Place to Stanford Street, and from Stanford Street to the west leg of Rosemary Street.

5. Install NO STOPPING ANY TIME on both sides of Rosemary Street (west leg) and both sides of Stanford Street from the Circle to 35' (minimum) westward. (Replaces existing NO PARKING ANYTIME zones with stronger NO STOPPING regulations.)

6. On the east leg of Rosemary Street, install NO STOPPING ANY TIME on both the north and the south side from the Circle to 50' eastward and on the outer edge of the Circle 30' south of Rosemary Street. Install additional NO PARKING ANYTIME signs on the north side of Rosemary Street from the school's eastern property line to 50' east of the Circle. (The latter item has been changed from a more restrictive NO STOPPING proposed by DPWT and would provide for better posting of an existing NO PARKING regulation for the greater part of the school's Rosemary Street frontage.)

7-8. On the outer edge of the Circle from the east leg of Rosemary Street to Hillcrest Place, replace existing parking control signs (3) with NO STOPPING 8AM – 4PM EXCEPT BUSES. (DPWT proposed NO PARKING EXCEPT BUSES 8:30 AM – PM; PSC recommends a more restrictive NO STOPPING with time conforming to other signs. In addition, DPWT recommended painting a 3-4 ft wide zone along this segment (#8); PSC does not recommend this measure due to maintenance and appearance concerns. We prefer to assess the effect of the new signage before proceeding with the street markings.)

9: On the south side of Beechwood Drive from Hillcrest Place to Valley Place, replace existing NO PARKING SCHOOL DAYS 8 AM – 5 PM with NO PARKING SCHOOL DAYS 8 AM – 4 PM. (DPWT suggested changing the times to 8:30 AM to 4 PM; PSC recommend 8 AM to 4 PM for consistency.)

10: Extend the educational effort (as noted in Item #1) to provide CCES parents with more information about traffic and pedestrian issues around the school, including the new/augmented parking restrictions described above.