

ATHENS TOWNSHIP SUPERVISORS
April 28, 2011 Special Meeting 1:15 PM

Chairman Ronald Reagan called the meeting to order at 1:15 PM. Supervisors also present were Jack Walter, Maurice Fay, Cheryl Wood-Walter and Robin Smith.

Ron introduced Jason Krise of Tina Pickett's office and Arnie Kriner of Senator Yaw's office, as well as the following attendees from PENNDOT: District 3 Executive Engineer, Sandra Tosca; 12-Year Program/Smart Transportation/Bridge Program Engineer, Mike Mausteller; Traffic Unit Supervisor, Alan Keller, PE; Traffic Unit Studies & Work Zones Engineer, Bill Houpt; and Bradford County Maintenance Office Supervisor, Bob Thorne.

Ron turned the meeting over to Cheryl. Cheryl said she asked for this meeting a couple months ago with Arnie. She expressed our frustration with not being able to do anything unless the Commonwealth approves. We have to answer to our residents and we can't because it's not our road. We feel frustrated. There is increased gas traffic now, but this intersection has always been a problem. Cheryl remembers circulating a petition about the Wolcott Hollow/220 intersection 16 years ago – with no results. She said Hickory Heights is a fine housing development, but wouldn't buy a house there because of this problem. School buses, high school drivers are added traffic. There are times when you can go, but it's very rare. Cheryl said Maurice told her he sat there 17 minutes waiting to get out onto 220 one day. Cheryl said it can take 7-8 minutes to get to the stop sign, and that doesn't count the wait to pull out.

She has traveled a lot. Cities have millions of people. We have just a fraction of that amount and this area seems very urban. There is a real safety factor here. Just sit and watch. People take chances when they pull out. An added problem is the expansion of the Dandy Mini Mart on that corner. Will all due respect, PENNDOT says it's all OK. We used to have people cutting through just to turn right – now they pull in to turn left as well. This cuts off people at the stop sign.

This frustration needs to be addressed. She doesn't know if a traffic signal is the answer. One day a tractor trailer with a large load couldn't turn onto Wolcott Hollow Road because the traffic was in the way at the stop sign. This caused a real back-up of traffic in all directions. You can see by the number of people in attendance at this mid-afternoon meeting on a weekday that this is a very big concern to our residents. Just one day's notice in the media brought these people out. We need this to be pushed to the forefront. We have faced this way before the gas industry appeared.

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Cheryl held up the folders of accidents, traffic citations and MVAs that have occurred in this area in the last 3 months. This is a busy area. We need to get this addressed.

Sandy Tosca said PENNDOT recognizes there are gas industry related traffic pattern changes. Traffic counts can change every 6 months. The traffic counts need to be updated. They are trying to formulate projects that can correct things. She has recognized the letters that we have sent. They are here today to listen to what we are seeing. Truck traffic does have an impact. After they compile the information and do the traffic counts, they will come back and discuss what they've found. There will be a meeting on July 13th to discuss projects for the 12-year program. Brian Baker of NTRPDC will be testifying at the TIP hearing on September 15th in Stroudsburg. We can make the public aware that they can submit written testimony for this hearing and coordinate it through Brian.

Bill Cotton of Cotton's Concrete said until the traffic counts and the hearing are done, we won't know anything? Sandy said they will come back after the traffic counts are done. Bill asked how long it will be before something is done, once the data is compiled. Sandy said it would probably be 1-1/2 to 2 years as long as no environmental issues are found.

Robin asked that they do the traffic counts while school is in session, and also include a Monday when the stockyard is open. The last day of school is June 15th, and Sandy said they will do the traffic counts the last week in May or the first week in June. Ron added that Wolcott Hollow to Erin Road is a shortcut to the SRU school and there is a lot of school traffic through there.

Maurice said we asked that the 40 mph at 199 be taken back further north, and instead, they moved it ahead 150 yards. The speed limit needs to be reduced before you get to 199. People need to be slowed down.

Sandy said people drive the speed at which they're comfortable. She added the 40 mph speed limit got moved down because of an old speed study. Bill Houpt said they can't reduce it just because they want to. Maurice added that the State Police can use radar, but we can only use VASCAR.

Ron said it's hard to judge the speeds when you're trying to pull out of 199. It's 45 mph heading north and 55 mph heading south.

Vivian Chisari of Erin Road said she was going to a doctor appointment on August 26th. She said her heart almost stopped when this girl pulled out in front of her from 199. They hit so hard the girl's car spun around. She and her husband have pain and injuries that will never be gone. Their bill is \$16,000 – the girl was under-insured. They came and spoke to Robin and sent a letter to PENNDOT. PENNDOT answered and sent a copy to the township. The girl testified in the courtroom that no one was coming from the south. She had a 3-month-old baby in the car. She pulled out because “she waited 10 minutes already”. Vivian doesn't think this will be resolved without a traffic light or with cameras. This accident totally altered their lives.

Cheryl said when you travel through congested areas and there's a long traffic light, you have patience because you know you'll get your chance. The frustration here is very high.

Vivian said ever since her accident, 199 puts fear in her. It is VITAL to save our people in this area.

Jim Lister of Hickory Heights said he appreciates PENNDOT coming up today. He said this is not rocket science – spend 2 hours watching the traffic and you'll see. He said another problem is people making a right turn off 220 going south – are they turning onto Wolcott Hollow Road or into the Dandy Mini Mart? We need a fix there very quickly. How many people need to be hurt or killed before something is done?

Rita Jo Swingle of Abbey Lane said 2 years is unacceptable. She said one year ago on 3/23/2010 and 4/27/2010 the Athens Township Zoning Hearing Board, of which she is a member, met to hear the Randy Williams expansion proposal. The subject of the traffic at Wolcott Hollow/220/199 came up and was so severe that it took two hearings and 6 hours of testimony! She said the PENNDOT 2004 traffic study stated the volume of traffic had increased. The study was done because of a fatal accident. Traffic has dramatically increased. She stated several ideas/recommendations from the 2004 traffic study – none of which have been done. She also referred to a letter from Athens Township Police Chief, Larry Hurley, that stated he feels the expansion of the Dandy would increase the traffic problems in that area to a dangerous level.

Karen Coots of Hickory Heights said she's lived there for 8 years and the traffic has increased 10-fold – it has easily doubled in the last 2 years. These problems existed long before the gas companies arrived. She has a teenager who is going to start to drive and she is extremely concerned. People pull out in frustration.

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Her biggest concern is that the truck traffic will be taken into consideration. It's not about the truck traffic. It's about the increased traffic. With the proposed influx of people it will double or triple. This has been a concern for years. The fatality was before the gas companies arrived. There have been life-impacting injuries, like the Chisaris. There was a school bus accident. This is a 4-way intersection. How did Ulster get approved for a traffic signal on a 3-way intersection in a 30 mph zone?? It doesn't make sense.

Dan Stark of Clinton Street asked how long did PENNDOT know about the meeting – shouldn't they have had a study done already? Sandy said they can't lay the traffic cables until they are sure there will be no more plowing.

Cheryl said people are pulling out because of frustration. There are a lot of teen drivers. One told her she was tired of waiting for people at the stop sign. She said 'if you just pull out, those people coming down 220 will see you and they'll stop'. They are immature and inexperienced drivers.

Bob Smith of Pump Station Hill Road asked that when they do the traffic study on 220/199/Wolcott Hollow, they also need to do one on Elmira Street. Sandy said she recognizes there is a greater need for traffic studies. They need information from planning groups, etc. to help them with their evaluation. Bob said before a course of remediation is decided, they need to come and sit there and watch the traffic. He said the other day someone was actually parked in the driveway entrance of the Dandy.

Vivian Chisari added that the shrubs at the corner block sight distance, and trucks parking on the shoulder do as well.

Rita Jo Swingle said the Zoning Hearing Board made recommendations to Randy Williams, but they were not implemented.

Don Johnson was concerned about the trucks in and out of Hawbakers (former Cole's Construction) on 220 – they've made that operation 2-3 times larger.

Ron said we're lucky that we're getting the 'clean' end of Chesapeake – the headquarters, housing facility, etc. Rita Jo said in East Athens there are 3 drilling right behind her house.

Ron said we don't want to become a 'Wysox'. He sympathizes with PENNDOT having to resolve that.

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Roman Rosh of Roman Way, South Waverly, said he appreciates PENNDOT, Arnie and Jason being here today. He said they should look at picking up the litter along the highways. PENNDOT should also look at access management and gave some examples of changes he feels could be made to address his concerns.

Ron thanked PENNDOT, Arnie Kriner, Jason Krise and the residents for coming.

The bid award for pipe had been postponed until this meeting so we could clarify an issue with Ray Brobst. The bids were as follows:

Ferguson Waterworks	\$24,010.30
Bradco Supply Company	\$24,119.15
Chemung Supply Corp.	\$25,752.51

On motion of Jack, second by Robin, it was unanimous to award the pipe bid to Ferguson Waterworks.

There being no further business, on motion of Robin, second by Ron, it was unanimous to adjourn the meeting at 2:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin L. Smith
Secretary