

Traffic Committee

MINUTES

June 17, 2014

Committee Members Present	Chair Susan Ruinen, Vice-Chair Clyde Smith, Robert Diatkar, Randy Edwards, Ari Teal (8:15), Rosemary Wilson, Larry Yon, PD Lt. Matt Davis, Town Engineer Rosemarie Nuzzo, Planning Commission Member Frank Berry, Parks Streets and Sanitation Director Dan Walker (9:00). Absent: Karen Hanner, Bob Ferrell, David McGehee, Lisa Gibson – Planning Commission, Mayor Pro-Tem Hazel Livingston.
Others Attending	Town Administrator Britt Poole, Police Chief Terrence Green, Major Jay Koon, Special Projects Manager Wesley Crosby, Councilmember Ron Williams, Municipal Clerk Becky Hildebrand.
Call to Order	Chair Ruinen called the Traffic Committee to order at 8:05 a.m. in the third floor Conference Room.
Approval of Minutes	A motion was made by Vice-Chair Smith and seconded by Committee Member Yon to approve the Minutes from the May 20, 2014 meeting as submitted. The motion was unanimously carried.
Relocation of Corley Mill Rd.	Mr. Edwards stated that the County has been getting complaints, particularly regarding the new Chick-fil-a where there is no right turn. He added that it should have been a left turn instead of a right turn. Chair Ruinen agreed and added that she recently witnessed problems and she was not there during peak hours. She stated that they had done a good job with the pork chop. Councilmember Williams stated that he witnessed two people entering the restaurant going the wrong way.
Phase I	<p>Mr. Poole reported that Phase I is complete with the exception of some minor curb and grass issues which are on the punch list. He did a final walk through on Thursday with SCDOT and they had already started working on some of the punch list items. Chair Ruinen confirmed that sidewalks in that area are being done by a separate contractor. She added that the entire Phase I project had gone very smooth. Mr. Poole confirmed that he expects sidewalk construction to start in late summer. He added that some Interstates do not have as much traffic per day as the interchange at West Main Street and Columbia Avenue. He commended C.R. Jackson, who recently purchased an additional paving crew, for helping with the success of Phase I.</p> <p>Vice-Chair Smith inquired about Phase II and the remaining funds from Phase I. Mr. Poole stated that Phase II is in the top 20 projects on the County's Penny Tax list. He added that it was part of the "horse trading" done for the Town's adaptive signaling in that the Town could retain \$4.5M, but \$2M had to go to a project in Chapin. He stated that all traffic projects are in the first round of the Penny Tax projects. Mr. Edwards announced that the Public Hearing and Final Reading of the</p>

Phase I (cont.)

Penny Tax would be held tonight at 6:00 in the County Council Chambers.

InSync Signalization

Chair Ruinen stated that all field reviews were complete and design work had started for 32 signals. She stated that consultants were hard to get, but initial discussions should be held the week of July 4th. She anticipated that SCDOT would award funding in November. She questioned why the lights at the US 1 interchange were not included. Mr. Poole responded that those lights are for traffic going in another direction and were part of another whole group of signals and it wouldn't make sense to include them in the initial project. He added that Library Hill is part of the project. He stated that once the Town's InSync project is rolled out, other intersections could be brought on one at a time, but the initial \$4.5M would not cover all the signals.

Chair Ruinen asked if Harmon Street would be part of the project. Mr. Poole stated that he had discussed the issue with Mr. Layman and Mr. Condon, owners of the Old Mill, and they are geared up to be included in the trail which is included in the Town's Vision Plan. He added that they understand the cost, but they would get a lot of benefit from it. He would meet with the owners again once the TIF District goes through. He stated that there is only an informal drawing of how the owners anticipate the design of the project. Mr. Poole stated that access is currently where it will be, but there will be a second exit from the parking lot.

Vision Plan

Chair Ruinen stated that it appeared some work had been done on Main Street. Mr. Poole stated that the work was on a two inch water line and the boring project took longer than expected due to waiting for a contractor that had the right equipment. He added that work would soon start on the planters on Main Street and the Ice House Project demolition was complete.

Mr. Poole stated that he had recently met with the CFO for Lexington One School District and everything with the District looks positive. He added that if they "do not comment" that is the same as having no objection and their portion would go to the Town. He explained that there are six taxable districts of which the penny tax can come from and only two are significant and they are the School District and Lexington County. He stated that the School District was pleased that the Town kept the TIF District small. Mr. Poole stated that if nothing is done property values could decline in that area over time, but with the TIF District, the School District and the County would get a windfall at the end of the TIF (15 years) because at least three buildings will return to the private sector.

Vision Plan (cont.)

Mr. Poole announced that work on the trail and bridges at the 14-Mile Creek Trail is almost complete. He added that even though the newspaper said it was open, it has not officially opened yet. He commended Wesley Cosby for doing a good job on the project, which is 3,600 feet or $\frac{3}{4}$ mile long. Mr. Poole stated that he met with the Army Corps of Engineers regarding the wetlands and they are pleased with the project. He stated that signs are being ordered for the trail and should be installed soon; along with call boxes with cameras. Vice-Chair Smith stated that the trail is still very damp at the bottom of the trail. Mr. Poole responded that the Corps of Engineers has allowed the Town to use install something that will help with drainage. He added that once the grass is established, it will also help hold the grid down. He stated that we would see more trails like this one in the future using woodlands. He added that was not the case with the proposed trail at the Old Mill.

Resurfacing

Chair Ruinen stated that there are still items on the punch list. Councilmember Williams agreed in that some of the items are in his neighborhood. Mr. Poole stated that there are still a few items to be done in Woodcreek and Mallard Lakes.

Park Rd by Willowbrook

Chair Ruinen will contact SCDOT regarding trimming on Park Road.

Crosswalk on Old Chapin

Mr. Poole discussed the crosswalk with SCDOT. They discussed the large entity that owns the apartments and one handicapped person that requested the crosswalk. He added that he would be surprised if SCDOT does not install the crosswalk because it would not look good if they don't install it.

Penny Sales Tax Projects

Chair Ruinen stated that the sidewalks on Park Road are part of the Penny Sales Tax Projects list. She reconfirmed the County Council meeting tonight at 6:00 where a Public Hearing and Final Reading will be heard for the Penny Sales Tax Projects list. She added if you go and wish to speak, please sign in at the meeting. She stated that she would be interested to see what others have to say. Mr. Edwards stated that what they have experienced is that people have misinformation. He added that he has not seen any wasteful projects on the list. Mr. Edwards stated that the Exit 119 is one of the worst configured interchanges in the state and several million to improve it would be a good thing even though it does not affect everyone. Mr. Poole agreed that the committee did a good job of whittling down the list. He added that Exit 119 does affect everyone indirectly due to industrial growth that could come to that area. Mr. Edwards stated that the 12th Street Extension Project would be huge for industry because it would come out to Exit 119 and at I-77. He added that there are large tracts of land in that area just waiting for good ideas. Mr. Poole stated that Lexington County is ranked 4th for industry in the state which is due to having

Penny Sales Tax Projects (cont.)

water, sewer and interstate access, which is why Amazon, UPS and Nephron are located here. Chair Ruinen suggested that they get a copy of the list and at least become familiar with it in case they are asked questions about it. She would rather have citizens get accurate information about the worthwhile projects than for them to think that a steam bath was being installed in Eastover. Mr. Edwards agreed that it is not just another tax. He stated that everyone cares about traffic issues and in a democratic society what is better than letting the citizens vote for exactly what they want especially since taxes are not going to go away. He added that it shows we have heard their complaints. He wished that the Federal Government would give citizens a point and click method to pick and choose.

Vice Chair Smith stated that when Rock Hill gave their presentation about Penny Tax, they had lay people make the pitch. He added that Rock Hill stuck to the concept of safety and saving lives and traffic flow projects are where 75% of the money was used. He stated that when the county works on a project, a sign should be erected to state that this is a Penny Tax project so citizens know the source of funding. Vice Chair Smith agreed that they needed to be better educated on the subject.

Mr. Edwards stated that one project is a 10 mile trail from Saluda Shoals to Columbia. He commented that it doesn't sound like a traffic issue project, but if people can ride a bike to work it would decrease traffic. He added that he would love to have a 10 mile trail to ride bikes with his kids. Mr. Poole stated that the Town's sidewalk project ties into a larger plan of sidewalks for more pedestrian use because it could mean one less car on the road. Chair Ruinen stated that she recently spent two days walking several interchanges and it was scary being so close to trucks in such heavy traffic. She added walking from Target across the street to Marty Rae's was dangerous and from Publix to Saxe Gotha Presbyterian Church was not easy either. She stated that it gave her a new appreciation for people when she sees them walking along Highway 378. She also realized how pedestrian friendly Main Street is in downtown Lexington.

Councilmember Williams asked if the Town's Event and Media Coordinator could send a Press Release out listing what projects are left on the Penny Tax list. Mr. Poole responded that the Town could send a Press Release. He further explained that the law takes the last five years average project estimate with no growth. He added that in 2008 to 2009 averages were down because of the recession which means that the projects on the list will get done but will probably cost more than listed. Mr. Edwards agreed and added that on bid pricing, it is a classic case supply and demand. He used the example of the Longs Pond Road project which is projected at \$35M but will probably cost \$40M. He stated that others cities are also asking for projects and

Penny Sales Tax Projects (cont.)

SCDOT can only do so many. He predicted that contractors would move to this area where so many projects will be taking place. Mr. Edwards stated that project may be delayed which happened with Hope Springs, waiting on contractors to get started. He commended a Gilbert contractor used by the County because they can take on projects and care about the work. Mr. Poole stated that Old Dunbar Road and Hope Ferry projects could have also been done faster. Mr. Poole added that C.R. Jackson could justify buying another paving crew.

Fort Street

Mr. Edwards stated that he had forwarded the request to the County Administrator. He went to the site to see for himself how difficult it was to make a left turn and now he would like to resubmit his request to the Administrator and change it from no left turn from 7:00 to 6:00 to 4:00 to 6:00.

**North Lake Drive and
Roundknob Road
at Gold's Gym**

Mr. Edwards requested to move this item to the next meeting. He estimated traffic counts at 2,400 inbound at Gold's; 1,862 past Gold's; 1,700 coming out of Northwoods; and 1,100 from Northwoods. He added that this equals 500 to 600 cars turn at Gold's Gym. He would forward the traffic count map to the committee members. Chair Ruinen stated that now was not a good time to ask SCDOT about the project since school is out for the summer. She asked the committee if there were any objections to table this request until the Fall because then SCDOT would be more likely to come out with their clickers and do a traffic count. There were no objections.

Downtown

Chair Ruinen stated that she received the turn counts from SCDOT from 2012 and she had not yet had a chance to go through the directory of counts. She planned to look at the intersections, medians, and turn lanes next week. She suggested that the turn sign at Church Street and Highway 6 be moved up so oncoming traffic could see it. Mr. Poole stated that a 12 hour count for turning onto Church Street was inconsequential at 3 – 4% at peak hours. Vice Chair Smith stated that trucks have a hard time turning right onto East Main Street. Chair Ruinen asked if the pole could be moved back. Mr. Walker stated that he had looked into moving the pole back but there are too many water and gas lines because the base has to be eight feet to support it. He stated that the temporary pole has been there for a year and has not been damaged. Chair Ruinen stated that the ped heads (Portable Pedestrian Crossing Signal) have been hit. She recommended removing the two parking spaces on East Main Street beside Lexington Square. Mr. Poole stated that there are also fiber optic lines which are very hard to repair if damaged. He added that the two parking spaces near Lexington Square are primarily used during special events. Mr. Edwards suggested that the mast arm be placed at a diagonal angle to serve both sides.

US 378 & Ginny Lane Area

Mr. Edwards stated that he would bring the sketch at the next meeting. He requested that the committee receive an Outlook reminder for the meetings. Chair Ruinen confirmed that the Traffic Committee meets on the Tuesday after the 3rd Monday.

George Street @ West Main

Mr. Walker stated that an officer issues tickets if cutting through the county parking lot. Chair Ruinen stated that they want people to use the traffic signal and it is hard to make a left turn out of George St. Major Koon stated that the most of traffic comes from Lizard's Thicket, but the people that live in the area will go down to the light. Mr. Poole stated that he comes down Thompson Street and uses the hospital parking lot to cut through to the light in front of K-Mart. Chair Ruinen stated that if there are not many accidents to report she recommended putting this item on hold until such time there are sufficient problems. Chief Green stated that he can monitor the accident data back six months.

The next Traffic Committee meeting will be on July 22, 2014 at 8:00 a.m. in the third floor Conference Room at the Lexington Municipal Complex, 111 Maiden Lane, Lexington, SC 29072.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Vice Chair Smith and seconded by Committee Member Diatkar to adjourn the Traffic Committee meeting at 9:21 a.m. The motion was unanimously carried.

Respectfully submitted by:

Becky P. Hildebrand, CMC

APPROVED BY:

Susan Ruinen, Chair