SAFETY ADVISORY AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

The Safety Advisory and Transportation Committee Meeting was held on August 25, 2014 at 4:00 p.m. with Chairman Hutchison presiding. Members present were Mr. Dixon, Mr. Keller, and Mr. Truax. Mr. Perza was absent. Councilman Anderson was also present.

AGENDA ADDITIONS/DELETIONS

Mr. Dixon moved for approval of the agenda as presented, seconded by Mr. Keller and unanimously carried.

Proposed Ordinance #2014-21 Amending Chapter 46 - Fire Prevention and Protection, Article I - In General, Section 46-4 - Impact Protection of Natural Gas and LP Gas Devices

Mr. Timothy Mullaney, Fire Marshal, advised members that the purpose of the proposed ordinance was to clarify the standards for impact protection surrounding natural gas and liquid propane gas devices and that, currently, the code does not specify the standards, specifically dimensions and color, for bollards installed to protect natural gas and liquid propane gas devices. Mr. Mullaney indicated that formally codifying the standards would reduce the potential for confusion about the requirements.

Responding to Mr. Hutchison, Mr. Mullaney confirmed that the purpose of the amendment was basically "housekeeping" and to provide a clear reference in the Code for those who inquire.

Mr. Dixon moved to recommend adoption of Proposed Ordinance #2014-21, seconded by Mr. Keller and unanimously carried.

Prioritization of City of Dover State Capital Transportation Program (CTP) Projects

Mrs. Ann Marie Townshend, Director of Planning and Community Development, reminded members that City Council develops a list of transportation priorities each year and shares these priorities with the Secretary of Transportation for consideration when the Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT) develops the State's Capital Transportation Plan (CTP). She, along with Mr. Scott Koenig, City Manager, reviewed the priorities approved by City Council in September 2013 and recommended that the prior year's ranking be maintained for the coming year, as follows:

1. Garrison Oak Connector Road
2. Construction of Sidewalks within the Walk Zone of the New Dover High School
    a. Mifflin Road
    b. South Side of Route 8 West of Mifflin Road
    c. Kenton Road (must be coupled with Kenton Road Corridor Upgrades)
3. Route 8/Hazlettville Road Connector
4. US Route 13 Sidewalk Construction
5. Crawford Carroll Avenue Extension
6. Kenton Road Corridor Upgrades
7. Loockerman Street/Forest Street Improvements
8. Kings Highway/Route 13 Intersection Improvements
9. US Route 13 Service Road Corridor
10. College Road Corridor Upgrades

Mrs. Townshend advised members that the City was also supportive of projects to improve pedestrian and bicycle friendliness. She stated that The Capital City Trail project was currently under construction, noting that Phase 2 of the project, which is located behind Delaware Public Archives, was being finished and Park Drive would be next. She stated that the Dover/Kent County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) was leading the development of bicycle and pedestrian plans for the City of Dover and that, once these projects were complete, other bicycle and pedestrian priorities would be developed.

Responding to Mr. Hutchison regarding the results of the priority list submitted by the City to DelDOT during the previous year, Mrs. Townshend indicated that the projects recommended by the City for the CTP had not fared well, which is why it would be important to continue to submit them in hopes that they would get the attention needed.

Mr. Dixon moved to recommend approval of the prioritization of City of Dover State Capital Transportation Program (CTP) projects, as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Truax and unanimously carried.

Debriefing/Post-Mortem on Firefly Music Festival

Police Chief Paul Bernat reviewed a presentation entitled, "Special Preparation Instructions & Debriefing/Post-Mortem on Firefly Music Festival" and explained that the Police Department meets monthly throughout the year to prepare for this event, anticipating an estimated attendance of 80,000 people. Referring to the grid map, Chief Bernat explained that the festival area had been divided into four (4) zones and the Dover Police Department was responsible for Zones 1, 2, and 4, while the Delaware State Police had jurisdiction over Zone 3.

Chief Bernat stated that the 2013 festival was a three (3) day event and most attendees arrived on Friday, the first day, which created a traffic problem. In 2014, the site opened on Wednesday afternoon to those who had special tickets; however, there was a traffic problem on Thursday until approximately 11:00 a.m. because the officers did not report until 5:00 a.m. and, unexpectedly, attendees began to arrive at 3:00 a.m. Chief Bernat stated that they plan to remedy this problem for the 2015 festival by having traffic control around the clock on the first day.

Chief Bernat informed members that there were 3,378 man hours used throughout the six (6) day period of the festival and that this expense would be paid by Red Frog Events. He reviewed the complaints received pertaining to the festival as well as several issues which will be addressed prior to the 2015 festival. He noted that there was a non-ticketed event held on Saturday night outside the venue, by Miles the Monster, and a fight started which resulted in a couple of arrests. The Police Department suggested that all events be held inside the festival in the future, noting that people who do not purchased tickets "have nothing to lose," whereas people who buy tickets are aware that they could lose the next few days if they are arrested.

Responding to Mr. Keller, Chief Bernat stated that there were approximately six (6) arrests last year, when approximately 55,000 people attended, compared to 80,000 this year, and that the larger population this year contributed to more arrests. Overall, he stated that it was a very successful event.

Responding to Mr. Dixon regarding noise complaints, Chief Bernat noted that some complaints were received; however, he felt that the amount of money that was brought into the City and State economy was "phenomenal."

At Mr. Hutchison's request, Mr. James Hosfelt, Dover International Speedway Security Manager, (and former City of Dover Police Chief), stated that the event could not be held without the help of 14 - 17 law enforcement agencies. Noting the small number of arrests, he stated that Dover Downs considered the festival a success. Mr. Hosfelt advised members that the traffic plan was coordinated by Dover Downs, the Dover Police Department, the State Police, and the Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT) to bring cars and campers in from Route 9 and Leipsic Road to park in Lot 18 on Wednesday, which worked very well. He reiterated Chief Bernat's comments about the traffic back-up on Thursday and indicated that, going forward, it had been decided to start 24-hour vehicle parking on Wednesday afternoon. Mr. Hosfelt stated that campers who stay in the campgrounds in that area will be required to stay throughout their visit; there will be no coming and going from the campgrounds.

In response to Mr. Hutchison, Chief Hosfelt stated that next year's event would also be a four (4) day event.

Responding to Mr. Keller about the upcoming "World Championship Punkin Chunkin" at Dover International Speedway, Chief Hosfelt confirmed that the Dover Police Department would be involved in the event and that 20,000 - 25,000 people attended in Sussex County last year. He noted that the event was scheduled for October 24 - 26, 2014.

Councilman Anderson stated that the complaints he received regarding noise from the Firefly Music Festival were related to after-hours events on week nights, and he suggested terminating outdoor events held after midnight on week nights. He indicated that most people had been surprised by how wonderful and unobtrusive the crowds had been and felt that the event had been a big benefit. Mr. Anderson questioned the possibility of bringing the Country Music Festival to Dover International Speedway from Sussex County. Responding, Chief Hosfelt stated that this had not been discussed but expressed his understanding that, unless it were a Red Frog event, the organization that manages the Firefly Music Festival, he did not think that it would happen at Dover Downs.

Mr. Hutchison stated his opinion that no other location in Delaware could handle this type of crowd in this manner and that the success of the event reflected the partnership between the City of Dover and Dover Downs. He expressed his pride that the City of Dover had the confidence to put on such an event and his thanks to all involved.

Update - Dover High School Construction

Mrs. Ann Marie Townshend, Director of Planning and Community Development, advised members that Dover High School was open and had a temporary Certificate of Occupancy. Occupancy was staged to initially allow only teachers to enter and subsequently to allow students who were attending orientation nights. An additional inspection was done to extend the occupancy to include the

Jumpstart Academy for freshman students from August 11 - 12, 2014. Mrs. Townshend stated that on August 20, 2014, staff performed a full site inspection and extended the temporary Certificate of Occupancy to include use of the school. She explained that the athletic facilities had a separate permit, and a temporary Certificate of Occupancy was issued to allow use of the grass multi-purpose fields and the turf competition field, but not the stadium. Mrs. Townshend indicated that the Capital School District had requested an inspection of the stadium for August 27, 2014 and would like to begin using it on August 28, 2014. She stated that the school passed all life safety and building inspections and only the completion of site items remained, including the baseball and softball fields on the east side of the site, as well as clean-up and grading. For the most part, she felt that everything was functioning well.

Mrs. Townshend advised members that on first day of school, August 21, 2014, traffic was "a mess" from approximately 7:00 a.m. to 7:30 a.m. and was backed up beyond Mifflin Road. She stated that she met Mayor Robin Christiansen, Capital School District (CSD) Board members and staff, and Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT) employees at the site on August 22, 2014 and there was significant improvement in traffic flow. Mrs. Townshend expressed a need to educate the public, including students and drivers, about the High-Intensity Activated crossWalk (HAWK) signal, as there was some confusion. She indicated that many of the projects that staff had been concerned about, including extension of the sidewalk from Dover High School to Tribbett Street, pedestrian connections to the south, and the east entrance were all complete and the small projects that remained were coming together nicely.

Responding to Mr. Hutchison regarding the reason for the traffic improvements between the first and second days of school, Mrs. Townshend stated her belief that more people drove their children to school on the first so there was larger volume. In addition, she felt that traffic would continue to improve as everyone learns the routine. Mrs. Townshend noted that four (4) motorcycle officers were present on the first day to assist with traffic exiting nearby developments, but it will be difficult to fully assess this traffic situation until after the sidewalk construction is complete. She indicated that safety staff from DelDOT expected to perform traffic counts during the third week of school to see if a full signal was warranted.

In response to Mr. Hutchison regarding the status of traffic earlier in the day, Mrs. Townshend stated that no complaints had been received. She noted that it is difficult to exit from the school's east entrance because vehicles coming out of the west entrance create a steady volume of traffic and that the CSD did not want buses to use the east entrance if they could not enter and exit easily.

Mr. Keller stated that the difficulty with using the east entrance indicated a good reason to have a full-fledged traffic signal at that location.

Mr. Truax asked if the HAWK signal allowed Fire Department and Emergency Medical Services staff to change the light remotely. Mrs. Townshend stated that it did not have that ability because DelDOT indicated that the signal turns red only when there is a pedestrian in the crosswalk. Their concern was that if this were changed remotely and the light changed suddenly, the pedestrian could not safely cross the street. Mr. Truax stated that this would be a concern for emergency vehicles coming from the west toward Bayhealth Kent General and the Dover Fire Department.

Mrs. Townshend expressed her opinion that the HAWK signal was probably less of a concern for emergency vehicles coming from the west than the traffic back-up that may be encountered. She indicated that there would be steady, heavy traffic on Route 8 in this area from approximately 7:05 a.m. until 7:25 a.m., and sporadic use of the HAWK signal from approximately 7:00 a.m. until 7:15 a.m., with similar use in the afternoon. Mrs. Townshend stated that the CSD had discussed having school personnel monitor the area to ensure that all students crossing Route 8 at the HAWK signal were complying.

Mr. Hutchison requested that Mrs. Townshend consult with DelDOT to determine if the HAWK signal could be controlled remotely. He stated that this matter could be discussed further based on that determination.

Responding to Mr. Hutchison, Chief Bernat confirmed that the Police Department was continuing to monitor traffic conditions at the new school. Mr. Hutchison requested that Police Department personnel contact Mrs. Townshend with an update on the morning and afternoon traffic pattern.

Briefing on Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT) Projects

Mrs. Ann Marie Townshend, Director of Planning and Community Development, provided updates on DelDOT projects, as follows:

Garrison Oak Connector Road

Mrs. Townshend informed members that the Garrison Oak Connector Road was the City's top transportation priority; however, it was not listed in the State of Delaware Capital Transportation Plan (CTP).

Construction of Sidewalks within the Walk Zone of the New Dover High School

Mrs. Townshend indicated that sidewalks in the vicinity of Dover High School were being completed; however, there was no report from DelDOT regarding sidewalk construction on Mifflin Road or the south side of Route 8.

Route 8/Hazlettville Road Connector

Mrs. Townshend advised members that no funding was shown for this project in the current CTP.

US Route 13 Sidewalk Construction

Mrs. Townshend stated that DelDOT does not currently have any projects in this area, although several sidewalk segments were installed by developers as part of their site plan approval. She advised members that a sidewalk was constructed in front of the former Sheraton Hotel as part of its conversion to dormitories and the charter school at Delaware State University (DSU), and this was extended to the DSU campus through funding from State legislators. She noted that a sidewalk was also being constructed on Route 13 in front of TGI Fridays.

Crawford Carroll Avenue Extension

Mrs. Townshend stated that DelDOT indicated that this project was currently funded for preliminary engineering in FY16 and FY17, although there was no right-of-way or construction funding in the current CTP spending plan.

Kenton Road Corridor Upgrades

Mrs. Townshend stated that this project was currently funded by DelDOT for preliminary engineering in FY16 and FY17, right-of-way acquisition in FY18, and construction in FY19 and FY20.

Kings Highway/Route 13 Intersection Improvements

Mrs. Townshend indicated that DelDOT did not have a project planned in this area; however, developers of the former Playtex site at this location would make improvements as part of their development. Mrs. Townshend explained that the City was working with DelDOT on a Transportation Improvement District (TID) study and that this area would also be addressed in the study.

US Route 13 Service Road Corridor

Mrs. Townshend advised members that DelDOT had no information to report at this time regarding this project; however, it was noted that representatives of The Dover Mall were in discussion with Dover International Speedway regarding the concept of a service road between Rt. 13 and Rt. 1.

Transportation Improvement District

Mrs. Townshend reported that development of a Transportation Improvement District was an ongoing project and that a progress meeting had been scheduled with DelDOT.

Mrs. Townshend indicated that DelDOT provided information on additional projects, as follows:

- Construction for the West Dover Connector would be advertised in September, with construction scheduled to begin around the first of the year.
- Safety improvements were planned for the intersection of Route 8 and Saulsbury Road and would include the addition of through and left-turn lanes on northbound and southbound Saulsbury Road at the intersection, with preliminary engineering to begin early in FY15.
- Improvements were planned for the intersection of Loockerman and Forest Streets, with preliminary engineering in FY17 and FY18, right of way acquisition in FY19, and construction in FY20.

Mrs. Townshend noted that DelDOT was also working on adding a third lane of traffic on US 13 from Lochmeath Way to the Puncheon Run Connector, with preliminary engineering in early FY 15. She noted that this project was outside the City limits but would affect the City.

Responding to Mr. Dixon regarding his concern that Delaware State University (DSU) students were crossing Route 13 through traffic, Mrs. Townshend stated that it was her understanding that there were plans to extend the brick wall in front of DSU to prevent students from accessing the highway in areas where they are not supposed to cross.

Mr. Keller moved for adjournment, seconded by Mr. Dixon and unanimously carried.

Meeting adjourned at 4:49 p.m.

James L. Hutchison, Sr.
Chairman

JLH/JS/dd/tm
S:\AGENDAS-MINUTES-PACKETS-PRESENTATIONS-ATT&EXH\Committee-Minutes\2014\08-25-2014 SA&T.wpd