SAFETY ADVISORY AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

The Safety Advisory and Transportation Committee Meeting was held on June 27, 2012 at 5:00 p.m. with Chairman Hutchison presiding. Members present were Mr. Perza (arrived at 5:07 p.m.), Mrs. Russell, Mr. Davis, and Mr. Keller. Councilman Lynn (arrived at 5:03 p.m.) was also present.

AGENDA ADDITIONS/DELETIONS

Mrs. Russell moved for approval of the agenda, seconded by Mr. Davis and unanimously carried.

Request for Two (2) Hour Parking Designation - Gooden Avenue *(Dr. Richard Taylor)*

Members reviewed a letter submitted by Dr. Richard Taylor requesting a two (2) hour parking designation for Gooden Avenue. He indicated that he owns the professional building located on the corner of S. Bradford Street and Gooden Avenue. With the construction and expansion of Kent General Hospital, the City placed a two (2) hour parking limit on South Bradford Street; however, Gooden Avenue has no such limit. Dr. Taylor advised members that employees of Kent General Hospital have been parking along Gooden Avenue for 8 - 10 hours per day. The patients of his facility require short-term parking and are having difficulty finding available space near the practice. As a result, he requested that members authorize a two (2) hour parking limit on Gooden Avenue.

Mr. Scott Koenig, City Manager, advised members that the two (2) hour parking limit on Bradford Street was implemented several years ago as a result of the hospital and office/medical buildings in the area. He noted that the same restrictions were implemented on State Street, near the hospital. He assured members that neighborhood residents were permitted to obtain a residential parking permit, allowing them to exceed the two (2) hour restriction. He stated that staff had no objections to Dr. Taylor's request and, upon Council's approval, appropriate signage would be erected and notification provided to the property owners in the area.

Responding to Mr. Davis, Mr. Koenig stated that he would obtain details regarding the parking garage recently built, such as the number of available spaces, and whether hospital staff were authorized to use the parking garage, prior to the City Council Meeting scheduled for July 9, 2012. Mr. Keller stated that, according to a security guard at Kent General Hospital, the parking garage was for use by visitors and patients only.

In response to Dr. Taylor, Mr. Koenig stated that if the change in parking designation were approved by Council on July 9, 2012, he anticipated that staff could implement the change during the week of July 16, 2012.

Mrs. Russell moved to recommend approval of the request for a two (2) hour parking designation on Gooden Avenue, seconded by Mr. Davis and unanimously carried.

Update Dover High School Construction

On behalf of Mrs. Ann Marie Townshend, Director of Planning and Community Development, Mr. Scott Koenig, City Manager, read the following statement into the record:

- *Monthly coordination meetings are continuing. The last one was held on June 21st.*

- *The School District completed the Signal Warrant Analysis for the East Entrance and submitted it to DelDOT* [Delaware Department of Transportation] *for review. DelDOT issued comments on June 22nd. The Signal Warrant Analysis indicates that the east entrance does not meet the warrants for a signal. As we have expressed to the Committee, this is a serious concern to the Planning Office, especially given the number of students who will live in the developments on the north side of Route 8 who will be expected to walk to school. The Planning Office will continue to pursue this matter with DelDOT and the School District and involve other City staff and elected officials if and when appropriate. We will continue to keep the Committee apprised of progress on this.*

- *DelDOT sent a letter to the Papens, who own the farm on Hazlettville Road just west of Cannon Mills, indicating that the Route 8/Hazlettville Road Connector is being moved out in the Capital Transportation Plan to future years. The letter indicates that the road is not necessary for the opening of the new Dover High School. At the Dover/Kent County MPO* [Metropolitan Planning Organization] *TAC* [Technical Advisory Committee] *meeting on June 13th, I expressed concern on behalf of the City that this road was ranked as the City's 2nd highest transportation priority, and that this determination was made by DelDOT without the benefit of any discussion with the City nor communication to the City regarding the matter. I expressed concern regarding traffic on Route 8 with the opening of the High School if this road is not in place at the time of the school opening or shortly thereafter. Natalie Barnhardt, DelDOT's Chief Engineer, has offered to meet with City staff. This meeting will be set up in the near future.*

Mr. Koenig advised members that buses would be entering and exiting the school onto Route 8 at the east entrance and, according to the site plan at this time, this would be a non-signalized intersection. He noted that there would be a signal at the west entrance, which was intended to be the main entrance to the High School. This road would be extended and then come to a dead end, since the apartment complex planned at that location had not progressed toward construction, and connection to the end of Cannon Mills would not occur until the construction of the apartments. He stated that the construction of the road that was to connect the school to Hazlettville Road had been delayed by DelDOT; however, due to the concerns of staff regarding traffic on Route 8, he assured members that this matter would continue to be pursued.

Responding to Mr. Hutchison, Mr. Koenig stated that the new Dover High School was scheduled to open in the fall of 2014.

Mr. Hutchison requested that Senator Brian Bushweller and Representative Darryl Scott be provided any correspondence regarding traffic issues relating to the high school. Noting concerns of Mr. Perza regarding the need for sidewalks in the area, Mr. Hutchison requested that this issue be considered as important as the signal issue.

In response to concerns of Mr. Lynn, Mr. Koenig explained that a site plan is initially presented to the Planning Commission to obtain conditional approval and the information presented on the site plan is subject to additional review. Although a plan may originally include a signal, the signal will not be approved by DelDOT if it does not meet warrants. He stated that the signalization and sidewalks for this project were now matters for DelDOT to address. Prior to Council becoming involved with this matter, Mr. Koenig suggested awaiting the results of staff's meeting with DelDOT's Chief Engineer.

Mr. Lynn requested that the City Manager be authorized to stress the importance of the signalization at the east entrance/exit rather than having to approve a signal sometime in the future after a tragedy occurs. Concurring, Mr. Hutchison felt that the installation of sidewalks was just as important as the signal.

Mr. Davis moved to recommend that City Council send a letter to the Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT) requesting the installation of a traffic signal at the east entrance of the new Dover High School and sidewalks on the north side of Route 8 in that area *(Attachment #1)*. The motion was seconded by Mr. Keller and unanimously carried.

Mr. Hutchison requested that Senator Bushweller and Representative Scott receive copies of the letter to DelDOT.

By unanimous consent, the meeting adjourned at 5:26 p.m.

James L. Hutchison
Chairman

JLH/JS/jg/dd/tm
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Attachment
Attachment #1 - Draft Letter to the Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT) - Installation of Traffic Signal at East Entrance of Dover High School and Sidewalks on the North Side of Route 8

July 9, 2012

Mr. Shailen P. Bhatt, Secretary
Department of Transportation
800 Bay Road
Dover, DE 19901

Dear Secretary Bhatt:

As we have previously discussed, the new Dover High School is under construction on Forrest Avenue (Delaware Route 8) on the west side of Dover. The location of the school on the City's primary east/west route creates significant challenges to ensuring that traffic in this area continues to flow smoothly and does not adversely affect the many residents and businesses along the corridor that rely on Route 8 for their daily travel. To this end, monthly coordination meetings among City of Dover staff, DelDOT staff, and the consultants for the Capital School District have helped to keep this large, complex project on schedule and address design concerns before they become problematic.

For the past several months, there has been discussion about the installation of a traffic signal at the east entrance of the school site, which would line up with Heatherfield Way. As required by DelDOT, the Capital School District completed a signal warrant analysis for this location. The analysis indicates that the intersection does not meet the warrants for a traffic signal.

Dover City Council firmly believes that a signal at the east entrance location is imperative in order to provide safe pedestrian access to the Dover High School. We also request that DelDOT install sidewalks along the north side of Route 8 to facilitate safe pedestrian access to this location. There are a number of residential developments on the north side of Route 8, from which students will be expected to walk to school. The absence of a signal at this location and the absence of sidewalks to provide safe access to this signal will likely create an unacceptable safety risk for students and other members of the community accessing the school property. This safety risk extends beyond simply accessing the school at the beginning and end of the school day and also includes access to the athletic fields and the school grounds for events held on the campus before and after hours.

Further, we are concerned that the lack of safe pedestrian access through sidewalks and a signalized crossing will result in unnecessary vehicle traffic due to parents driving their children to school rather than allowing them to walk.

Sincerely,

Thomas J. Leary
Dover City Council

cc: Senator Brian Bushweller, 17th District
Representative Darryl Scott, 31st District
Scott D. Koenig, City Manager
Ann Marie Townshend, Director of Planning & Community Development