

DRAFT
TRANSPORTATION SAFETY COMMISSION
November 24, 2020

The Vienna Transportation Safety Commission (TSC) met in regular session on November 24, 2020 via Zoom. Chairman Beth Eachus opened the meeting at 8:01 pm with the following Commissioners present: Leonard Ignatowski, Keith Aimone, Loginn Kapitan, Angela Sorrell, Donna Smith, Charlie Strunk, SallyJean Penna, Peter Hartogs and Joe Lowther. Also present were Jennifer Sigler, TSC Clerk, Andrew Jinks, Department of Public Works (DPW) and Sergeant Pete Elias, Vienna Police Department (VPD).

Chairman Eachus read the Resolution for Continuity of Government into the record. By roll-call vote, members voted unanimously to approve the resolution, 9 – 0.

Approval of the October 27, 2020 Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Kapitan made a motion to approve the October 27, 2020 meeting minutes. Commissioner Strunk seconded. Motion carried unanimously, 9 – 0.

Department of Public Works (DPW) Report

Answering Questions from Last the TSC Meeting (October 27th)

Can the new state law requiring drivers to stop for pedestrians in crosswalks, versus yielding, be publicly announced in the Vienna Voice? When does the law go in effect? Is there a plan to update signage in Town?

Answer: The new law was actually already described in the August edition of the Vienna Voice, see page 9. The law went into effect on July 1, 2020. DPW will update the appropriate signage once the sign details and specifications are available.

Is there any criteria on the installation of traffic calming mitigations near or at an intersection?

Answer: VDOT's Traffic Calming Guide for Neighborhood Streets page 46 states: "Speed Humps, speed lumps, speed tables, chicanes, chokers, and raised median islands are generally located at mid-block with a minimum distance of 200 feet from an intersection."

Is there implementation criteria for RRFB (Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacon) signage?

Answer: Yes, both VDOT and FHWA have criteria that DPW will utilize when RRFBs are requested or when potentially applicable. Please note that due to costs and the required coordination with Dominion for the installation, RRFBs will only be recommended for locations that meet the criteria and not simply due to a request. VDOT standards state that the overuse of RRFBs in the roadway environment could decrease not only the effectiveness of the RRFBs but also those crossing without RRFBs.

Chairman Eachus asked Mr. Jinks to provide the criteria for RRFBs at the next TSC meeting.

Receipt of Petitions and Communications from the Public

NONE

Review of 2017 Traffic Study Results and DPW's Recommendation for Traffic Calming on Windover Avenue NW

Based on speed and volume data gathered during the initial traffic study in September/October 2017, DPW does not recommend traffic calming mitigations. The 85th-percentile average speed was 28.9 and 28.3 MPH.

DPW also does not recommend reducing the speed limit. Due to state laws/codes and the Town's current ordinance, any public roadways must be designed and posted as 25 MPH (or higher, depending on the roadway type). Even if the laws/codes/ordinances are updated, a traffic engineering investigation would be required in order to adjust the speed limit. Based the 85th-percentile data from the current traffic study the speed limit along Windover Ave should not be adjusted.

The MUTCD (Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices) states "When a speed limit within a speed zone is posted, it should be within 5 MPH of the 85th-percentile speed of free-flowing traffic." For Windover Ave the closest standard speed limit to the 85th-percentile, within 5 MPH, is the current posted speed limit of 25 MPH. Meaning that Windover Ave would not even qualify as a speed zone.

Speed Zone—a section of roadway with a speed limit that is established by law or regulation, but which might be different from a legislatively specified statutory speed limit.

Commissioner Sorrell asked if Mr. Jinks had considered any other types of traffic calming measures, such as bump-outs at the corners.

Mr. Jinks said there was potentially some signage that could be added.

Commissioner Ignatowski mentioned of the 8 intersections along Windover Avenue NW, 6 of them have stop signs which makes it very difficult to speed.

Chairman Eachus provided some background from the previous Windover Avenue NW TSC discussions and decision: *Town Council has asked the TSC to review the Windover Avenue NW petition from 2018. Since a lot of you were not part of the TSC in 2018, I have compiled the following for your information so everyone can be on the same page.*

Agenda Item 6: HISTORY – Windover Avenue NW original petition

At the February 27, 2018 meeting, the TSC heard the Windover Avenue NW traffic calming petition. Speed studies had already been performed by the police with the following results:

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293 Windover Ave NW (09/29/17 – 10/12/17)

Road Segments: Local Road from Orchard St to Pleasant St
2120 VPD
10.7% traveling 5 mph or above speed limit (TCG = 15%)
Town of Vienna PD - 85th Percentile is 28.9 MPH (TCG = 31 MPH)

313 Windover Ave NW (09/29/17 – 10/12/17)

Road Segments: Collector street from Pleasant St to Knoll St
1491 VPD
7.6% traveling 5 mph or above speed limit (TCG = 15%)
Town of Vienna PD - 85th Percentile is 28.3 MPH (TCG = 31 MPH)

Ms. Horner, DPW Engineer concluded based on this data neither road segment warrants traffic calming per the Town's traffic calming guidelines.

Chairman Somers summarized a petition for traffic calming on Windover Avenue NW has been submitted to the TSC. A traffic study and a DPW analysis has already been completed showing the road does not meet the current criteria for traffic calming. Options have been put on the table including sidewalks, increased fines for speeding, increasing the size of the "no truck" signs, increased police enforcement, lowering the speed limit and installation of radar signs. Ms. Horner will return with recommendations at the April 24, 2018 meeting.

At the April 24, 2018 meeting, the TSC reviewed the data again. Chairman Somers summarized the request to lower the speed limit would need a traffic and engineering study to prove it is warranted. Stop sign cameras are not allowed under the law in Virginia. The petitioners do not want sidewalk installed. Not everyone is in favor of a one-way option. Moving the no truck signs can be done by DPW without a motion. Pole mounted speed indicators can be installed once they become available.

At that time, the Commission declined to make a motion.

Paul Layer, 317 Windover Avenue NW, explained the 85th percentile rule does not take in to account the nature of the road segment in question. It applies to roads that were constructed per VDOT design. Windover is NOT a VDOT designed road, it is a paved tractor transportation way at the edge of a farm. The trees are over 150 years old and adjacent to those trees is a dirt road that eventually became Windover Avenue. It does not really qualify for this type of approach. Some of the trees are within a foot of the pavement. What the petitioners requested besides lowering the speed limit, was intermittent police enforcement on a sustained basis, "15mph when children are present" signs (appropriate for a school zone), a sign that says "Share the Road", signs indicating pedestrians should stay to the side of the road and pole mounted speed indicators.

Judy Medwedeff, 309 Windover Avenue NW, turned her three minutes over to Mr. Layer so he could continue.

Mr. Layer described Windover Avenue as a unique road which has many features that don't lend themselves to standard ways Public Works would address traffic calming. The width of the road is

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16' in one or two locations and is 18' on average so it does not meet any standard. People enjoy walking along Windover Avenue and their safety would be improved if the speed limit was lowered to 20 MPH.

Patty Hanley, 333 West Street NW, stated that people cannot safely walk down Windover Avenue because of the volume of traffic and the high school students driving to school.

David Medwedeff, 309 Windover Avenue NW, said it was more a matter of pedestrian safety rather than traffic calming. He believes the traffic study devices were placed in the wrong locations to properly capture the speeding.

Mr. Jinks asked if pedestrians should be walking in the road.

Chairman Eachus said there is no sidewalk, so the road is the only place to walk.

Chairman Eachus asked Sergeant Elias to speak about the enforceability of a 15 or 20 MPH speed limit.

Sergeant Elias responded he had spoken to judges and the Town Attorney and learned the judges strictly follow the code of Virginia which states the minimum speed limit that can be enforced is 25 MPH.

Chairman Eachus moved on to the topic of sidewalks – Windover Avenue is very narrow, the historic trees are right along the roadway and the houses are closer to the street than in other places. At the 2018 TSC meeting, the majority of Windover petitioners were not in favor of having sidewalk installed.

Mr. Layer stated Windover Avenue is not suited for sidewalk. If a sidewalk were installed, it would put pedestrians within 10' – 15' of resident's front doors. He reiterated low cost signage such as "15mph when children are present" signs (appropriate for a school zone), a sign that says "Share the Road", signs indicating pedestrians should stay to the side of the road would be a better solution.

Mr. Jinks said he would have to consult the MUTCD regarding such signs, some may not be approved. He proposed installing the electronic speed indicator signs as soon as they become available.

Commissioner Kapitan asked if traditional sidewalks were off the table, would it be possible to create a walking area such as adding a gravel shoulder to the road.

Commissioner Smith explained she is in favor of lowering the speed limit and she asked if the Town Attorney could draft some language that would make that exception specific to Windover Avenue only.

Mrs. Medwedeff recalled she had Ms. Horner, the DPW engineer in 2018, walk the roadway at 2pm (when the high school lets out) to prove how scary it is to be walking on Windover Avenue. She

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suggested if 20 MPH is not enforceable, could the police issue warnings to drivers instead. She mentioned there is no stop bar at the intersection of Windover Avenue and Pleasant Street.

Commissioner Strunk said no matter the speed limit, people will drive the speed they are comfortable with.

Commissioner Penna is very much in favor of the speed indicator signs.

Vice Chairman Sorrell does not believe the 20 MPH speed limit will fix anything. She asked if striping a pedestrian walk lane was an option.

Mr. Jinks said based on what he was hearing, sidewalks is the answer for this roadway. Despite the right of way issues, this is the perfect place for sidewalks. He will consult the MUTCD to see if there is a “pedestrian share arrow” option that could be painted on the street itself.

Commissioner Lowther supports the installation of the speed indicator signs and increased police enforcement. He thinks it’s better to change the behavior of the drivers than to change the speed limit.

Commissioner Kapitan is also in favor of the speed indicator signs as well as additional enforcement.

Commissioner Ignatowski frequently walks and drives on Windover Avenue NW. He has never felt unsafe. He believes the road width and configuration naturally slows down traffic. He suggested moving plantings from the right of way to make more space for pedestrians.

Commissioner Smith doesn’t think 20 mph is an unreasonable speed limit for the size and historic nature of Windover Avenue NW. Additionally, signage stating both pedestrians and vehicles share the road.

Chairman Eachus asked Mr. Jinks to come up with possible suggestions to be heard at the January 26, 2021 meeting.

Vice Chairman Sorrell cautioned against setting a precedent with a 20 MPH speed limit. She asked Mr. Jinks to see if “chokers” could be used to slow traffic.

BAC Report

BAC Vice Chairman Strunk announced the Committee for Helping Others (CHO) is holding their annual bicycle donation and distribution drive and have already received 30 – 35 donated bicycles to be restored and given to James Madison HS students.

PAC Report

PAC Chairman Sorrell said the Robinson Sidewalks are moving along. Letters have been mailed asking residents to a yes or no vote on sidewalk installation on their streets. The PAC has been asked to help reaching out to residents who didn’t respond.

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Reports of Commissioners

Commissioner Strunk has noticed plantings in the right of way at intersections around Town that seem to be causing line of sight issues.

Commissioner Penna has noticed the VDOT speed humps on Tapawingo Road SW seem to be effectively slowing traffic speeds.

Commissioner Smith shared work has begun on the Old Courthouse Road NE sidewalk project.

Chairman Eachus welcomed new TSC Commissioner Joe Lowther.

Vice Chairman Sorrell suggested asking Council to approve an additional position at the Police Department dedicated to street safety.

Commissioner Ignatowski requested the Accident Map be updated since the last update was around 2010.

Commissioner Hartogs has noticed the pedestrian signage on Park Street SE at the Community Center is getting worn. The signs should be replaced with "Stop for Pedestrians" signage.

Report of the Chairman

NONE

Adjourn – 9:50pm