SPECIAL SAFETY ADVISORY AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

A Special Safety Advisory and Transportation Committee Meeting was held on December 12, 2011 at 5:00 p.m. with Chairman Hutchison presiding. Members present were Mrs. Russell, Mr. Davis, and Mr. Hutchison. Mr. Lynn was absent. Mayor Carey was also present (arrived at 5:02p.m.).

AGENDA ADDITIONS/DELETIONS

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

Traffic Signal Warrant Analysis for Weston Drive and Forest Street - Recommendation to Remove Signal at Ridgely Street

Mrs. Ann Marie Townshend, Director of Planning and Community Development, explained that the Capital School District has recently made improvements to the parking and circulation at William Henry Middle School and Booker T. Washington Elementary School and the next phase of the proposed improvements includes a connection of the internal circulation of the school campus to Weston Drive, which is a city street. When this project was reviewed through the Development Advisory Committee, the City required that this connection be made in conjunction with the installation of a traffic signal at Forest Street (Route 8) and Weston Drive.

Mrs. Townshend informed members that Landmark JCM, the design consultant hired by the Capital School District, completed a signal warrant analysis, which was submitted to and reviewed by the Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT). She stated that DelDOT sent the City Manager and her an e-mail indicating that the intersection met the warrants for a traffic signal, but also recommending that the signal at Forest Street and Ridgely Street be removed when the signal at Forest Street and Weston Drive is installed. The placement of signals at both intersections would cause conflicts with vehicle stacking due to the short distance between the intersections.

Mrs. Townshend stated that the installation of a traffic signal at Forest Street and Weston Drive is consistent with the recommendations of the 2008 Delaware Route 8 Operations Study and that the Forest Street Improvements, that were planned nearly 10 years ago, also included the concept of a signal at this intersection. She explained that this is a heavy traffic area.

Mrs. Townshend stated her belief that the signal at Ridgely Street was installed due to the heavy volume of truck traffic utilizing the street to access Playtex and Sara Lee. She indicated that there is still some warehousing and distribution in this area; however, Sara Lee is no longer there and Playtex does not access from Ridgely Street.

In response to Chairman Hutchison, Mrs. Townshend stated that DelDOT recommended that the signal at Forest Street and Ridgely Street be completely removed, not changed to a flashing light. Additionally, Mr. Scott Koenig, City Manager, stated his belief that some of the signal equipment will be relocated to Weston Drive.

Responding to concerns of Mr. Hutchison regarding the light at Gibbs Drive, Mr. Koenig stated that the lights will have to be timed. He explained that having traffic backed up at Ridgely Street has the potential to back up traffic over the railroad tracks, which is an entirely different concern than simple traffic congestion. He explained that DelDOT will have to coordinate the timing of the lights through the traffic management center in Smyrna, DE because the State upgraded all of the lights

on Division Street and they are now State assets. Due to the fact that the light at Gibbs Drive is manually activated, it will "create a little havoc" with the traffic there, however, Mr. Koenig stated his opinion that in the long run this will be a better location for the system, despite that manual operation.

Responding to the concerns of Mrs. Russell, Mrs. Townshend stated that the presence of a signal at Weston Drive will still allow for a break in traffic; however, there have not been any meetings with property or business owners in the area.

Mrs. Russell stated that she felt that the property owners, and especially the business owners, needed to be contacted to determine what type of impact the change would have on their businesses.

Staff recommended that the Committee support the addition of a traffic signal at Forest Street and Weston Drive and the removal of the traffic signal at Route 8 and Ridgely Street once this new signal is in place.

Mr. Hutchison moved to recommend acceptance of staff's recommendation, seconded by Mr. Davis and unanimously carried.

Update - Dover High School Construction Project

Mrs. Ann Marie Townshend, Director of Planning and Community Development, briefed members on the status of the Dover High School Construction Project. She informed members that City staff continues to meet monthly with the Capital School District and their consultants, the Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT), and a representative from the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC), who occasionally attends to offer a stormwater perspective. She advised members that the next coordination meeting is scheduled for December 15, 2011.

Mrs. Townshend informed members that the Capital School District was almost finished finalizing the entrance plan approvals and that the City has released the foundation only permit, so they are able to do foundation work. However, she stated that work has ceased on the site until some of the concerns raised by DNREC related to the stormwater management have been addressed. She explained that there was a lot of tracking of soil onto Route 8, and as a result DelDOT, the Kent Conservation District, and the City contacted DNREC. DNREC, DelDOT and the City met with the site contractors on Friday, December 9, 2011 and agreed that work would stop until the contractors can make sure that the erosion and sediment controls will ensure that any sediment is contained on the site. She stated her anticipation that the project should be resumed on Wednesday, December 14, 2011.

In response to Mr. Davis, Mrs. Townshend agreed that the situation did appear better earlier in the day because crews worked over the weekend upgrading the construction entrance, cleaning out the swales where some sediment had accumulated, and cleaning off the roadway.

Responding to Chairman Hutchison, Mrs. Townshend and Mr. Scott Koenig, City Manager, stated that they were satisfied that the entrance was moving in the right direction. Mrs. Townshend explained that staff anticipated that construction crews would work through the weekend to have everything ready for DNREC to perform a reinspection on Tuesday, December 13, 2011 and to be back up and running on Tuesday or Wednesday.

In response to Chairman Hutchison, Mr. Koenig explained that the "next big hurdle" will be getting the final entrance plans approved for Route 8. He informed members that, during the last coordination meeting, issues were discussed related to utility relocation on the north side and those concerns have been resolved. The City, Comcast, and Verizon have provided prices for relocation of facilities; however, the entrance plan approval must be completed before the City can issue the building permit. Mrs. Townshend assured members that staff will not issue anything beyond the foundation permit until the full entrance plan approval is received from DelDOT. Mr. Koenig stated that the contractors anticipate receiving a full building permit during the month of February because they cannot set any steel until they have the full building permit, which is tied directly to the entrance approval and the approval of the improvements for Route 8.

There being no further business, Mr. Davis moved to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Hutchison and unanimously carried.

Meeting Adjourned at 5:12 P.M.

James L. Hutchison
Chairman

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