

**STREETS AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
CITY OF REHOBOTH BEACH**

March 18, 2011

The Streets and Transportation Committee Meeting of the City of Rehoboth Beach was called to order at 2:02 p.m. by Co-Chair Pat Coluzzi on Friday, March 18, 2011 in the Commissioners Room in City Hall, 229 Rehoboth Avenue, Rehoboth Beach, DE.

ROLL CALL

Present: Co-Chair Pat Coluzzi, Co-Chair Dennis Barbour (arrived at 2:10 p.m.), Cindy Lovett (left at 3:02 p.m.), Lorraine Zellers, John Gauger, Dennis Diehl

Absent: Kathy Osterholm, Jim Ellison

Audience: Walter Brittingham, Rick Eisenman, Hoyte Decker, Ellen Marcus, David Hastings of Jolly Trolley

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Lorraine Zellers made a motion, seconded by Cindy Lovett, to approve the Agenda as amended with the deletion of the March 1, 2011 Meeting Minutes. Motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes of the March 1, 2011 Streets and Transportation Committee Meeting were not available for approval.

CORRESPONDENCE

There was none.

Discussion of State grant regarding pedestrian and bicycle planning.

Pat Coluzzi reported that the State grant has been signed. A formal RFP is required for consulting services in the amount of \$50,000 or above. Initially, a vendor assisted in writing the proposal, and this vendor was proposed as a member of the team. Pat is waiting for a response as to whether a RFP is needed. A copy of the scope of work for pedestrian/bicycle planning will be forwarded to the Committee members.

Update on signs on Columbia Avenue.

Pat reported that a vote will be taken at the Board of Commissioners Meeting tonight regarding two electronic speed signs, one to be located at each end of Columbia Avenue, and additional signage. The Committee's recommendation will be read as part of the record. The vendors who produce the signs will probably have thoughts on the placement of the signs.

Dennis Diehl noted that certain signage poles which belong to the State cannot be altered but the additional signage can be put on other signage poles which belong to the City. An existing speed limit sign located behind a tree will need to be moved.

Cindy Lovett suggested the possibility of Complete Streets offering a creative way to get people to slow down other than to put up a sign that says to slow down. Another suggestion was a type of flag to be used to say slow down other than an official sign or painting something in the middle of the street. She also suggested the possibility of changing the appearance of Columbia Avenue to make it look like a lane or country road with trees planted along it so it does not look so much like a highway.

Lorraine Zellers suggested using traffic calming devices such as rumble strips, etc. when entering either side of the circle.

Pat's idea was to put in rumble strips on Rehoboth Avenue when approaching the circle from the east and possibly from the west, but this idea has been temporarily tabled until the bicycle/pedestrian master plan has been established. A grant has been received to plant 150 trees, and the contract will be awarded at the Board of Commissioners Meeting tonight. The company that will be awarded the contract could possibly come to talk with the Committee about other locations for trees to be planted. Initially, the proposal for the State grant included a complete street policy. The scope of work for the pedestrian/bicycle master plan includes interviewing. Included in the background documents will be the referencing of a DelDOT bicycle plan, Executive Order from the Governor

about walking and bicycling, turn off highway policies and elements of a pedestrian/bicycle master plan, State's Complete Streets policy, DelDOT pedestrian action plan, etc.

Dennis Barbour noted that part of the speed issue is that the police need to be stricter in enforcing the speed limits particularly on certain streets in residential areas. Instead of giving a warning, a ticket should be issued. At the last Board of Commissioners Workshop Meeting, it was discussed that the solar powered speed indicating signs would be placed one at each end of Columbia Avenue, and the yellow signs on either side of the road indicating to slow down it is a residential area would be placed going east on Columbia Avenue.

Update and discussion of alterations on traffic circle.

Marcus Richardson and Rick Lawson of Sposato were in attendance at the meeting and presented proposed plans regarding modifications to help with sight lines at the traffic circle. In regard to previously stated recommendations from the Committee, Sposato agreed with making the intersection safer for pedestrians as well as vehicular traffic and making modifications to the plantings first; and subsequently seeing what effects there are and if it is necessary to make changes to the wall surrounding the lighthouse. Sposato had done its own unofficial analysis of the intersection. The first proposed plan showed the pedestrian use of the space and basically confirmed that when a pedestrian is crossing Rehoboth Avenue at the circle, the inhibited view is based on plant material which can impede vision by approximately 10 to 20 feet depending on what direction a person is coming from. Greater visibility is gained by lowering the height of the annuals that surround the outer wall of the lighthouse such as removing the rose bushes and planting wave petunias. Sposato's recommendation was to make changes to the plantings on the outer edge of the circle. When the dune grasses are in full height with plumes attached, the height at the wall is actually doubled causing a greater obstruction; and nothing will be able to be seen when coming around the circle. Another recommendation was to possibly remove the dune grass to increase visibility over the wall. The wall itself is not creating a great obstruction; but approximately 30 to 40 feet of visibility would be gained by removing the wall and cutting the planting bed back 10 to 15 feet before increasing the grade. Removing the roses and using a flatter plane with annuals will increase visibility in both the perspective of the person in a vehicle seeing a pedestrian and a pedestrian seeing a vehicle. There are a lot ways to make the intersection safer such as additional signage, etc. From the sight lines of vehicular traffic, there were some obstructions which gave caution to a vehicle being able to see pedestrians in time to react when they are coming out of the crosswalk. Plant obstruction is an issue in the beds leading up to the circle.

When Cindy first introduced this subject, she was hoping what would be done first is to remove the rose bushes, and then revisit it in a year and see what would need to be done with the wall. She would hate to incur the expense of removing the wall if it does not need to be done. Marcus said that Sposato agreed with that process of action.

Dennis Barbour thought that there might be too many signs. If there would be fewer signs, it would have more impact. One of the flaws of streetscape is that it was designed primarily with cars in mind.

Walter Brittingham, 123 Henlopen Avenue, noted that speed is the problem at the circle, not the plantings. He suggested that speed should be controlled. At the Royal Farms parking lot at night, there is not enough lighting when going around the circle; the trees are too big; and people cannot be seen who are standing at the crosswalk. People need to know that pedestrians have the right-of-way.

Pat said that there are possible speed issues and this is a separate problem. Signs may be relocated in the future.

Rick Eisenman said that the yield signs are set too high. The color of the sign is red, and the sign below it is black. People think they are directional signs. They do not see the yield signs and do not have time to react to both signs. Lowering the sign and making it the same color as done in Georgetown, DE will alleviate some of the problem.

Marcus looked at whether the plantings in the northwest corner of the traffic circle add to the visibility problems of pedestrians when they are crossing in that space. One of the potential ways of calming is to remove everything in the bed and use annuals or change the area to turf. Maintenance can be eliminated by removing a lot of the plants. Names of various plants will be forwarded to the Committee for its review. The other place where there are visibility problems is immediately to the left when exiting the City. It was suggested to remove one holly tree and two bushes in the median to narrow the plant buffer and take away the visibility obstruction. Another suggestion was to remove two trees at the northeast corner where the Royal Farms parking lot is located to improve visibility. Marcus has looked at the City's blueprints of the construction of the wall and the lighthouse to see what would be entailed with modifying the space. An estimate of approximately \$2,000.00 to remove the outer wall around the

lighthouse which would include hauling materials away, etc. has been prepared. It was also suggested that for an additional cost, consideration should be given to redoing or modifying the irrigation system at some point by adding three zones to the space. Currently there are two zones which work independently of each other but they are designed to water lawn area. Marcus suggested that one zone be put in for plant beds and a second zone for upper and lower terrace lawn areas; or if the wall would be removed, have two separate zones for lawn on the east and west side. No formal proposal was given to the Committee for removal of the wall and putting in boulders, flowers, etc. Sposato's recommendation was based on the analysis of looking at the traffic circle to see if there is a need to remove the wall. Marcus had spoken with the engineers at JMT regarding the traffic circle, and they have said that lighthouse is more of a monument type arrangement and presentation. If the additional slope and outer wall would be taken out, it would not weaken the foundation of the lighthouse. There are a lot of utilities which run through that space such as the irrigation system for the adjacent medians, electrical, etc.

Dennis Diehl would like to see cost estimates in regard to the concepts with the wall remaining and the wall being removed. He did not think that the 15 inch wall is a safety issue. Cindy agreed. Marcus will forward proposals to Pat next week.

Hoyte Decker, Laurel Street, was opposed to any changes that the Committee would be making in regard to taking down the wall. This is an aesthetics issue, and the Committee has no valid evidence to suggest there are sight line problems. Changing the greenery and landscaping would be fine. This is a monument and is an achievement that is part and parcel of streetscape. It is a design that was well thought out and should remain.

Ellen Marcus, Sussex Street, voiced concern that the northeast corner of the circle is the most dangerous part of the circle.

David Hastings of Jolly Trolley, thought that the engineers got the engineering correct from a transportation perspective. The circle itself is a monument, and the height of the wall is not the issue. Speed is the issue. He suggested the use of a low impact speed bump at least eastbound and a slightly higher impact speed bump on the north and south sides. Speed bumps would be the easiest solution from a practical standpoint or having the police sit with radar guns.

Walter Brittingham suggested keeping the yield signs at the circle and putting radar signs on Rehoboth Avenue to slow people down before they get to the circle. The proposed signs for Columbia Avenue should be put a third of the way down the street after the vehicle have picked up speed. He thought the signs could be gotten free from the Federal Department of Highway Safety and the State. The traffic accident report is also needed.

Other remarks from members and the public.

John Gauger recommended that the signs at the crosswalks be placed on the next agenda.

Dennis Diehl suggested that the crosswalk issues and the pedestrian/bicycle master plan be discussed at the next meeting.

Set next meeting.

The next meeting has been scheduled for March 28, 2011 at 10:00 a.m.

There being no further business, John Gauger made a motion, seconded by Lorraine Zellers to adjourn the meeting at 3:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

(Ann M. Womack, City Secretary)

**MINUTES APPROVED ON
MAY 2, 2011**

(Dennis Barbour, Co-Chair)

(Pat Coluzzi, Co-Chair)