

PENN AVENUE RECONSTRUCTION COMMITTEE

Thursday, May 7, 2020 @ 11:00 a.m.

Virtual On-Line Meeting

MEETING MINS

Attendees: Nina Gibbs, Terence Olesniewicz, Eric Setzler, Kyle Potter, Magda Gangwar, Bruce Chan, Eric Boerer, Ricardo Solis, Amber Epps, Anna Tang, Paige Anderson, Mora McLaughlin, Deborah Gross.

Nina Gibbs called to order at 11:00 A.M.

I. Welcome/Introductions

II. Previous Meeting Minutes

Anna approves the meeting minutes and Eric S. seconds to approve. Terence Olesniewicz from Trans Associates compiled the meeting minutes from the Public Meeting.

III. Preliminary Engineering Update/Review Prelim. Engineering Schedule

a. Preliminary Engineering

Terence indicated that the Waste Investigation Plan for the field testing was being completed and there was some back-and-forth with PennDOT as the City desired more testing than PennDOT for heavy metals as part of the project.

Eric B. asked why PennDOT had as much control over the project it appears. Eric S. confirmed that PennDOT acts as the steward of the money which ultimately comes from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). PennDOT reports to FHWA regarding their oversight and how the funding is administrated.

IV. Other Issues / Items – Questions submitted by community for discussion – presented by Bruce Chan, Chair Bloomfield Livable Streets. See attached correspondence for additional detail including photos and illustrations.

1. Can the time of the PARC Meeting be changed so business owners and others can attend? Potentially host on YouTube Live? Could mornings, noon-time be considered? Or evenings or weekends for residents? What is the schedule for community meetings?

Eric S. indicated that the City is flexible and often has evening meetings. Quarterly meetings seem reasonable for PARC meetings. The next public meeting is anticipated once Preliminary

Engineering is complete. Two presentations, one in the morning and one in the evening could be considered for the next public meeting.

- 2. Will there be coordinating with different traffic patterns? Will DOMI coordinate with the Port Authority of Allegheny County (PAAC) regarding the proposed bus detour routes? There is a concern of putting buses on Coral Street if it is established as a pedestrian and bike route.***

Eric S. indicated that the bus detours will be closely coordinated with PAAC and that the PAAC must ultimately approve the bus detours to be used. He confirmed that it is critical to continue bus service during the project and that there will be inconveniences to riders when the buses are moved off of Penn Avenue in one direction. Detours and stop locations will be publicized.

Bruce asked if buses will be able to make turns and will they conflict with pedestrians and bikes? Eric S. indicated that some no parking areas may need to be posted to accommodate buses and minimize conflicts.

Deborah Gross added that she is concerned with the Montessori School which already has a significant amount of buses, parents with vehicles, and walking children. Eric S. indicated that the proposed bus detour is Friendship to Roup. Deborah stated Roup is very dangerous and should be closed and that DOMI should discuss these issues with the school which is Pre-K through 5. Eric S. stated that they will discuss with the school. However, the ultimate goal is to get buses back to Penn Avenue as quickly as possible and there may be a trade-off that must be made with this situation. Paige indicated that Roup and Penn is unsignalized and there is a potential issue with corner turning.

- 3. General street elements: what are the standards for lighting and final streetscape? There is a desire for pedestrian level lighting vs. higher traffic-grade lighting. Also, as part of Phase 1, 10% of the street trees were lost. There are currently 52 publicly-owned street trees and there is the desire to replace trees at a ratio of 2:1 or higher. What about trees that die?***

Eric S. explained that the City Forestry Department will review the plan and final tree design rigorously and that the project will aim to put in as many trees as possible. The City does have Forestry Standards which provides a guide for which tree to use in what situation.

Deborah Gross also indicated that she objects to signal pole and tall poles for street lighting. Eric S. indicated that traffic signal poles painted black similar to Phase 1 will be utilized. The City and the Engineers are still working out the details on the lighting for Phase 2. Phase 1 did not have pedestrian scale lighting – this will be evaluated as part of Phase 2 and is a good comment. Nina added that there have been complaints about too much lighting and will provide comments from previous meetings. Eric S. explained that Phase 1 did not use the current City Standards.

Eric S. stated that trees that die will be replaced as the City budget allows and additional funding may need to be investigated to replace trees that died in Phase 1. There were issues with the tree pits in Phase 1.

- 4. Crosswalks/Bus Stops/Curb Cuts: Can enhanced crosswalks be used for crossings parallel to Penn Avenue such as raised speed tables? Is there an overall City plan for pedestrian safety? Will the Final Design place bus stops at bump outs? In Phase 1 there were no amenities at bus stops. Coordination should be done now with the Port Authority to provide amenities. Per the Port Authority, over 30 daily boardings would justify a bus shelter and benches should be provided with 10 or more daily boardings. What is the total number of curb cuts proposed for Phase 2?***

Anna added that raised crosswalks into neighborhoods could delineate residential areas and prioritize pedestrian safety while still allowing trucks to use the roadway. Eric S. indicated that the City Traffic Group would look into the use of raised crosswalks to determine if they would be appropriate for this project. The City has already started discussions with the Port Authority – at the South Atlantic intersection diagonally across from the church there have been preliminary discussions to provide a shelter at this location with the parcel redevelopment.

There was a comment that paint markings on sidewalks at driveways could promote pedestrian safety. Eric S. explained that the City typically does not paint crossings at driveways. There are on-going maintenance costs to be considered and there is an issue with highlighting these crossings and the unsaid implication that these crossings may be more important than others in the City which are not currently marked. However, this is something that can be investigated further.

- 5. Pacific and Penn Intersection: This is currently unsignalized and there are pedestrian safety concerns. Can the project include a traffic signal at this location? Or a dedicated pedestrian signal? This intersection is over 200 feet away in both directions from existing traffic signals and the posted speed limit is 25 MPH.***

Eric S. confirmed that he would discuss the issue with the City Traffic Group, however, if a traffic signal is not warranted it cannot be installed by the City. The City could look at other potential pedestrian improvements.

Nina indicated that this issue has been brought up at the Zone 5 Public Safety Meeting. Usually no one slows down for pedestrians here. Anna agrees that it is unsafe and dangerous for pedestrians and drivers. This is especially true for visually impaired pedestrians who have a harder time especially with the two stores with parking lots and driveways. Nina also explained that there is an elderly apartment across the street as well as the BGC Activity Center which frequently holds events. During First Fridays there is a huge amount of pedestrians and a motor officer is typically needed for pedestrian crossing. Could a flashing pedestrian sign be provided? Would a Healthy Ride station be warranted in the future?

- 6. Construction Period: There are coordination and transparency concerns. Will there be a contact Point Person with the contractor? Will the City coordinate with Navigation providers such as Apple Maps and Waze to avoid directing/detouring vehicles onto Coral? Who will maintain pedestrian walkways including temporary pedestrian walkways during the winter? Will there be accessible walk-ways that are coordinated and clearly posted? Need to ensure that inbound bus stops are accessible and riders can still get on and off buses. The Healthy Ride at Atlantic and Penn – what will happen with this facility during construction? Will it be replaced after construction?**

Eric S. explained that these issues will be addressed during Final Design of the project. Many of these issues can be requirements made of the contractor by being written into the contract special provisions. Accessibility will definitely be a requirement which will be written into the traffic control contract for the contractor.

- 7. Anna indicated that to accommodate visually impaired residents the available digital presentation materials provided on-line need to be compatible with screen readers. The project description should be provided and construction updates should also be provided and compatible. Nina suggested that the City should integrate the project process with social media.**

Eric S. indicated that the City was currently in the process of developing standards for coordination with Registered Community Organizations (RCOs) and how public meetings will be conducted and managed.

Terence Olesniewicz compiled the above meeting minutes.

Date for next meeting: Format and Date/Time To be Determined.
