

DRAFT PUBLIC SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday December 4, 2007

ATTENDEES:

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

Joseph Cutro, Traffic Engineer

Absent: Blaney Harper, Costis Toregas

The meeting was called to order at 7:35pm.

Lance Hoffman reported that the Town received a letter requesting that the intersection of Curtis and Oakridge Lane be made a three-way stop and another that speeding be addressed on East-West Highway.

The minutes of the November 13 2007 meeting were approved.

Susan Milner was introduced as a new member of the Committee.

Safety around Chevy Chase Elementary School:

Mr. Cutro noted that the area surrounding the Chevy Chase Elementary School should be posted with a reduced speed limit as a school zone. The details of the signs and specific and appropriate placement may be determined by a traffic engineer to ensure compliance with current guidelines and the most effective implementation.

The PSC approved the following recommendation:

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.

Leland Center playground equipment:

Susan Milner reported on the state of disrepair of the Leland Center playground equipment and attendant safety hazards. The playground equipment is slated for replacement in July 2009. The Town has been in contact with Parks and Planning on the matter. There was general discussion about options for accelerating the replacement and potential for the Town to supplement the costs of replacement. Town residents should be involved in the selection of final designs.

The PSC approved the following motion:

The PSC notes the poor condition of some of the Leland Center playground equipment, some of which presents a safety hazard. The Committee urges the Town to work with Park and Planning to expedite the installation of new or temporary playground equipment as soon as possible rather than waiting for the scheduled July 2009 installation date.

Signs at the entrances to the Town along Connecticut Avenue:

The PSC continued its discussion of the signs at some of the seven entrances to the Town along Connecticut Avenue between East-West Highway and the National 4H Center that advise drivers of restricted access to Wisconsin Ave. While these signs may inhibit entry into the Town from Connecticut, their removal would decrease the visual clutter and make the proposed 25 mph speed limit signs more effective. There was concern that their removal could lead to increased through traffic in the Town. In order to assess any change, a traffic study of all seven streets before sign removal and again at one year is proposed. If traffic volume increases after removal, then re-installation may be considered.

The PSC approved the following recommendation:

Following a traffic count on all seven streets intersecting Connecticut Avenue between East-West Highway and the National 4H Center, the signs at the entrances to the Town along Connecticut Avenue that advise of restricted access to Wisconsin Avenue should be removed. A similar traffic count should be done one year later to assess if any significant changes have come about in traffic flow.

Policy for evaluating proposed traffic restrictions:

Following discussion, the PSC approved a "Traffic Restrictions and Signage Policy" that delineates the decision process to be followed by the Town in considering new traffic restrictions. **The PSC forwarded the policy to the Council for review.**

Speed hump policy:

Mr. Cutro presented his recommendation that the Town adopt two thresholds for use in the assessment of traffic data:

A minimum of 120 vehicles per day exceeding 30 mph, or

A minimum of 20 vehicles exceeding 30 mph during any hour of the day

These are based on the criteria used by the City of Rockville. Currently, there are 15 out of 87 street segments in the Town that contain speed humps. Mr. Cutro estimates that approximately 7 more would qualify using these thresholds. These thresholds lie between (1) the more conservative criteria used by Montgomery County which do not meet the needs of the Town and (2) a more liberal criterion of perhaps 50-60 cars per day exceeding 30 mph. Further decreases below the latter criterion would yield little or no further reduction in speed; hence it is a lower bound for the range of potential thresholds.

The PSC voted to accept the proposed thresholds but notes that the decision may ultimately depend on subjective assessment of mitigating factors, such as proximity to playgrounds and schools, presence or absence of sidewalks, number of children on the block(s), etc. The PSC will draft a policy that includes these thresholds and potential mitigating factors.

The next meeting will be on either Tuesday, January 22 or 29, 7:30-9:00 pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:20.