

## HIGHWAY COMMITTEE REPORT – OCTOBER 11, 2021

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**Members:** Richard, Chair; Martin, Vice Chair; Zimmerman, Member; Dudley, Alternate; Burkholder, Staff

**Attendees:** Richard, Chair; Martin, Vice Chair; Zimmerman, Member; Dudley, Alternate; Rowe, Council President; Reinhold, Council Vice President; Ressler, Council Member; Mowen, Mayor; Petrick, Police Chief; Harris, Municipal Services Manager; Burkholder, Staff; Visitors: Thomas Leh, Theresa Caruthers, and Rebecca Beres

The Highway Committee met on September 20, 2021 and discussed the following:

### Action Items:

1. The Committee reviewed an Ordinance to amend the Code of the Borough of Ephrata, Chapter 305, Vehicles and Traffic, Section 305-100, Schedule XVII: Parking Prohibited at all Times by adding thereto a certain section of the west side of Railroad Avenue. The Committee will recommend that Borough Council enact Ordinance No. 1563 at their October 11, 2021 meeting.
2. The Committee reviewed an unbudgeted expenditure request to fast-track the purchase of a new dump truck to replace existing truck #69 which is a smaller 2012 Ford F-350 with dump bed and snow plow suitable for navigating narrow alleys but not adequately equipped to handle full loads of salt needed to de-ice the alleys. Truck #69 was slated for replacement with a heavier-duty truck in the 2023 mobile equipment fund 5-year plan but is being moved up so existing truck #69 can replace an existing Parks and Rec dump truck which will not pass state inspection due to a badly rusted frame. The plan is to transfer title to existing truck #69 to the Ephrata Borough Authority who may then choose to donate the vehicle to the Ephrata Recreation Center. A disposition of assets form for existing truck #69 will be provided in the future for Committee review. Whitmoyer Auto Group has provided a COSTARS quote for a 2022 Ford F-350, 4X4, with a standard cab and aluminum dump truck bed, increased engine horsepower, and improved load and towing capacity for \$75,150 including \$3,000 in up-fitting costs by Borough staff. The mobile equipment fund in 2021 included purchasing an electric vehicle which will not be purchased this year. Remaining mobile equipment funds in 2021 are \$49,492. The Committee will recommend that Borough Council authorize an unbudgeted expenditure of \$28,658 from the unallocated balance of the mobile equipment fund (#40-47-440-7420) and approve the purchase of a new 2022 Ford F-350, 4X4, with standard cab and aluminum dump truck bed with up-fitting for \$78,150 at their October 11, 2021 meeting.
3. The Committee further reviewed signage and parking space availability simplification at the Locust Street parking lot. Borough staff will provide two (2) sign mockups, one for reserved parking Monday – Friday 8 AM – 5 PM and one for public parking (blue sign with a blue “P” in a white circle) for review at the October 4, 2021 Council Work Session. The Committee was advised that the Borough Solicitor recommends we don’t modify the existing agreement but wait for the current easement agreement with Ephrata National Bank and Laundromat owner to expire and, if so desired, look at entering into another agreement. Committee Vice Chair Martin also inquired about the Fulton Street at Railroad Avenue parking lot overflow parking directional signage and was advised by Municipal Services Manager Harris that Public Works is working on that signage and it should be installed in the near future. The Committee will recommend that Borough Council approve the additional signage for installation at the Locust Street parking lot at their October 11, 2021 meeting.

4. The Committee reviewed a September 8, 2021 letter request from Kelly Withum, Executive Director for Mainspring of Ephrata to close Railroad Avenue on Thursday, November 11, 2021 from 3:00 PM to 9:00 PM to hang a flag, aurally, across the Major Winters Memorial Trail and to accommodate no more than two (2) food trucks to park and serve during the Veteran's Day event. The requisite certificate of insurance has been provided and an incident plan will be completed with Borough EMC Randy Gockley. The Committee will recommend that Borough Council approve this request as part of the consent agenda at their October 11, 2021 meeting.

**Discussion Items:**

1. The Committee discussed citizen safety concerns regarding a lack of sidewalk along Parkview Heights Road adjacent to 150 Heatherwood Drive. The concern is that some school students must walk through wet grass or on the street to get to the school bus stop at the Parkview Heights Road and Ashley Drive intersection. It was noted that there are alternate walking routes to the bus stop within the Heatherwood Heights development. This condition has existed since 1994 when the final phase of Heatherwood Heights was constructed. It is not known why sidewalk was not installed along Parkview Heights Road as part of the final phase of construction so the Committee directed staff to research if any deferral agreements existed for sidewalk through this area and to contact the Transportation Coordinator with the Ephrata Area School District to inquire about adding a bus stop along Parkview Heights Road adjacent to the Heatherwood Drive cul-de-sac and report to Committee at their October 25, 2021 meeting.
2. The Committee further discussed tree removal liability adjacent to 203 Park Avenue. Staff advised the Committee that Borough Council meeting minutes from 1970 and 1971 were researched and no mention of trees planted anywhere within the Borough was found during that timeframe. Staff discussed this issue with the Borough Solicitor who indicated that nothing obligates the Borough to maintain the trees at 203 Park Avenue and that this issue is simply word of mouth from one citizen to another. Municipal Services Manager Harris added that the Borough is responsible for street trees along Main Street from Spring Garden Street west to the Cocalico Creek and specified that no precedent has been established to maintain trees outside of that defined area along Main Street. It was noted that a shade tree permit was issued in 2018 to trim trees in front of 203 Park Avenue suggesting that the property owner was maintaining the trees. The current property owner purchased the property at 203 Park Avenue in 1990 and believes that the trees were planted sometime between 1969 and 1972. Citing a lack of documentation demonstrating the Borough is responsible for maintaining the trees at 203 Park Avenue the Committee denied the property owner's request for cost-sharing to remove the trees and replace tree damaged curb and sidewalk prior to a planned street improvement project. No further action required at this time.
3. The Committee reviewed the Steinmetz Road Motor Vehicle Accident (MVA) report for the time period between January 1, 2010 and August 29, 2021 noting that there have been 2 MVA's directly adjacent to 1140 Steinmetz Road during that time. The Committee heard from Theresa Caruthers regarding her concerns about motor vehicles speeding in this area and noted that recent speed checks along this segment of Steinmetz Road did not reveal that speeding is occurring based on the posted speed limit of 35 mph. Clear sight distance exists around the curve in this area. Additional warning and/or advisory signage is not necessary and would only serve to generate sign pollution through the area. Stating that existing conditions do not warrant any modifications at this time the Committee agreed no further action is required.

4. The Committee reviewed citizen traffic concerns regarding clear sight distance at the Spruce Alley approach to West Chestnut Street and motor vehicle speeding in Spruce Alley. Clear sight distance is occasionally obstructed depending on time of day which is no different than most intersections within the Borough. Speed data collected for Spruce Alley revealed an average speed of 9.4 mph over one week of data collection with one (1) vehicle traveling between 21-25 mph. Stating that existing conditions do not warrant any modifications at this time the Committee agreed no further action is required.
5. The Committee revisited Apple Street truck traffic concerns and reviewed a discussion item from the June 14, 2021 Highway Committee report where the Committee directed staff and the Ephrata police to continue to monitor truck traffic in this area and follow up with the primary complainants by the end of this year. The Committee discussed the new driveway location for Garden Spot Auto Auction (GSAA) being close to Springville Road and that GSAA encourages all traffic to use Hackman Road. Staff will follow up with Lt. Chris McKim with the Ephrata Police and continue discussions at the October 25, 2021 Committee meeting.
6. The Committee discussed resident traffic concerns regarding speeding in the Heatherwood Heights development and reviewed speed and volume data for vehicle traffic on Ashley drive and Heatherwood Drive. Average speed of all motor vehicles on Ashley Drive was 17.6 mph and on Heatherwood Drive the average speed for all motor vehicles was 12.6 mph. Ephrata Borough Ordinance states that the speed limit within the Borough is 35 mph unless otherwise posted. There is no speed limit posted on Ashley Drive or Heatherwood Drive. Children at play signs are discouraged in the Borough since it is believed that those signs actually encourage children to play in the street. Chief Petrick states that typically the residents within a street or development are the primary violators of traffic regulations. Mayor Mowen encourages all residents to contact their legislators regarding the use of radar by local police. Statistics and data collected regarding vehicle speeds on Ashley Drive and Heatherwood Drive shows that there is not a motor vehicle speeding issue at this time and the Committee agrees that no further action is required.

**Old Business Items:**

1. Old Business was not discussed due to meeting time constraints but Borough staff continues attempts at communicating with PennDOT regarding the South Oak Street bridge pedestrian railing/vehicle barrier with regards to PennDOT's plans for replacing similar barrier on their West Main Street (SR 0322) over Cocalico Creek Bridge. Staff will contact the consultant performing the November bridge inspection to discuss concerns regarding the pedestrian railing/vehicle barrier.