

Police and Public Safety Committee Meeting
Minutes
April 26, 2017

The meeting of the Police and Public Safety Committee was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairman Terry Mest. Committee members present in addition to Mr. Mest were Charles Heller, and ex-officio member Frank Deery. Committee member Lori Carnes was absent.

Also in attendance were Council member Barry Christman; Police Chief Barry Leatherman; Patricia Loder, Borough Manager; Adrienne Blank, Main Street Manager; Allen Steffy, Lynn Camella, and Emma Dinnocenti, Building a Better Boyertown, and an interested citizen.

Mr. Mest made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 29, 2017 meeting of the committee. The motion was seconded by Mr. Heller and approved by the members present.

Police Chiefs Report

Chief Leatherman briefly reviewed with the committee a report on department activities and upcoming events. Chief Leatherman also advised the committee of a handicap parking request for 142 North Reading Avenue. The request will be listed on the agenda of the May 1st meeting of Council.

The Chief also briefly reviewed with the Committee a written request from Building a Better Boyertown to hold the annual Cruise Night Event on North and South Reading Avenues on July 15 between the hours of 4:00 and 9:00 p.m.; road closure will be 2:00 to 10:00 p.m. The rain date is July 22. This matter will be listed on the agenda of the May 1st meeting of Council.

Unfinished Business

There was no unfinished business to conduct.

New Business

Advance Green Philadelphia and Reading Avenues – The Chief informed the Committee that he has been advised by a PennDOT official that PennDOT will most likely agree to conduct a traffic study at the main intersection to determine if the intersection meets the criteria for an advance green signal, and prepare the required signal improvement plans. They noted that it is possible that a senior PennDOT official could deny the study request due to a funding shortfall; they also noted that the turnaround time for conducting a study is a slow moving process. They also advised the Chief that the Borough may use their own personnel to perform the traffic count and submit that information to PennDOT.

Regarding funding grants they advised the Chief that the grant application is pretty simple; they indicated that the Automated Red Light Enforcement grant is very competitive because it is a “no match” grant; the Green Light Go is not as competitive and has a 20% match.

The Chief stated that the Borough would have to submit a letter of request to PennDOT to perform the traffic study. It was also noted that if the study indicates an advance green signal is justified, PennDOT will require the Borough to implement the change in the intersection.

The Chief also discussed with the Committee other improvements which could be made at the intersection such as traffic pre-emption, and updated pedestrian signals. The Committee agreed that those upgrades should be included in any modification made to the intersection. The Chief will speak with Signal Service about the potential cost of signal improvements as discussed.

Further discussion was held on the subject and Mr. Deery and Mr. Heller agreed to assist the Chief with performing the traffic study. Mr. Deery and Mr. Heller will meet with the Chief to arrange the details.

Public Comments

Mr. Mest called for public comment and recognized Mr. Charles Kleinhenn of 201 West Philadelphia Avenue. Mr. Kleinhenn addressed the Committee with a request to reduce the speed limit on West Philadelphia Avenue from 35 MPH to 25MPH. Mr. Kleinhenn noted that a reduction of the speed limit would establish uniformity along the entire length of Philadelphia Avenue within the borough limits. The benefits would include improved pedestrian safety, a lower potential for vehicular crashes and an improved quality of life for borough residents, businesses and visitors.

Mr. Kleinhenn also noted that the borough has an unusually high volume of heavy trucks which create noise pollution, diesel emissions and cause road damage and structural damage to buildings.

The Committee agreed that a reduction of the speed limit would be beneficial. The Chief will speak with a PennDOT representative to inquire about any additional information which may be useful to the discussion.

Mr. Mest then recognized Mr. Steffy who stated his opinion that an advance green at the main intersection will speed up traffic, which is not a BBB objective. The Chief informed Mr. Steffy that an advance green signal will serve to make the intersection safer.

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Ms. Blank inquired about improved pedestrian signals at Chestnut and Washington Streets; she was reminded that the Committee and members of Council previously agreed to include investigation of and application for funding for signal improvements at all Borough intersections in the 2018 budget.

There being no further business to conduct a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:50 p.m. was made by Mr. Mest and seconded by Mr. Heller. The next meeting of the Police and Public Safety Committee will be held on Wednesday, May 31, 2017 at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia A. Loder
Borough Secretary