

## HIGHWAY COMMITTEE REPORT – MAY 8, 2023

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**Members:** Richard, Chairman; Martin, Vice Chairman; Musser, Member; Buohl, Alternate; Burkholder, Staff

**Attendees:** Committee: Martin, Vice Chairman; Musser, Member; Buohl, Alternate  
Council: Ressler  
Staff: Burkholder, Harris  
Guests: Steven Wissler

The Highway Committee met on April 24, 2023 at 5:30 PM at Ephrata Borough Hall, 124 South State Street.

### **Approval of Agenda:**

Mr. Burkholder provided confirmation of the following:

1. The meeting agenda was posted on the Borough's website and at Borough Hall no later than 24 hours in advance of the time of the meeting.
2. The meeting agenda included a listing of each matter of Borough business that will be or may be the subject of deliberation or official action at the meeting.
3. There were no changes made to the meeting agenda after it was posted.
4. The meeting agenda was made available to individuals in attendance at the meeting.

Committee Vice Chair Martin asked if there were any requests to add a matter of Borough business to the meeting agenda. Seeing none, Ms. Martin asked for a motion to accept the meeting agenda as posted. Mr. Musser moved, and Mr. Buohl seconded to approve the meeting agenda as posted. The motion carried unanimously.

### **Action Items:**

1. The Committee reviewed a staff request to authorize the purchase of a new street saw and two new blades. The 5-year fleet replacement plan includes \$55,000 in 2023 to replace a street saw. The Committee will recommend that Borough Council approve this purchase via Costars Contract #008-E23-1115 through Service Supply Corporation from Ephrata, PA for \$34,715 at their May 8, 2023, meeting.
2. The Committee reviewed a disposition of assets request for a 2009 Husqvarna Street Saw, Serial #001260790001, with 395 hours of use to be traded in towards the purchase of a new street saw. This equipment is in fair condition and is functional. This equipment has a trade-in value of \$6,000. The Committee will recommend that Borough Council approve this disposition of assets and authorize the President of Borough Council and Borough Secretary to execute Resolution #2023-15 at their May 8, 2023, meeting.
3. The Committee reviewed the results of Bid #23-2 for South Oak Street Bridge Repairs and Approach Improvements. Budget estimate for this project is \$125,000. The Committee will recommend that Borough Council award the bid to the apparent low bidder: Bertolet Construction, LLC from Wernersville, PA in their total bid amount of \$115,732 at their May 8, 2023, meeting.
4. The Committee reviewed an April 17, 2023, letter request from the Ephrata Pioneer Fire Company asking to close South State Street between West Franklin Street and Fulton Street on Tuesday, June 27, 2023, between the hours of 5:30 pm and 9:30 pm to conduct an open house. The Committee will recommend that Borough Council approve this street closure at their May 8, 2023, meeting.

**Discussion Items:**

1. The Committee reviewed the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2023 budget report for those activities under their purview and noted that snow and ice control numbers were lower than expected due to the mild winter months with little snow and ice. No other concerns currently.
2. The Committee discussed parking and traffic concerns on the Hummer Road approach to West Main Street in conjunction with two proposed land developments within the Lincoln Heights neighborhood. The Committee also heard from Lincoln Heights property owner Steven Wissler and was provided a copy of his summary of issues regarding his perceived traffic impacts of the proposed land developments within the Lincoln Heights neighborhood. Mr. Wissler's summary of issues is included in this report. Staff will solicit a Proposal from the Borough's traffic engineer to further study the Hummer Road approach to West Main Street and report back to Committee at their next scheduled May 22, 2023, meeting.

**Old Business Items:**

1. The Committee briefly discussed parking kiosks and was advised that Borough staff is working on putting together a capital project for 2024 to upgrade parking payment options in the CBD. Reducing the proposed number of parking kiosks is planned. Preliminary capital projects for 2024 will be due sometime in July 2023.

**Miscellaneous Items:**

1. None.

# TRAFFIC IMPACTS OF NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN THE LINCOLN-HEIGHTS NEIGHBORHOOD:

## A Summary of Issues

by Steven Wissler, 1322 Marie Ave., Ephrata PA

### Choke-point Problem—

Two new developments proposed for the Lincoln-Heights neighborhood--one of which will be the highest-occupant-density apartment building on Main Street/322 in Ephrata Borough--will significantly congest traffic at the Hummer Road/322 choke point.

- \* The Cause: The addition of 60+ cars (flowing from the 45-car parking area of the proposed 30-unit apartment building and the 36-car parking area of a proposed 24-unit townhouse development) cannot be serviced by the traffic light and lanes on Hummer Road. The added traffic flow will further tax the ability of the Market St/322 intersection to clear congestion.
- \* The Consequence: The additional traffic at this intersection will significantly compromise traffic flow at peak periods. The ensuing congestion will cause major backups and drivers re-routing through the neighborhood. Traffic will especially increase at morning school-commute time-periods on Marilyn Ave. and Lincoln Heights Ave.--on which a children's park is located.
- \* The Impacts: The resulting traffic increase through the Lincoln Heights neighborhood will compromise safety (esp. for bicycling kids and track teams who run on streets/sidewalks), dramatically change the neighborhood's character, and lower property values.

### Roadway Constraints:

- \* **Just 36 cars will fill to the congestion point the inclined 1,000-foot section of 322 from Hummer Road traffic light to Market Street traffic light** when cars share the roadway with just two tractor trailers and two pickup trucks.
  - \* Average length of tractor trailer is 70 feet
  - \* Average length of pickup trucks is 20 feet
  - \* Average length of car is 15 feet
  - \* Average spacing between vehicles for bumper visibility is 7 feet
- \* **Hummer Road is not wide enough to permit a left-turn lane** that complies with State design rules for suburban corridor roads (minimum 11-foot width per lane plus 8-foot shoulder = 41-foot width versus 36-foot width for Hummer Road)
- \* Market Street

### Traffic Volume and Congestion Periods—

- \* 14,000 vehicles = average daily volume of traffic on Main Street (322) within Ephrata Borough
  - \* 2,200 vehicles = average daily volume of traffic on Market Street (1024)
- (source:  
[https://gis.penndot.gov/BPR\\_PDF\\_FILES/MAPS/Traffic/Traffic\\_Volume/County\\_Maps/Lancaster\\_tv.pdf](https://gis.penndot.gov/BPR_PDF_FILES/MAPS/Traffic/Traffic_Volume/County_Maps/Lancaster_tv.pdf))
- \* Conducted in June, the Traffic Study counts 590 westbound vehicles on 322 at a.m. peak hour and 682 eastbound vehicles at p.m. peak hour accounts for 1,372 vehicles

over that two-hour period (pages 21 and 27 of Traffic Study). Assuming greatly reduced traffic in the 8 hours between 10 pm and 6 am, then at the count levels of the Traffic Study, EITHER the traffic would need to continue to flow at nearly peak volumes throughout the day to reach total the 14,000 average daily volume cited above—OR the Traffic Study undercounts traffic volume.

**\* Traffic flow during congestion conditions often encountered at this intersection is not represented in the Traffic Study.**

#### **Additional Limitations of Traffic Study done for Hummer Rd/322 apartment project—**

**\* The scope of the study doesn't account for additional traffic generated by the proposed 24-unit townhouse development** (source: page 3 of Traffic Impact Study)

**\* The study doesn't account for two-vehicle trips per household common in transit-isolated suburban sites**, nor for visitor and delivery traffic serving common in today's built environment (source: pages 14 and 19 of

<https://keunhyunpark.files.wordpress.com/2018/12/tian-et-al-2018-trip-and-parking-generation-rates-for-different-housing-types-effects-of-compact-development.pdf>)

**\* Given these oversights, the Traffic Study doesn't adequately account for the traffic increase—projecting just 9 more left-hand turns and 8 right-hand turns** based on 25 left- and 15-right turns in the study's 2022 existing peak a.m. conditions (Traffic Impact Study page 21) versus 36 left- and 23-right turns in the study's 2029 projected peak a.m. build conditions (page 27)

#### **Conclusions:**

Traffic flow from the proposed 30-unit apartment building and 24-unit townhouse development will tax the capacity of the Hummer Road/322 intersection to the breaking point at peak hours— and other time periods if visitor and delivery traffic is taken into account. Although 1,000 feet away from the Hummer Road/322 intersection, the Market Street/322 intersection constrains the capacity of 322 to clear east- and west-bound traffic (especially in winter conditions), which affects the entire Lincoln Heights neighborhood. Commuters will re-route down Lincoln Heights and Marilyn Avenues, making right and left-hand turns at Crescent and Blossom Aves./322-- affecting safety of children and families, changing the character of the neighborhood, and negatively impacting property values.

Instead of attempting to squeeze through by building first and thinking later about the Hummer Road/322 choke-point problem, Ephrata Borough Council, town planners, and developers can work with the neighborhood to consider such immediate and long-term options as:

\* Orienting size/traffic flow of the proposed Hummer Road apartment building in more manageable way in relation to 322 (restricting thru traffic on Lincoln Heights neighborhood streets while facilitating difficult left turns onto 322)

\* Adding bike lanes in the Lincoln Heights neighborhood to protect kids and adults against increased traffic

\* Creating a gated entry onto Market Street (using Galen Alley?) limited to residents of the proposed Sensenig town-house development

\* Upgrading the Market Street/322 intersection

Using this opportunity for more thoughtful planning rather than piecemeal decision-making will achieve the goals of improving not only our borough's image, but also our traffic "gateways."