

**Pennington Borough Council  
East Welling Resident Meeting – August 23, 2021**

Mayor Davy called the Meeting to order at 7:01 pm. Mayor Davy announced that this meeting is to discuss improvements to East Welling Avenue and because of the possibility of a quorum of Council the meeting has been advertised according to the regulations of the Open Public Meetings Act. Mayor Davy stated that residents of East Welling Avenue were invited to attend this meeting. Mayor Davy stated that there were a number of residents in attendance and he would give everyone the opportunity to speak but first he was going to ask Borough Engineer, Brandon Fetzer to describe the proposed project and plans. Mayor Davy stated that the Borough is on a tight time line because the plans have to be submitted to the Department of Transportation for approval. Mayor Davy stated that once the plans are approved the Borough will put the project out to bid and award the project later this year so that the work can commence in the spring of 2022.

Mayor Davy stated that this project is a basic mill and resurface project with a couple of other design considerations that will be presented. Mayor Davy turned the meeting over to Borough Engineer, Brandon Fetzer.

Mr. Fetzer stated that the base project is a mill and overlay of the road from Main Street and running the project all the way to the border of Hopewell Township. Mr. Fetzer stated that projects includes new curbing and driveway aprons at the base of every driveway and some regrading of the road. Mr. Fetzer stated that there will be some inconvenience when the driveway aprons and the actual paving are done but it will all be coordinated with the contractor. Mr. Fetzer stated that at the intersection of Baldwin the Borough is proposing a new crosswalk and a new sidewalk along Baldwin Boulevard. Mr. Fetzer stated that in order to get the driveway apron completed at Baldwin Boulevard there is an elm tree that will be removed and replaced with a new tree. Mr. Fetzer stated that the limits of the project extend to the Borough right of way ending at the border of Hopewell Township.

Mayor Davy stated that some residents' concerns were discussed as add alternates to the project if they fit within the budget. Mr. Fetzer stated that the first part of the add alternate would be to decrease the width of the intersection down to a 24 to 30 foot cartway from the 40 foot cartway that it is today. Mr. Fetzer stated that this should have no impact other than eliminating some parking. Mr. Fetzer stated that this is a traffic calming feature to reduce speed by shortening the width. Mr. Fetzer explained the road is still passable for two cars, but the shorter width causes people to slow down.

Mr. Fetzer stated that the next thing that was considered would be a 3 to 4 inch speed table which could be installed even if the width is not changed. Mr. Fetzer stated that it would be placed far enough from the intersection for safety and would not impact any driveways.

Mr. Fetzer stated that the Borough is also considering new sidewalk to extend the length of the Borough right-of-way but there are a couple of large trees that would have to be removed.

Mr. Marciante stated that he has concerns with bump outs which cause problems for public works when they are plowing. Mr. Marciante asked if they really help with speeding. Mr. Fetzer stated that they are supposed to reduce speeding but he can't say for certain that it will reduce speed. Mr. Fetzer stated that painted street improvements could be put in to see if it works and then do a separate project to install them. Mr. Marciante asked if another speed table would help. Mr. Fetzer stated that there is another speed bump in the project. Mr. Fetzer stated that the Borough is not suggesting a 3-way stop as part of the project because it would take too long for DOT to get approvals. Mr. Fetzer stated that the Borough could put in a 3-way stop by changing the ordinance. Mr. Fetzer stated that the second speed tables are also separate items in the bid specs so that Council can decide whether to put one or both in the project.

Mrs. Chandler asked about two sycamores on the other side of the street that are not marked in the plans. Mr. Fetzer stated that the sidewalk can be placed to save those trees. Mr. Marciante asked whether the bump outs would be concrete and Mr. Fetzer stated that they would be grass.

Mayor Davy stated that he would open this up to comments from the residents in attendance. Mayor Davy asked that anyone wishing to speak state their name and address for the record. Mayor Davy reminded everyone that this is a basic mill and overlay project and depending on availability of funds the Borough would begin to consider the speed bumps and sidewalks that will be proposed as add alternates.

Mr. Stan Switlik of 33 East Welling Avenue stated that he would be most impacted by the bump outs and he does not see the need for them with the speed bumps and other proposed items. Mr. Switlik stated in addition to the problem for the snow plows there would be additional maintenance of the lawn and he does not see any reason for the bump outs. Mr. Switlik stated that he has lived here for 40 years and he does not see the need for a choke point when a speed bump on Baldwin would be a better idea. Mr. Switlik expressed concern about drainage with regard to the bump outs. Mayor Davy stated that there is a stop sign at Baldwin so a speed bump would not be needed.

Ms. Cara Laitusis of 23 East Welling Avenue stated that she and other neighbors she has spoken to are most concerned about the Curlis to Baldwin intersection and if there is a need to cut things the speed bump at Main and Baldwin should be the first to be cut. Ms. Laitusis stated that she does like the bump outs particularly on the Baldwin side as that is a pick up and drop off location for school buses. Ms. Laitusis

stated that she is hoping that no striping will be put in on the road. Mayor Davy stated that they have not discussed that for this project but it is considered a traffic calming solution.

Ms. Larissa Kelsey of 45 East Welling Avenue, the front of her house faces Hopewell Township and she is wondering if there has been any conversation with Hopewell Township about working together on this. Mayor Davy stated that he as well as Mayor Lawver both spoke to Hopewell Township and they are aware that this project is pending. Ms. Kelsey stated that she appreciates the sidewalks and the third crosswalk will be great in terms of walking to school. Mayor Davy stated that the crosswalk and sidewalks are add alternates and will only be considered if there are funds available. Mayor Davy stated that this meeting is a pre-design meeting and he plans to hold another meeting once the plans are approved. Ms. Kelsey asked about a traffic study and if someone could comment on that. Ms. Kelsey asked if it would be possible to lower the speed limit. Chief Pinelli stated that the speed trailer was placed as a speed deterrent and though it does track speeds, the average speed recorded was 24 mph, the majority of cars travel at 25 mph or less.

Mrs. Susan Perris of 43 East Welling Avenue stated that she has a unique perspective because their house faces Baldwin and they see people speeding and residents not stopping at the stop sign. Mrs. Perris stated that she does not really understand the drawing, but because of all of the storms over the last few years, they have lost a lot of trees and the two sycamore trees are some of the only large trees left and she would caution working around the roots of these trees. Mrs. Perris stated that they managed to walk their kids to school every day. Mrs. Perris stated that she sees buses and amazon trucks speeding down the road, but with regard to the speed bumps perhaps the Borough should think about putting speed bumps in front of the houses of the mothers who are complaining about walking their kids to school. Mrs. Perris stated that rather than adding crazy bump outs and random sidewalks maybe better define the existing sidewalks and if a speed table is proposed put it where people want it and not in front of her house because they don't want it. Mayor Davy stated that there are design standards with regard to speed tables that would need to be followed.

Mr. Elias Perris of 43 East Welling Avenue reiterated Mr. Switlik's comments and the two sycamores are in his front yard. Mr. Perris stated that he does not think that the bump outs are necessary.

Mr. Todd MacDonald of 22 East Welling Avenue thanked Council for the opportunity to hear from the proposed project and the comments from his neighbors. Mr. MacDonald stated that he has four children and they are always outside and the speeding is definitely worse in the area that is being discussed. Mr. MacDonald stated that he is not opposed to the speed tables and he would trust that the design process would identify where they would have the most benefit in reducing speeders. Mr. MacDonald stated that as far as the bump out area he would agree that it would be a problem for snow plowing as that area is where the snow is usually piled. Mr. MacDonald stated that he is in favor of anything that would increase the walkability of the town and he appreciates the efforts to save or replace trees.

Mrs. Maria Brown of 25 East Welling for 27 years and she is not opposed to a speed bump between Baldwin and Main Street but she agrees with her neighbors concerns about the bump outs. Mrs. Brown stated that she agrees with Dr. Perris with regard to saving the two sycamore trees on their property. Mrs. Brown stated that she thinks that a lot can be done with striping and painting. Mrs. Brown stated that a bike lane might be a good idea.

Mrs. Jacqueline Moyer of 21 East Welling Avenue stated that she does not love the idea of a speed bump at Baldwin and it seems that the speeding is at the other end of the road. Mrs. Moyer stated that perhaps a blinking solar light that shows the speed cars are traveling. Mrs. Moyer stated that she likes the idea of a 3-way stop but it sounds like that is too involved. Mayor Davy stated that will not be part of this project because there is a lot of work that goes into adding a stop sign, but it is not off the table. Mrs. Moyer stated that if a 3-way stop were put in then the bump outs would not be needed.

Mr. Craig Lewis of 20 East Welling Avenue stated that he does not think the bump outs are needed and they will likely cause issues. Mr. Lewis stated that keeping the character of the street is important and adding bump outs and sidewalks to nowhere are not needed. Mr. Lewis stated that instead of putting the speed trailer out the Borough should put a police officer out to issue tickets and produce revenue for the Borough.

Mrs. Heinzl stated that she saw a chat that Stewart Warren and Fred Scheetz would like to comment but she did not see them on the meeting.

Mr. Stewart Warren of 12 East Welling Avenue stated that he understands the concern of young children walking to school. Mr. Warren stated that the traffic is coming from cars coming from the Pennington circle and cutting over to Abey Drive especially at rush hour. Mr. Warren stated that there are irresponsible drivers that run the stop signs and the best way to deal with this is to place officers with radars and start issuing tickets. Mr. Warren stated that in terms of the bump outs he thinks it is a mistake for several reasons. Mr. Warren stated that he does not think the speed bumps are going to solve the problem and he respectfully suggests using the police department to start issuing tickets.

Chief Pinelli stated that there was a comment in the chat about lowering the speed limit. Chief Pinelli stated that lowering the speed limit would also have to go through several chains and the Borough would have to prove why this is needed.

Ms. Maureen McGrath of 24 East Welling Avenue thanked the Borough for this opportunity but this seems to be overkill with the bump outs and the speed bumps and it seems that most of the problem is between Curlis and Baldwin and she would be against a speed bump between Main Street and Baldwin. Ms. McGrath stated that lowering the speed limit might be complicated but it might be worth looking into.

Ms. Larissa Kelsey stated that in response to the residents who spoke about walking their children to school many years ago, today there are other things to consider like texting and driving, distracted driving, pizza delivery, amazon delivery and the like and there is a lot of traffic coming through that are not paying attention to children in the neighborhood.

Mayor Davy asked if there were any further comments from residents.

Mr. Fred Scheetz of 32 East Welling Avenue stated that he has lived here for 63 years and his property is where the proposed bump outs are going and he is not in favor of the bump outs at all. Mr. Scheetz stated that the other day he watched 15 cars, 11 of which blew through the stop sign and unless this is enforced nothing will be done.

Mayor Davy stated that in summary what he is hearing that more enforcement of the speeding and stop signs is in order, no big love for the bump outs and perhaps that should be eliminated as an add alternate and there is cautious optimism for the sidewalks but not at the expense of any trees and if there are going to be speed tables they would be best between Baldwin and Curlis.

Mr. Fetzer stated that this set of plans needs to be submitted to DOT approval so that we can go out to bid and get the project awarded by the November deadline. Mr. Fetzer stated that just because an add alternate is in the plan does not mean the Borough is going to award that part of the bid but at least the Borough would have prices for the work if they wanted to proceed. Mayor Davy stated that depending on the cost of the project, there might not be any funds available to do any of the add alternates anyway. Mayor Davy stated that he will hold another meeting for the residents prior to awarding the contract.

Mrs. Toni Lewis stated that Mr. Bill Ducharme wanted to join the meeting but he was unable to do so. Mr. Todd MacDonald stated that if there is another meeting he would like to hear more about the standards for placement of safety tables so everyone can understand the facts and data.

Mr. Fetzer stated that speed tables are placed where they are needed and where they will have the least effect on driveways and crosswalks. Mr. Fetzer stated that speed tables require signage as well.

Mr. Michael Rheinhardt of 30 East Welling Avenue asked if speed tables could also be the crosswalk to address both things and use less real estate. Mr. Fetzer stated that there are a couple of speed table/crosswalks in town.

Mrs. Susan Perris stated that it is hard to know on the drawing but the current placement of the speed table would directly affect her driveway and also where her daughter parks. Mayor Davy stated that the placement can be addressed later if they are even part of the project.

There were no further comments from the public.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Sterling  
Borough Clerk