



The Town of Fenwick Island

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PEDESTRIAN SAFETY COMMITTEE OCTOBER 19, 2017 AT 10:00 AM

MINUTES

In Attendance

Vicki Carmean, Gardner Bunting, Mary Ellen Langan, Richard Mais, Bernie Merritt, Bill Weistling

Absent

Terry Tieman

Vicki called the meeting to order at 10:01 AM.

Discussion

Bill provided the Committee a copy of the report that he and Bernie compiled while walking the west side of Route 1 to look at the conditions of the sidewalks compared to the previous study. During the walk, they noticed that most areas of the sidewalk can be installed with no problems. There are some minor problems with planters that will need to be moved. Vicki questioned if Bill thought that DelDOT would replace the planters. Bill responded no, but the Town could fund replacing the planters. Richard added if planters are on State property, then it should be the owners responsibility to have them removed and replaced.

Bill added that it would be nice to stripe some of the parking lots as well. He also mentioned that if DelDOT requires the buffer zone of 2' and a minimum 5' sidewalk, then it might be a problem for some business owners. Bernie commented as an example, Fenwick Islander Motel has a retaining wall that would need to be removed if DelDOT requires the buffer zone. Vicki suggested that we work with each individual business. Mary Ellen added that we should ask residents about their thoughts on adding sidewalks in front of businesses.

Vicki mentioned that Terry already forwarded the report to DelDOT and is waiting to hear back from them. Bill commented that he is glad that DelDOT is still concerned and is willing to work with us.

Vicki spoke to Ron Gray and asked him if he received our resolution letter. He appeared unaware of the letter we sent him, but she did share our concerns with him. She mentioned to Ron that it would be nice if we could connect with the Route 54 sidewalk project and have it extend into Town.

At the Route 54 traffic meeting last month, it was brought up about traffic lights and how they cannot be installed until they have at least 5 accidents with bodily injury. Vicki spoke to Chief Boyden about the conditions in Town, and he stated last year there were 31 accidents, with one accident with bodily injury. Richard added at the Route 54 meeting last month, one of the engineers from DelDOT said that traffic lights actually cause more accidents and also slow down traffic.

Mary Ellen informed the Committee that there is an organization forming in regards to the Route 54 traffic and we could possibly coordinate with them. She will check with one of the ladies of the organization to see when their next meeting will be held. Vicki added that she knows of 3 more developments that are happening on Route 54, which will add to the existing traffic problem. Vicki plans to attend the next DelDOT meeting on Thursday, November 2nd at Indian River High School in regards to Route 54. Vicki pointed out that 2/3's of the Route 54 traffic everyone complains about turns into Fenwick at the intersection of Routes 1 and 54. Bill commented with the increasing traffic that maybe we will have business owners' support for our sidewalk project since more people will be walking to the beach and shopping instead of sitting in traffic.

Vicki suggested that it may be a good idea to get the businesses involved now and would like to attend the next Business Development Meeting. Prior to attending the meeting, she will draft a letter (like the letter distributed during the previous study), and then will send out a copy to everyone via email for their review. Gardner commented that he will talk to Tim Collins to get on the agenda for the November meeting. Bernie looked through the previous study and noticed the previous letter was actually drafted and signed by the Chamber of Commerce, while the petition that was developed was signed by the business owners.

Gardner feels that businesses have a fear that they will be paying for the sidewalks or they would lose parking spaces, so they may not be in favor of having sidewalks installed. Richard commented that pedestrian safety should be the concern, not losing parking spaces. Bernie added that the parking situation should not be a problem since during his walk with Bill, parking lots that could be affected with the sidewalks being installed could switch to diagonal parking. Richard commented as an example, the parking lot at Pottery Place/Just Hooked has angled parking, which increases the amount of spaces and provides safe parking spaces. Bill thinks the worst place is Jimmy's Kitchen since their parking lot does not have consistent parking spaces, with some being big and others too narrow.

Mary Ellen asked if the guidelines we currently have for the number of required parking spaces are for each individual business or for the total structure. Richard commented that fewer spaces are required for retail, with more spaces required for restaurants. Bill said that each existing structure would be grandfathered in and would have the same amount of spaces they have now, but he does know that each parking space is required to be at least 18', which could be adjusted. Richard suggested we ask Pat Schuchman for the number of required parking space prior to our next meeting.

Vicki questioned if something were to happen to a building (if it was leveled), would rebuilding it require a sidewalk. Bill answered yes and no, as long as it was a natural disaster, but he will double check the Town Code. Vicki would like to know what the Code says since the Town's offer to pay for the sidewalk now could be considered as incentive.

Vicki will check with Terry to see if she feels it is all right to attend the Business Development Committee Meeting in November, or if it is too soon. Richard commented that it would not be a bad idea to attend the meeting to get ideas from them on the possible elimination or redesign of parking spaces. Gardner added that maybe Terry could meet with Tim Collins ahead of time and provide him information. Vicki is also going to check with Terry if she has had any response from DelDOT in regards to Bill and Bernie's report.

Bill commented that in the previous study, DelDOT had a note about removing signs. During his investigation, he noticed that they meant directional signs, which should not be a problem to move.

Vicki is concerned that there has been no response from the resolution and letter that were mailed out last month and asked the Committee if we should draft a follow up letter. Richard commented that the lack of response should not be an issue and that we should wait to hear back from DelDOT before proceeding.

As for funding for the sidewalk project, Vicki does not see the County or State giving the Town money for the project. Gardner suggested that we may be able to increase the Town's share of the required amount if funds were added in the Dedicated Street Fund. Bill commented that the fund should be renamed or noted to also include sidewalks and paving. Vicki said the fund could be renamed the Dedicated Infrastructure Fund, which would cover roads, sidewalks, and paving.

Adjournment

Motion – Council Member Carmean asked for a motion to adjourn.

Second – Treasurer Bunting.

The meeting adjourned at 10:56 AM.