

TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MAKEFIELD
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
SPECIAL MEETING
MINUTES - JULY 31, 2001

A Special Meeting of the Board of Supervisors of the Township of Lower Makefield was held at the Afton Elementary School, Lower Makefield Township. Mr. Fazzalore called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Those present:

Board of Supervisors: Frank Fazzalore, Chairman
Scott Fegley, Vice Chairman
Grace Godshalk, Secretary/Treasurer
Fred Allan, Supervisor
Wes Hackman, Supervisor

Others: Terry Fedorchak, Township Manager
Duke Doherty, Township Engineer
David Steil, State Representative
Robert More, District Administrator for Joe Conti,
State Senator
Stephen Sanderlin, Chairman of the Newtown Township
Board of Supervisors
Andrew Warren, PennDOT District Administrator
(joined meeting in progress)
Lynn Bush, Bucks County Planning commission

Mr. Fazzalore introduced those present this evening and reviewed the purpose of the meeting. He announced that the meeting would be adjourned at 9:00 p.m. or shortly thereafter as the air conditioning is controlled by computer out of Falsington.

DISCUSSION OF QUARRY TRUCK TRAFFIC ROUTING

Ms. Sue Herman, Lower Makefield, stated she represents a group of concerned residents from Northampton, Lower Makefield, Wrightstown, and Newtown Township. She presented maps showing the various roads in the areas of concern, the location of the quarries, and the routes used by the quarry trucks. She stated the shortest and safest route would make use of Swamp Road but the truck drivers are unable to use this route with loaded trucks because of weight restrictions. She stated they do use this route on their return trips. Ms. Herman reviewed the handouts she provided this evening which show mileage for the various routes and the number of street and residential driveway accesses. She stated the greater the number of access points, the greater the probability that a crash will occur. She stated truck traffic should not be on these types of roads. Ms. Herman stated Swamp Road should be opened up to all traffic now. She stated Newtown Township and Wrightstown are doing engineering studies to determine what improvements are needed to make Swamp Road suitable for heavy trucks. She stated it is important to insure that this project is put on the 2001 Twelve Year Plan as promised by Mr. Steil and Newtown and Wrightstown Township officials. She stated if the deadline is missed, it will be another two years before it can be placed on a Twelve Year Plan. Ms. Herman stated they have asked Mr. Steil to insure that the deadline is met. She stated it is also important

that the culvert upgrade project is put on the 2001 Twelve Year Plan. She asked Mr. Steil what needs to be done to insure that this will take place.

Mr. Steil stated the adoption of the Twelve Year Plan will take place in year 2002 with public hearings beginning in October, 2001. After the Public Hearings, they will then have an opportunity to lobby PennDOT to include projects on the Twelve Year Plan.

Ms. Herman stated they would like to have the upgrade of the weight-restricted culvert included in the Twelve Year Plan as well. Mr. Steil stated he is not sure that a culvert upgrade needs to be on a Twelve Year Plan. Mr. Steil stated he would be willing to get verification on this. Mr. Steil stated the safety study that is being done is not restricted to culverts alone. He noted there is also another culvert that may be in question since it the same age as the weight-restricted culvert, and PennDOT will decide if they will include that culvert as well in the road upgrade. Ms. Herman stated she would like to insure that both culverts are included so that they cannot be used as stall tactics to keep Swamp Road closed.

Mr. Warren joined the meeting at this time and stated the entire Swamp Road corridor is in the study and there is no reason why all bridges would not be included. He stated bridges need to get on a capital project plan out of Harrisburg. He stated there are many bridges in District 6 that are in far worse shape than the one at Swamp Road. The reduction of the weight limit on a bridge is a usual way of working with bridges. He stated the Swamp Road Bridge is deficient and can no longer support the weight it was originally built for. He stated the bridge will eventually be replaced, but it is by no means one of the worst bridges in District 6.

Ms. Herman noted a display board showing newspaper clippings of accidents which occurred in the area. She stated they are requesting that PennDOT, State, and Federal officials look at this situation because of the dangerous nature of the traffic in the area. She asked what they can do to get the weight-restricted bridges included in the study. Mr. Warren noted there is a Citizens Committee in place; and he suggested that she speak to those individuals who are members of the Committee, some of whom were present this evening. Ms. Herman asked Mr. Sanderlin what they can do to get the bridges included in the study. Mr. Sanderlin stated he felt they were included, but suggested she speak to the representatives from Wrightstown where the bridges are located. He stated he felt the entire roadway was to be included in the study. Mr. Steil stated he will contact the Wrightstown Board of Supervisors to make sure they are included. Mr. Fazzalore stated Newtown and Wrightstown have both put up \$50,000 for the study, and he stated Lower Makefield Township thanks them for doing so.

Mr. John Cowley, Lower Makefield Township stated he moved to the Township approximately one year ago to the corner of Lindenhurst Road and Route 532. He stated quarry trucks wake him up at 5:00 a.m. He reviewed his own experience in the insurance industry and the procedure for filing of claims. He also noted the location of the residences of several Lower Makefield Supervisors and his concern that traffic is being kept off the roads near those residences.

Mr. Bob Murphy stated his home backs up to Stoopville Road. He stated there is no enforcement of the jake brake restrictions. He asked that they correct the road problems and install the proper size culverts.

Mr. Jeff Stout, Stoopville Road, stated he does not feel Stoopville Road can handle the traffic. He stated he feels they should establish a truck route going down Route 413 which can handle this kind of traffic.

Mr. Sanderlin stated Route 413 is a State road and is open to trucks with the only restriction being any weight limits. He noted the synchronization of the lights on Route 413 is a project that is ongoing. They have opened the bids and hope to start construction this year.

Ms. Alice Gale stated people are driving over the speed limit and driving too close to other drivers on the road. She stated she feels there should be more police enforcement of the traffic laws.

Mr. George Vanderhorn, Newtown Township stated he lives on Swamp Road and does not want the trucks there either. He also does not want other residents to get the truck traffic. He stated Swamp Road gets its share of traffic as well. He stated the empty trucks use this and can travel faster than the loaded trucks. He noted he is a member of the Swamp Road Study Committee. He feels the main concern should be the safety of all people in the area. He feels there should be a very thorough safety study done and it should be done properly and not rushed. He feels this should be looked at regionally and not just push the traffic from one area to another. He stated the accident which has been referenced by Ms. Herman that occurred at the bank with a truck would have occurred regardless of the status of Swamp Road.

Mr. Richard Condict, Newtown Township, stated he feels the culvert should be fixed because they are artificially pushing traffic onto other roads that are not equipped to handle it. He stated he feels they should fix the culvert and let the truck drivers decide which of the routes open to them they will take. He also expressed concern with the proposed upgrade of Stoopville Road since the road was already fixed and any other improvements would only make it more conducive to truck traffic.

Mr. Christopher Kennedy, Newtown Township stated the Newtown Township Board of Supervisors have stated that truck traffic is divided among the various routes; but he feels most of the trucks use Stoopville Road and if they make more improvements, even more trucks will use it. He noted the number of trucks already in the area. He stated nothing has been done on the culverts for thirty years on Swamp Road. He stated now that he has seen the map, he does not feel the residents are getting the representation that they should be getting.

DISCUSSION OF SOLUTIONS TO TRAFFIC IMPACT OF PROPOSED NEWTOWN DEVELOPMENTS

Mr. Fazzalore stated they would like to discuss new development in the 332 area by Newtown and Lower Makefield Townships. He stated Newtown and Lower Makefield representatives have met with Mr. Steil on a number of occasions to discuss this matter.

Ms. Lynn Bush stated Mr. Steil has worked with the Bucks County Planning Commission on this matter. She stated because of existing and proposed developments in the area, the Townships wanted to try to find solutions for which they could then apply to PennDOT to get funding for these solutions. She noted the map showing the area under discussion. She

stated they also discussed a link from the end of Penns Trail across Newtown/Yardley Road which would allow for greater circulation and take some traffic off the By-Pass. This is in Newtown's O/R District where there is potential for additional development. This would connect to a new intersection between Lindenhurst Road and Newtown/Yardley Road. Mr. Warren stated a traffic signal could be accommodated at this location. Newtown Township has also indicated the possibility of converting part of the O/R zoned area to a residential development. They therefore have prepared another map that shows what would be recommended if the residential development were built and a loop road could be constructed to try to direct some of the traffic to Silver Lake Road and disperse traffic throughout the area without concentrating everything onto Lindenhurst road. Mr. Steil stated there are two intersections - one at Penns Trail and one onto the By-Pass. He also Noted "D" which shows the total plan including the loop ramp.

Mr. Sanderlin stated the road shown as Road A which is Penns Trail Extension is part of a development which is currently before the Newtown Township Board of Supervisors for Preliminary Plan approval. The lower end of Road B is part of a development that has Final approval and is to be constructed as a right-in, right-out on the By-Pass. They have been told by PennDOT that they have no problem converting that into a full intersection with a traffic signal where you could make any motion in any direction you wish. Mrs. Godshalk asked how many feet it is from Lindenhurst Road, and Mr. Warren stated he feels it is approximately 1000 feet. Mr. Warren stated they were asked if a signal could be safely put in this area, and they did a study where it was determined that this could be done. He stated he feels the distance is 900 feet to 1000 feet between signals. Mr. Steil stated this would be tied into the synchronization project. Mr. Sanderlin stated the upper part of Road B they have seen as a Sketch Plan, and the road configuration is shown as it is shown on the map presented this evening. Mr. Sanderlin also stated the Heston property is under Agreement of Sale to be built as a residential development of twenty-four homes.

Mr. Steven Cochrane, Lower Makefield, asked the impact on the flow of traffic by adding an additional traffic light as discussed by Mr. Sanderlin. Mr. Sanderlin stated the closed loop system that is being discussed accommodates a dynamic flow of traffic so that the timing is optimized to move traffic. They would make this new intersection part of the signalization system. Mr. Cochrane asked if an Impact Study will be done, and Mr. Sanderlin stated one will be done when it is submitted to PennDOT.

Ms. Herman stated they would like the Board of Supervisors to do the impact analysis now and look into other options including an overpass to determine the best way to handle this intersection. She stated she does not feel they should wait until it is submitted to PennDOT. Mr. Sanderlin stated the traffic study for the intersection would be done during the course of the Preliminary Plan process at the expense of the developer, not the Township. Ms. Herman asked if they are considering an overpass, and Mr. Sanderlin stated they have not discussed this. Mr. Herman asked that they consider this. Mr. Sanderlin stated an overpass would be much more expensive, and he did not know where these funds would come from. He added the purpose of the access road was to prevent traffic from going from the O/R to Lindenhurst Road. He feels what is now proposed is an improvement over the impact the alternative would have had on Lindenhurst Road. Mr. Sanderlin stated the owners of CAU have been asked if they could access that road so some of their traffic could come in that way rather than Lindenhurst Road. They are also going to take measures so that it is not used as a cut through.

Mr. Condict asked if they have looked at Terry Drive as an upgrade to get some of the traffic out of the area. Mr. Sanderlin stated Terry Drive has been brought up. He stated some of the problem is the timing of the light. Mr. Condict suggested widening to allow for two left turns.

DISCUSSION OF I-95 LOOP RAMP

Mr. Fazzalore stated the construction of a loop ramp will help traffic on Route 332. He noted the Lower Makefield Chief of Police has indicated that this intersection is one of the most dangerous in Lower Makefield. Mr. Warren stated Mr. Larry Bucci is present this evening and is the engineer in charge of the I-95 Ramp. Mr. Warren stated PennDOT feels this is a necessary project and they are ready to begin final design. Assuming everything proceeds, they should be ready for construction in approximately 2003/04.

Ms. Karen Friedman, Lower Makefield Township, stated she reviewed the blueprint for the loop ramp, and she does not feel this will solve the problems. Mr. Warren stated with the new ramp you will be able to make a right instead of a left to get to the Scudders Falls Bridge.

Mr. Bucci reviewed how the roads leading up to the ramp will be constructed. The loop will eliminate the left turn onto the By-Pass, eliminate turning conflicts, and will increase capacity. He stated one signal will be eliminated and southbound there will be a yield condition going onto the By-Pass.

Mr. Warren stated they are still some time away from a final design, and there will be a number of public meetings held about this project. He stated they will consider an extra lane in this configuration, but they do not have the final details as yet.

Mrs. Godshalk stated there are three points on the By-Pass where people have to make left turns across traffic. Mr. Warren stated they are taking one light away. Mrs. Godshalk stated they still need to make a left turn to get to Newtown and to go south on I-95.

Mr. Hackman stated he feels that if they want to do the proper job at I-95 and the By-Pass, they should put in three loops. He stated they wanted to minimize the impact on the land taken from the Patterson Farm and to do so they tightened the loop. He feels this impedes putting in another ramp or two which is really what should be done to cure the intersection problem. Ms. Friedman agreed and stated she is concerned that this proposal is only a "Band-Aid" and if they do not deal with the intersection now, if they need to make additional improvements in the future, the land will not be available to do so.

Mr. Fazzalore stated he is concerned that it would take a significant amount of time to get funding for three ramps. Mr. Hackman stated he feels that they could plan for the other loops and design this loop so that it fits with other loops they may need in the future. Mr. Steil agreed and stated this could be the first of three and should be designed as a stand-alone ramp now to do what it needs to accomplish now and designed to work with two other loops that may be needed in the future. Mr. Warren stated if the Township and residents agree that this should be a complete loop system, they should discuss it with the Planning Commission and get it on the Twelve Year Plan. He stated PennDOT would be in favor of this. He stated they have already gone through a great deal of work to get the property to do even this one loop.

Mr. Fegley stated if they are serious about a full loop system, they must understand that this will involve taking a large piece of land from the Wright Farm and the Torbert Farm which he does not want to see happen. He feels the single loop should be designed in such a way that it could be used in a complete system at some point in the future.

Mr. Don Faust, Newtown Township, stated he is concerned about any additional traffic that will be put on the By-Pass because of the impact on area properties which were built prior to the construction of the By-Pass. He stated they are now working with the Newtown Board of Supervisors to install sound walls along the By-Pass. He stated this was originally a local By-Pass and is now a regional By-Pass. He is concerned that opening up Swamp Road will add additional traffic to the By-Pass. He stated this will create a new cross-County expressway. Mr. Warren stated PennDOT did not create the By-Pass as it was Congressman Kostmayer who fought for his constituents at that time who wanted the By-Pass constructed. Mr. Faust stated synchronizing the lights will have the same impact of adding an additional lane of traffic. Mr. Steil stated they are working on this issue currently with Mr. Faust.

Mr. Hackman stated traffic on the By-Pass and all other area roads is going to increase as development continues in the area.

Ms. Judy Gordon, Lower Makefield, stated they must consider current and projected traffic flows when designing the loop ramp. Mr. Fazzalore stated numbers have been done as part of the study. She asked when the numbers were done, and Mr. Steil stated one study was done in 1998 and Newtown Township did a study in 1999. Ms. Gordon stated she is concerned with the quality of life.

Ms. Irene Koehler asked if the Scudders Falls Bridge will be widened. Mr. Fazzalore stated the Delaware River Toll Bridge Commission is studying five bridges along the River, one of which is the Scudders Falls Bridge.

COMMENTS FROM GUESTS AND BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Mr. Hackman stated this process has been going on for years. He stated he still feels they are a long way from getting things straightened out and the situation will get worse because of increased development in the area. He feels the plans discussed may help marginally, and he would like to continue to work on these projects. He is concerned about the access on Lindenhurst Road from the Brandywine Development. He also stated CAU will most likely be taking occupancy shortly and this will increase traffic in the area. He stated he is concerned that people will start taking short cuts to avoid traffic at the major intersections. He stated he feels all the trucks should be kept on the By-Pass but it seems that the laws will not permit them to require this.

Mr. Allan asked how long ago the Swamp Road bridge was closed, and Mr. Doherty stated it was closed in 1969. Mr. Allan questioned why it is taking so long to get this situation corrected when they were able to get another bridge fixed one year after a storm. Mr. Warren stated when a bridge is washed out an emergency declaration is signed that allows them to short circuit some of the process. He stated the Swamp Road bridge they are currently discussing is able to handle some traffic although it is weight restricted. He stated they are working on fixing bridges that are falling down.

Mr. Fegley stated he is in support of fixing the culvert but recognizes that the timing of this is out of the Lower Makefield Township Supervisors' hands. Mr. Fegley stated he feels they must address the Inter-Governmental Agreement that is currently on the table between Lower Makefield and Newtown Township. He stated he recognizes that this will not solve all the problems but feels if they do nothing, the problems will only get worse. He stated if they cannot agree, PennDOT will take the money away that was designated for the loop ramp and use it elsewhere in the State. He feels they should join with Newtown Township now and approve the Inter-Governmental Agreement.

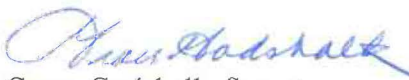
Mrs. Godshalk stated she has long been an advocate of opening up all the roads that can be opened up to the truck traffic so that it is spread out. She feels the synchronization project should go forward as quickly as possible. She stated she has done a study of I-95 and there are no full true cloverleaves, and she does not feel they should use the Lower Makefield open land simply because Lower Makefield has the land.

Mr. Sanderlin stated it is very difficult to serve the residents of one Township let alone try to work something out with two Townships. He thanked Mr. Steil for taking the initiative to work with the Townships. He stated the Newtown Township Supervisors discussed the Inter-Governmental Agreement in a Work Session and passed it onto their Planning Commission where it is scheduled for discussion next Tuesday night and hopefully will be discussed by the Board of Supervisors on Wednesday where he hopes they will vote in favor of the Agreement. Mr. Sanderlin also thanked Mr. Warren for his help in this process.

Mr. Fazzalore stated he now recognizes that there are regional issues that need to be solved on a regional basis. He thanked all those for attending this evening.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,


Grace Godshalk, Secretary

