ROADS, HIGHWAYS, AND PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

November 2, 2015

Present: M. Kirchgasser, C. Quinn, N. Shropshire, and B. Clark

A. Traffic Speed Concerns

Mr. Shropshire reported that 2 moveable radar units were installed at S. Old Middletown Road and that there were plans to install new speed limit signs with detectors on them. He asked Mr. Clark to reach out to Indian Lane principal and PTG to make them aware of this so they can pass the information along to parents. Mr. Kirchgasser asked the audience the best way to communicate with parents of the school. Corey Distefano, 243 S. Old Middletown Road, stated the school email list was probably the best form of communication. Mr. Shropshire asked who the president of the PTG was and she responded Shawn Quinn. Mr. Shropshire stated that while the Township would reach out to the president of the PTG, he would prefer to have parents reach out to other parents too, as he felt this would provide a stronger message about the concerns regarding speeding. He went on to report the Township has already reached out to the State Police. Mr. Shropshire emphasized that all parents for the school should be aware that the consequences for speeding in a school zone are severe. He then asked for suggestions other than speed bumps from the audience for how to reduce speeding concerns.

Ms. Distefano asked why speed bumps weren't an option and Mr. Shropshire reported speed bumps were hard to maintain, made snow plowing difficult, and created problems for residents who lived by speed bumps as they create an increase in vehicular noise. Mr. Shropshire also reported that PADOT does not consider stop signs as a speed control device and that the Township would not be permitted to install a stop sign for the sole purpose of speed control. He noted that stop sign installation had specific guidelines and requirements that had to be met, which included a traffic study, ordinance, etc.

Bibbiana Dussling, War Admiral Drive, expressed that more checks and balances needed to be in place and that speed bumps would help. She then asked about the use of "Do Not Enter" signs with times listed and signs that stipulate "local traffic only." Mr. Clark stated that they would have to be enforced by the State Police, and require compliance by all drivers, and that "local traffic only" signs were not enforceable.

Mr. Kirchgasser commented that a distinction needed to be made for this discussion, and explained that there are Township Roads and State Roads. While the Township has greater control with what can occur on Township roads, PADOT decides what happens on State roads. Mr. Kirchgasser stated that the process for Township roads called for certain things to be attempted first instead of doing everything at once. Ms. Dussling noted that she understood it was a work in progress. Mr. Kirchgasser went on to state

that both he and Mr. Shropshire are members of the Township Fire Company and are very much aware of traffic issues. He stated that the speed limit was reduced from 35 mph to 25 mph 8 years ago for S. Old Middletown Road, and that after the reduction took place it became an issue of enforcement. Ms. Dussling asked why the State Police were not enforcing the signs at present. Mr. Shropshire stated it was not the Township's decision as to where the Lieutenant of the State Police assigned cars for enforcement. Mr. Kirchgasser commented that the decision is probably based on how many calls the State Police get about a certain area. A resident from Old Forge Road asked if she should call the State Police to report an issue and Mr. Kirchgasser answered in the affirmative, and gave her the phone number.

The resident from Old Forge Road noted a concern she had for her street. She stated that when you come from West Forge Road, the speed limit sign on Old Forge road reads 25 mph; however, when you come from the opposite direction, the speed limit sign reads 35 mph. Mr. Quinn stated the Township would need to look into that.

Ms. Dussling reported the radar sign was no longer on War Admiral Lane. Mr. Clark stated that was because it was relocated to S. Old Middletown Road for the time being. He went on to state that drivers typically tend to ignore signs that are in place for a while. By the Township moving these types of signs around to where they are needed within the municipality, it helps with assuring they remain consciously visible to drivers. Ms. Dussling asked what was going to be done at War Admiral Lane now that the radar sign was removed. Mr. Shropshire commented that a stop sign was installed and asked what else she thought was appropriate. Ms. Dussling said she had a list that included speed bumps, enforcement, and stop signs.

Mr. Kirchgasser reminded the audience that correcting these types of traffic issues was a process and that the Township was moving in the right direction. For instance, last year there was only1 radar detection sign in the Township and now there were 3. Mr. Shropshire noted that 2 of them were purchased by a Council member on behalf of the Township.

Jean Vasquez, Pennell Place, asked if the Township receives revenue from the State Police. Mr. Clark answered in the negative. She then went on to state that she discussed signage on East Baltimore Pike at the last Council meeting and requested signs be installed that indicated reduced speed ahead and asked why the speed was reduced to 35 mph on the Middletown Township portion of the road. Mr. Clark stated East Baltimore Pike was a State road, but that the new speed limit was due to the distance to the turning lanes at that location.

Mr. Shropshire asked that the meeting address one situation at a time. He went back to the S. Old Middletown Road and reported what the Township was planning to do. This

included the 2 radar signs, increasing the number of speed limit signs, reaching out to the State Police for enforcement and having Mr. Clark reach out to the principal of Indian Lane and president of the PTG to make them aware of the issue and have them reach out to parents about the speeding concerns.

Ms. Dussling asked what the Township was doing to be proactive about other speeding concerns. Mr. Clark stated that concerns are usually addressed as they come up. He noted that the Township has, at times, installed 4 way stop signs to accommodate neighbors, as well as other signs.

Ms. Dussling noted that with the incoming development, there would be an increase in traffic and expressed she hoped the Township was addressing this issue now. Mr. Kirchgasser explained that the increase in traffic is due to the increase in development in Chester County and Concord Township. In addition, Middletown Township is a main "through traffic" location for the area's main highways. This results in local traffic using more back roads.

Mr. Kirchgasser went on to report that last year, the Township raised the LST tax and the funds were being used to research and complete engineering work to help improve the intersection of Rt. 452 and Rt. 1. He then explained that this project was on the PADOT TIP, which meant that the State had plans in the future to improve this intersection. Mr. Quinn noted that this project also included the intersection of Rt. 352 and Rt. 452, as well as the clover leaf. Mr. Kirchgasser went on to note that the number one quality of life issue in the Township is traffic, and that these were symptoms of the problems at both the intersections Mr. Quinn noted would be improved upon in the future. He stated that these symptoms can be seen in the form of traffic backups on local roads like Lenni Road and Old Forge Road, as well as others.

Mr. Kirchgasser stated that the Township has a number of traffic calming measures in place and now enforcement is important. He encouraged residents to go to the State Police and voice their concerns. Mr. Kirchgasser stated the Township would do the same.

Ms. Dussling expressed that cut-through traffic is a significant concern, especially in Riddlewood. While this is the case for all entry points of Riddlewood, she felt that War Admiral Lane and Man of War were the worst. Mr. Clark warned that if signs go up to stop cut-through, then it would be applicable to all, including Riddlewood residents. There is no way to enforce a "local traffic only" sign. Ms. Dussling stated the signs are in place in Wallingford. Mr. Clark noted that these signs were around elsewhere but that they were not considered enforceable.

Ms. Dussling expressed that she felt the stop sign installed was not solving the problem and that police enforcement was not enough. Mr. Clark noted that there were already 3 multi-way stop intersections on the road and Mr. Kirchgasser stated enforcement was essential. Ms. Dussling expressed that she felt calling the police was not working and suggested painting the road that noted something about going slow and children being present. Mr. Clark stated installing "watch children" signs was a possibility. Ms. Dussling asked if the road could be painted with "watch children" and asked what needed to be done to get "do not enter" signs. She reiterated that War Admiral and Man of War were the worst, especially between 7 AM and 9 AM. She expressed the parents of the neighborhood are concerned because this is also the time of school bus pickups when children are out. Mr. Kirchgasser stated the concern was understandable.

Mr. Shropshire asked if there were 2 "local traffic only" signs currently. Ms. Dussling confirmed this but stated they were small and white. Mr. Kirchgasser expressed that nobody on Council was saying no to additional measures. Mr. Quinn agreed and explained that they needed to address the matter from a larger picture and consider a broader standpoint. Ms. Dussling pointed out that the timeline for the improvements to the traffic intersection is 10 years. Mr. Kirchgasser explained this is why the Township was trying to allocate funds for the improvements now. Mr. Quinn explained that by the Township funding the preliminary work now, it should help get the project moving along faster with the State.

Mr. Shropshire instructed Mr. Clark to have Mr. Lank go to Riddlewood and look at the streets noted. He also asked him to look into the "local traffic only" signs that are yellow and black, and triangular in shape. Following a discussion about the types of signage by the Christian Academy, Mr. Kirchgasser noted a possible option may be to make certain roads in Riddlewood one-way only.

Andrew Fallon, 295 Glen Riddle, reported there is a lot of through-traffic on Glen Riddle Road and Lenni Road. He went on to state it took decades to get a street light there and he has never seen a speed limit radar detector on Glen Riddle Road. He felt that speeding has increased since that light went in and noted that a lot of drivers tend to use Glen Riddle Road as a cut-through to avoid the intersection of Rt. 452 and Rt. 1. Mr. Kirchgasser reported that Glen Riddle Road is a State road and the Township can't do anything to minimize those concerns; not even through the installation of a radar sign. Mr. Clark commented that the Township asked the State to evaluate that road a few years ago. He reported PADOT did this and installed additional signs. Mr. Fallon expressed that he felt the new development projects in the Township was only going to make this problem worse.

Steve Barackus, 13 Rampart West, stated that the difference between the State Police and municipality police is that municipalities that don't have a police department of its own

have less control over enforcement. Mr. Shropshire stated the Township does not have a police force. He explained this was a cost factor for the Township, and by extension, the residents. Mr. Clark stated that when speed limit signs are installed, they can be enforced by any police force.

Ms. Distefano reported that drivers speed on S. Old Middletown Road by the church in order to get the green light at the Rt. 352 intersection. She asked about the installation of a red light ticket camera at this location. Mr. Clark reported that was through a special State program and on a limited basis. He explained that is why you don't see them in every municipality. He also noted that the program has come under a lot of scrutiny.

Sandy Baggot, 21 Church Road, explained that the stop sign at Elwyn Avenue and Church Road is blocked by foliage. She asked if an additional stop sign could be installed on the opposite side of the road too. She went on to state that the speed limit from Indian Lane on Church Road is 25 mph, but it starts downhill and cars have a blind spot. There is also a yellow "watch children" sign; however, the location of the installation is right where the problem is. She felt it should be earlier. Lastly, she noted there is no stop sign in the downhill direction. Mr. Clark stated that not having a stop sign downhill was on purpose because the Township did not want to make drivers stop downhill in bad weather. Ms. Baggage reported somebody was almost hit at that location head-on.

Mr. Shropshire asked Ms. Dussling to consult with the Riddlewood Association and ask for their thoughts on making some of the streets one-way. When Ms. Dussling made a comment about the traffic concerns resulting in a dead child if something was not done, Mr. Shropshire expressed that he was offended by the comment and that he and the rest of Council take the safety of their residents very seriously. Mr. Kirchgasser added that the Township has been responsive to past requests for Riddlewood, like recently installing another stop sign. He emphasized that it would not be the correct response to do every possible thing at once because that could cause other residents to become angry. He noted that Council understood the sense of urgency, but reiterated that enforcement is important and that the involvement of the State Police was key. He commented that a "do not enter" sign would not deter all drivers. Mr. Shropshire again requested that Ms. Dussling consult with her Association to get the neighbors' opinion on what, if any streets could be made one-way. He stated Council would need to know that the Riddlewood community supports such a change before moving forward. Mr. Shropshire expressed that one-way streets would be more enforceable than the other types of signs noted.

Susan Coneg-Canon, Constance Lane, reported that when coming north on Pennell Road, the school zone flashing lights cannot be seen from Lenni Road. Mr. Clark reported that the Township has informed PADOT about this matter. He explained that those types of

signs are intended for pedestrians walking. Due to the School District doing away with students walking, those signs are not supposed to be there anymore. Therefore, PADOT will not install additional signs for that location. Ms. Coneg-Canon asked if it would be possible to have a "school zone ahead" sign. Mr. Clark stated that was a possibility. Ms. Distefano asked why the School District made that decision about students not walking. Mr. Clark explained it was a safety concern due to lack of sidewalks. She expressed she wanted sidewalks. Mr. Kirchgasser stated that sidewalks involved taking residents' property, which could be a touchy subject. He noted that the Township was working on a trails project though.

Mr. Fallon asked if it was a problem that some people use the shoulder lane as a right turning lane at some areas of the Township. He provided the example of making the right from Rt. 352 onto Knowlton Road by Shropshire Funeral Home. Mr. Clark felt that was an example of drivers' habits. Mr. Shropshire noted that while that could occasionally be problematic, it does work in other places. He used the shoulder lane in front of the dentist by the clover leaf as an example. Mr. Fallon expressed that another bad intersection was the intersection of Barren Road and Rt. 352. Mr. Kirchgasser noted that was part of the State TIP plan for traffic improvements. Mr. Shropshire reported that the Township is in discussions with the owner of the vacant property at that intersection to help with traffic there.

Mr. Shropshire went over some of the decisions made thus far at the meeting. This included, Ms. Dussling talking to her Association about the possibility of one-way streets and how much support the community would give that option, Mr. Lank going to Riddlewood and looking at "watch children" signs, and having Indian Lane reach out to parents about speeding concerns in that local area. Mr. Kirchgasser expressed that when the Police start enforcement, residents who get tickets may become disgruntled. He wanted those present to be aware of this possibility and expressed this is why it was so important for the parents and neighbors to reach out to each other about the enforcement plan ahead of time.

Beth Gumieney, 232 Howarth Road, asked if there were any measures that could be taken to slow down drivers on Glen Riddle Road. Mr. Fallon agreed and asked who he would need to make the speed monitoring request to. Mr. Clark stated they would need to contact PADOT but that he was unsure if they had a program for this type of problem or not.

Ms. Distefano asked if the Township purchasing the Roosevelt School meant that would become a cut-through to Rt. 352. Mr. Kirchgasser and Mr. Shropshire both answered no. She then asked about the possibility of sidewalks, stating most homes had the space on that road. Mr. Kirchgasser stated retro-fitting the existing homes with sidewalk could be challenging. She then asked about the possibility of a bike lane. Mr. Kirchgasser stated

that would depend on the width of S. Old Middletown Road. Mr. Clark noted that road used to be a State road so it was probably wider than most Township roads. Ms. Distefano stated that the PA Calming Traffic Sheet stated narrower roads slow down traffic. She thought it would be appropriate to make S. Old Middletown Road narrower and use the extra space for pedestrians. She asked who would be in charge of narrowing the road—the state or Township. Mr. Kirchgasser stated that road was a township road and they would note the request. She also suggested using plantings on the road to make it narrower. Mr. Kirchgasser stated that they have already determined a plan to start with to see if speeding can be reduced. He felt they should start there to see if the problem is alleviated before trying additional measures.

Ms. Distefano asked why the Township did not consider its own police force. Mr. Kirchgasser explained that the current Township operating budget was approximately $3,800,000 per year and that starting a police force would require more than doubling resident taxes. He stated that adjoining municipalities don't have an interest in operating police departments with others so that was not an option either. Mr. Clark also noted that municipalities do not have any statutory requirement to have a police department. Mr. Fallon asked if the State Police barracks moving would deter from them servicing the Township. Mr. Clark reported they were remaining on the Franklin Mint parcel. Mr. Shropshire emphasized that the Township saves a lot of money by utilizing the State Police for enforcement and that they have always been very responsive to Township concerns.

Ms. Dussling asked if the Township considered doing a public service campaign to put residents on notice about speeding concerns and enforcement. Mr. Kirchgasser answered in the negative and expressed he wasn't sure if it would be effective.

Mr. Shropshire noted that in the past, residents have made complaints about issues like speeding and requested drastic measures to correct the problem, like narrowing the roads. The Township has done it and then more residents come to the Township asking why they now have no parking on the street. He stated this is an example of why the Township tries different measures that are less interfering for the community as a whole first. He expressed that he felt that one-way roads may be the best course of action for Riddlewood at this point. Mr. Clark also stated that if neighbors slow down, they will force others to slow down as well.

Ms. Distefano asked if it was possible to get a sign by the clover leaf that instructs drivers to use the right line as a means to move traffic forward instead of waiting at the stop sign until no cars are coming at all. Mr. Kirchgasser stated that would need to be requested to PADOT and reiterated that the cloverleaf and intersections of Rt. 1 & Rt. 452 and Rt. 452 & Rt. 352 were all part of the TIP program and that the Township was hoping to expedite the improvements by doing as much of the groundwork as possible for the designs. Mr.

Clark noted that the Township requested the cloverleaf have pedestrian and bike crossing lanes too. Mr. Kirchgasser stated that the Township asked the traffic engineer for 3 different options for the Rt. 1 and Rt. 452 intersection and stated the options should be presented soon. He noted that the concept was likely to be a loop road.

Mr. Fallon asked for an update on what was going to be developed at the Sleighton property. Mr. Kirchgasser stated Sleighton was zoned for continuing care but that business is on the decline. If a CCRC was interested, the footprint would not be large. He stated the Township had no plans to rezone it, so nothing would likely come of the property on the Township side.

Adjournment

This meeting was adjourned by Mr. Shropshire at 8:04 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Amanda Allen, Recorder