

ATHENS TOWNSHIP SUPERVISORS

June 28, 2011 11:00 AM

Chairman Ronald Reagan called the meeting to order at 11:07 AM. Supervisors also present were Jack Walter, Maurice Fay, Cheryl Wood-Walter and Robin Smith. Representatives from PENNDOT were Sandra Tosca, Alan Keller, Bill Houpt and Bob Thorne.

Ron turned the meeting over to Sandra Tosca. Sandra said they were here today to update the supervisors as to the results of the traffic study along Route 220 at the intersection of Route 199 and the intersection of SR 4018 (Wolcott Hollow Road), and to present some VERY PRELIMINARY concepts for these areas.

Alan Keller reported on the traffic counts. He said they did their study from May 17 – May 26, 2011. A study done in 2008 showed 9407 vehicles on SR 220 by Wolcott Hollow Road. The study in 2011 showed 16,080 vehicles – a 71% increase! There was a 47% increase in truck volume over the same period.

On SR 199, the 2008 study showed 2827 vehicles. In 2011 the study showed 3429 vehicles, which was a 21% increase. The truck volume increased 34%. On 220 the increase in vehicles was 64%, with the increase in trucks being 40%. The increase in traffic at Wolcott Hollow was higher than the increase at 199.

Turning movement counts were done at Wolcott Hollow and 220 on May 19th. Traffic queues lasted approximately 39 minutes. Cars numbered from 6 to 13 and this congestion was logged between 7:27 – 8:06 AM. From 2 to 6 PM, the longest queue was 6 minutes to clear 2 – 5 cars. Robin asked if we can get a copy of this data and Alan said he will get her a copy.

Alan said they made changes to southbound 220 to have a single lane when you reach the intersection of 199. That has made an improvement in aggressive driver behavior in that area. On 199, there could be 7 – 10 cars waiting to get out. They noticed more vehicles in the PM tests – including one water truck that finally pulled out slowly and forced traffic on 220 northbound to stop. They are confident this would meet the criteria for signalization at both intersections.

Bill Houpt reviewed the crash history. He said there were 36 crashes, with 20 being reportable. Five of these occurred in the intersections. These were from the 2011 data the township supplied them at the last meeting.

The options were then presented. To install offset right turn lanes southbound on 220 at Wolcott Hollow and northbound on 220 at 199, the cost would be 550K - 650K at 199 and 450K – 500K at Wolcott Hollow. To install signals without the turning lanes would be 200K – 250K just for the signals. Sandra reiterated that these are VERY BASIC

PRELIMINARY CONCEPTS AND COST ESTIMATES based only on the traffic data. No studies have been done.

In order to get this project on the 12-Year Program, we would need to give testimony at the hearing in Stroudsburg on September 15th. Testimony can either be 'live', or written. Written testimony should be submitted to Brian Baker of NTRPDC. The project would be under Federal funding, which would be an 80/20 match just for the signal. The roadway would be a match of Federal and State dollars. The township would be required to maintain and energize the signals. Alan will get summarized data to Robin and Brian will get the guidelines and forms to her.

Robin asked if this project would have a high enough priority to move it up the list and Sandra believes it does.

Ron stated that when the Dandy proposed their expansion, we asked PENNDOT to look at his driveways and we were told that there was not enough traffic to warrant any changes and that he would not need to alter his driveways. Ron said when someone is trying to pull out onto 220 from Wolcott Hollow, and someone is also trying to pull out from the Dandy, they block each other's view. Sandra said they will pull the permit and look at it. Rita Swingle said the Zoning Hearing Board placed conditions on the Dandy expansion approval. We need to pull that decision.

Jack Walter said there is a water withdrawal site on 199. Chesapeake broke ground on the airport. This will increase the volume of traffic through this area. Sandra said PENNDOT doesn't know what growth there will be – we need to put that in our testimony. Ron added that sewer and water will be moving further south down 220 and that will bring growth. Alan said their estimates are generally 1-2% and you could sometimes see 60-70% in 10-20 years. We're experiencing that now.

Ron asked how much we can dictate when a driveway is going onto a state highway. Sandra said we can apply our zoning regulations. Cheryl asked if we can get a copy of the original HOP and Sandra said they would get one to us. Robin brought up the issue of people cutting through the Dandy to get to 220. It used to be they would do it to turn right, now they do it to turn left as well. Ron said we can't enforce a "No Left Turn" sign because the property owner would have to do that. Ron said he liked the turning lane concept on 220.

Alan Keller said he would get the summarized data to Robin. We need to get this on the 12-Year Program. It is on NTRPDC's long-range plan, so that will help. Rita asked if including the 2004 traffic study will make a difference. Sandra said with the 2008 study and this new data, we have more than enough to show the project needs to be done.

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Buddy Crockett asked if the study indicated dramatic changes, would that move it up sooner than the projected 2 years? Sandra said no, as other studies, right-of-way acquisition, modeling, turning lane designs, etc. will make it at least a 2-year project.

Sandra said the only way to get funding is through the Federal Highway Administration. This will require a 20% local match. Roadway portions would be Federal/State funds. It was also mentioned by PENNDOT that the township could start the project right away if they were to accept 100% funding responsibility. Engineering, however, would still put the project out about 2 years. SRs 4018, 220 and 199 are PENNDOT roads.

Bob Smith asked how long ago the 199 bridge was replaced, and if that was Federal or State money. Sandra said that project was funded with bridge funds. Bob added that people going south on 220 might get confused if they think the turning lane is for the Dandy. PENNDOT added that the traffic counts on 199 were delayed until Chesapeake started up their operation again. The Chesapeake office complex is the next problem intersection. Robin said that study is already being done in the HOP process.

Cheryl expressed concern about coming to a signal after you were just going 55 miles per hour and you're not expecting to have to stop – especially in the winter. Alan said a signal is not a safety device. They would probably install advance warning devices, and whatever else they can do.

Mike Murphy said they should also consider the traffic from the Glenn O. Hawbaker plant that is located on 220. That has increased in size considerably.

The Board thanked PENNDOT for coming. Chairman Reagan took the Board into executive session at 12:02 PM. The regular meeting reconvened at 12:22 PM.

There being no further business, on motion of Ron, second by Maurice, it was unanimous to adjourn the meeting at 12:23 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin L. Smith
Secretary