

SPECIAL MEETING - HILLTOWN PIKE

April 5, 1984

The meeting was called to order by Chairman, Vincent Pischl at 8:05 P.M. In attendance were: Rep. Benjamin Wilson; Rep. Paul Clymer; Stephen Lester and John Hendricks of PennDOT; Supervisors Mary Lockard and Robert H. Grunmeier; Township Coordinator, Robert Wynn; Police Chief, George Egly; and Secretary, Gloria Neiman.

Purpose of this meeting is to discuss traffic hazards on Hilltown Pike (L.R. 0919). The following testimony was offered:

Carl Wagoner (a property owner on the curve of Hilltown Pike) stated that speed and marking of lines on the road are the two main factors causing accidents. John Hendricks (PennDOT) indicated that he would have this investigated.

Eleanor Hunnemann (also resides on Hilltown Pike) said that her fence is knocked down when cars go through the intersection and into her yard; cars turning into Diamond Street are hit from behind.

Carl Hoppe (property owner on corner of Diamond Street) stated that he believes the speed limit is too high for the condition and type of road. Mr. Hendricks replied that the Township has had this investigated several times by PennDOT, and there has been no justification for lowering the speed limit in that zone. He indicated that a sample is taken of speeds cars actually travel and this is averaged to a safe speed which most of the motorists observe (85th percentile) - this has been determined to be 50 m.p.h. The last survey was taken in September 1983. Mr. Hoppe remarked that other roads empty onto that road and that it is not a straight-away.

Chief Egly conducted a survey of speeds traveled on Hilltown Pike on Saturday, March 31st and Monday, April 2nd. The findings were as follows:

Saturday - Cedar Hill Drive - between 7:00 & 8:00 a.m.:
average speed - 36.8 mph; high speed - 42.9 mph; low speed - 28.4 mph
Monday - Cedar Hill Drive:
average speed - 37 mph; high speed - 48.4 mph; low - 28.3 mph
Saturday - at cinder pile - early morning:
average speed - 55.4 mph; high speed - 61.7 mph; low - 46.3 mph
Saturday - same location - afternoon:
average speed - 51.2 mph; high speed - 59.9 mph; low - 37.8 mph
Monday - same location:
average speed - 54.1 mph; high speed - 68.2 mph; low - 46.4 mph
Total averages: 36.8 mph - Cedar Hill
53.8 mph - Cinder pile (south of Green St. -
straight-away)

Mr. Lester indicated that PennDOT will conduct more comprehensive speed studies. However, he stated that many people do not realize the sharpness of the curve and changing the speed limit will not necessarily solve the problem, since only 10% of motorists are speeders.

Mr. Wagoner stated that the 25 mph limit is only a suggested speed and asked if this could be enforced by the Police Department. Mr. Lester replied that they are advisory signs for only a short stretch of road -- motorists react better to advisory signs and suggested speed limits.

Paul Maynard read a letter from the Hilltown Civic Association stating their recommendations and steps to be taken for improvement of traffic conditions on Hilltown Pike. Copies of this letter were given to Rep. Wilson, Rep. Clymer, and representatives of PennDOT (a copy of same is attached to these minutes). Mr. Maynard also presented a petition signed by more than 200 residents requesting PennDOT to lower the speed limit to a maximum of 40 mph on Hilltown Pike from Line Lexington to Blooming Glen Road. After assuring the residents that all items on the list would be evaluated, Mr. Lester explained that traffic engineering studies are performed by his office staff with speed evaluations taken in off-peak hours when there is freedom of the road.

A resident of Telegraph Road, Bill Schmidt, remarked that speed limits will not stop speeders and he considers the present speed limit to be satisfactory. Mrs. Garwood Haines (who lives at the bridge) stated that she has seen cars "hop" over the bridge.

Diana Urban, who resides below Swartley Road on Hilltown Pike, voiced her concern regarding visibility when traveling up Hilltown Pike (over crest of hill) -- there are no signs indicating a driveway and no warning that motorists are entering a small town (Line Lexington). Mr. Wagoner remarked that water running across Hilltown Pike is an additional hazard. Mr. Lester indicated that a grate type of drain could be installed to enable water to go into the ditch. He also noted that road vegetation blocks sight distance of cars coming over the hill and that PennDOT will look into this when conducting their study. Mr. Wagoner, who owns the property with vegetation, stated that he would have it removed if it will aid sight distance; but that there should also be a shoulder constructed to give room to motorists.

In considering other alternatives of speed reduction, Mr. Lester stated that rumble strips would have a purpose in certain locations, however, when used in residential areas, neighbors usually complain of noise. He also stated that bumps would be hazardous and would not be used; but a stone mix (pattern of roughness on the road) may be an acceptable alternative.

Alfred Crawford voiced his concern for children traveling the road on bicycles (above Route 152).

John Snyder, President of Line Lexington Fire Company, presented a report stating the Fire Company's observations of causes of accidents and recommendations to improve conditions. A copy of this report is attached to these minutes.

Two residents, Bill Hersh and Margaret McCarthy, requested that speed be enforced on Hilltown Pike. Chief Egly replied that only 2 or 3 tickets have been given at that location when patrolled with unmarked cars.

Mr. Crawford indicated that cars often go through the stop sign at Upper Church Road; there is no shoulder and cars go into the ditch.

Mrs. Hunnemann stated that she also has a problem with water draining and gravel entering her yard. Mr. Lester will refer this problem to Mr. Taylor of PennDOT Maintenance Department. She also remarked that large trucks push over the stop sign at the bottom of the road.

George Dowiak remarked that there are two driveways which enter onto Hilltown Pike and asked if something could be done. Since driveways must conform to PennDOT standards, Mr. Lester said that this would be investigated.

A log of accidents occurring on Hilltown Pike (from 1962 to 1983) was kept by Mrs. Dowiak - a copy of same was given to Rep. Wilson and PennDOT officials for their review.

In reply to several residents concern over signs which were knocked down, Mr. Lester advised that PennDOT now uses break-away signs in order to reduce injuries in accidents.

Mrs. Dowiak and Mr. Crawford stated their concern over the road patching work (with special emphasis between Callowhill Road and Hilltown Pike), stating that old patch was thrown in the ditch. The PennDOT Maintenance Department will also be advised of this problem.

At this time, Chief Egly read a report compiling accident reports on Hilltown Pike over a 3 year time period.

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In answer to Supervisor, Mary Lockard's question regarding the best way to motivate motorists to slow down, Mr. Lester replied that enforcement and getting speeders off the road are the two most important factors (with signs and flashing lights only of value to commuters).

At this time it was announced that another meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 16, 1984 at 8:00 P.M.; PennDot officials will then reveal findings of their study.

Respectfully submitted,



Gloria Neiman
Secretary