

**JOINT EAST GOSHEN TOWNSHIP & EAST WHITELAND TOWNSHIP
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING
GREAT HALL, IMMACULATA UNIVERSITY
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 5, 2019
FINAL APPROVED MINUTES**

Present

East Whiteland Township: Sue Drummond, Chairwoman; Scott Lambert, Vice-Chair; Richard Orlow, Member; John Nagel, Township Manager.

East Goshen Township: Janet Emanuel, Chairwoman; Marty Shane, Vice-Chair; Carmen Battavio, David Shuey and Mike Lynch, Members; Rick Smith, Township Manager.

McMahon Associates: Chris Williams, PE; Jamie Kouch, PE

PennDOT: Paul Lutz

Introductions

Ms. Drummond called the meeting to order at 7:05pm. She welcomed residents, introduced officials from both townships and explained how the meeting would be structured. She noted that potential improvements at the King Road and Sproul Road/North Chester Road were first studied in 2004 or 2005 and that the townships began discussing updating those studies about two years ago. She also stated that no official action would be taken by either Board at tonight's meeting and that both Boards would need to act separately for any action to be taken. She stated that East Whiteland would discuss the matter at its June 12th meeting (*ed. note: this date was later deferred to July; see page 5*) and that East Goshen would consider the matter at an upcoming meeting of its own.

A copy of the video recording of the meeting is available [here](#).

Mr. Lambert stated that he was approaching tonight's meeting with an open mind.

Mr. Orlow thanked all the residents for coming and noted that the topic of taking property from any resident is not a power that he takes lightly or is comfortable using.

Presentation by Chris Williams, PE on Potential Improvements to the Route 352 & King Road Intersection

Mr. Williams presented the findings of McMahon's report. A copy of his Powerpoint slide deck can be found [here](#).

Questions and Comments from Boards of Supervisors

A resident asked about the cost of the project.

Mr. Battavio asked about McMahon's traffic projections and whether they reflected more traffic coming through the intersection and no longer cutting through the adjoining neighborhoods. Mr. Williams acknowledged Mr. Battavio's point and explained that McMahon's projections reflected about 2% annual growth, which is

higher than projected population growth in the area. Mr. Battavio also asked whether there was any thought given to reducing the speed limit to mitigate congestion. Mr. Williams observed that the concept of reducing speeds is consistent with a traffic circle, but that during rush hour there's no practical way to travel at the speed limit at this intersection.

Mr. Lambert asked if any out-of-the box proposals, such as straightening King Road, had been considered. Mr. Williams stated that this idea had been discussed; however, this option would create two inefficient T-intersections, with a much greater impact on private property and at a higher cost.

Mr. Orlow asked if there's a way to graph the results of the study showing queues at five minute intervals over a two-hour rush hour period. Mr. Williams explained that traffic studies reflect the "95th percentile" scenario; in other words, 5% of the time the queues would be longer. He added that he could generate a report using a 50th percentile scenario, although he doubted that it would result in substantially different results.

Ms. Emanuel asked whether any consideration of what the proposed "sliver" takings in Option #2 would have on the properties. She observed that many of the houses near this intersection are very close to the road. Mr. Williams stated that these are conceptual sketch plans that do not reflect detailed engineering; however, McMahon attempted to minimize the impact on private property in its conceptual plans. He noted that the slivers were estimated to be 8 feet wide or less.

Mr. Shane observed that, based on his research, roundabouts don't reduce accidents, but they do minimize their severity. He asked Mr. Williams about grant opportunities for these potential traffic improvements. Mr. Williams noted that PennDOT has greatly expanded funding opportunities in recent years and that both options #2 and #3 would be candidates for state funding. Mr. Williams also noted that East Whiteland can use its Section 209 impact fees for this project.

Public Questions and Comments

Carla Zambelli Mudry, East Whiteland, asked the boards to leave her neighbors alone and not make any improvements.

Sheila Caldwell, asked if East Whiteland had given any consideration to other parts of Route 352, such as at the SEPTA overpass. Mr. Williams stated that East Whiteland is in the early process of exploring potential improvements at the overpass and the Route 30 and Route 352 intersection. He noted that the SEPTA overpass improvements will probably not include widening the roadway. Ms. Caldwell also asked how improvements at King Road and Route 352 would minimize the impacts on adjacent properties. Mr. Williams reiterated that the sketch plan attempted to minimize the impacts on all properties as much as possible.

Ellen Sinclair, East Goshen Township, asked about the potential for imbalanced traffic flows in the roundabout. Mr. Williams noted that during rush hour there was more traffic volume on Route 352 than King Road, but that the imbalance was not significant enough to create problems. Ms. Sinclair asked how many traffic projects McMahon is currently working on in Chester County, to which Mr. Williams responded that the number was probably in the hundreds as result of their work on behalf of various clients, including municipalities.

Neil Glicksman, East Whiteland, asked if roundabouts are like rotaries. Mr. Williams responded that they are very similar, but that rotaries and "Jersey Circles" typically carry more traffic volume. Mr. Glicksman also asked about vehicular safety, particularly with the increase in elevation as you approach the intersection from King Road westbound. Mr. Williams stated that roundabouts are the most efficient type of intersection for emergency vehicles. He added that the grading concerns would be addressed by locating the traffic circle as far east as practical.

An East Whiteland resident noted that East Goshen has more green space than East Whiteland and asked how any voting by the Boards would work. Ms. Drummond observed that the decision of each Board would be treated equally. The resident noted that with all the development in East Whiteland, Route 352 will soon have similar traffic flow as Route 252. He also asked what the difference is between a sliver and non-sliver taking and how will fair market value be determined. Mr. Williams explained that PennDOT has a process for determining impact and fair market value and that for option #2, a sliver taking refers to a taking of less than eight feet.

Colleen Rogan, East Whiteland, asks who would acquire the property through eminent domain. Mr. Williams explained that technically the individual townships would acquire the property if they chose to proceed with the project. Ms. Rogan asked if the townships would be meeting with the individual property owners, to which Ms. Drummond stated that some conversations had already taken place. Ms. Rogan also asked how affected property owners would get into and out of their driveways. Mr. Williams acknowledged that the roundabout could create problems for some residents to access their driveways. Ms. Rogan also asked why the plans showed space for sidewalks. Mr. Williams explained that there may be a need to make future pedestrian improvements in the future, which should be incorporated into any traffic improvement to avoid costlier improvements later.

Tim Caban, East Whiteland, asked who makes the final decisions on the projects. Ms. Drummond responded that the townships would. Mr. Caban stated that Mr. Williams did an inadequate job of describing the difference between roundabouts, rotaries and Jersey Circles.

Edwin Roberts, East Goshen, asked why the townships are doing nothing to improve traffic enforcement at and around the existing intersection. He also asked for clarification about why the delay for a four phased intersection is so much more

than for the existing three phased intersection. Mr. Williams made an analogy to a pie, explaining that by slicing the pie into four pieces instead of three, less pie is available for everyone else. Mr. Roberts also asked if the Section 109 process of the Historic Preservation Act had been initiated. Mr. Williams explained that cultural and environmental review processes had not been initiated and would be completed along with more detailed engineering, if and when the Boards decide to proceed with a project. Mr. Lutz also remarked that PennDOT had special offices that would work on these types of matters.

Susan Spector, East Goshen, observed that taking “slivers” of land also takes trees, which would be an incalculable loss for the region. She stated that the loss of aesthetic beauty in the area was not worth a modest decrease in travel times. She also asked how long construction would last. Mr. Williams responded that it’s hard to predict, but that it would probably last an entire construction season, or approximately spring-to-fall.

Jim Jackson, East Goshen, asked Mr. Williams about the methodology for the traffic count, specifically about what year the traffic counts used in McMahon’s report were from. Mr. Williams explained that PennDOT updates its traffic counts every few years, so the data were recent. He also asked the East Goshen Board to consider the impact of the projects on residents and not let East Whiteland bully East Goshen.

Steve Mulhollan, East Goshen, disagreed with Mr. William’s statement that roundabouts are the best option for fire trucks. He observed that drivers act in strange ways when they see a fire truck in their rear view mirror. Mr. Williams noted that his statement was based in part on statements from the Swarthmore Borough Fire Company, which had experienced improved response times since the installation of a roundabout near the center of Swarthmore.

Tom Stuart, East Whiteland, asked attendees a series of questions about which options they preferred.

Krissy Stevens, East Whiteland, raised concerns about timid drivers from Hershey’s Mill having difficulty navigating a roundabout. She also asked whether instead of relocating utility poles, those lines could be moved underground. Mr. Williams stated that this might be an option to consider.

Jim Netten, East Vincent Township, asked how many hours McMahon spent on site and raised concerns about the data and statistics used in the report. He stated that no one from the area wants the improvements. He advocated for 4 split phasing. He also had concerns about the cost of the projects and noted that it’s misleading to compare Swarthmore Borough and East Whiteland Township. Mr. Williams noted that another problem with split phasing is that every time a light turns red, there is a two second delay before the next light turns green, meaning that there is a 6-7 second delay between one light turning yellow until the next one turning green.

An East Whiteland resident stated that the traffic estimates used in the report are too high. He also asked whether tractor trailers would have difficulty navigating a roundabout. Mr. Williams explained that PennDOT requires that any design options consider the ability of all vehicle types to navigate roundabouts.

Nancy Olson, East Whiteland, asked why there was such a short time frame for making a decision. She also suggested that the Township conduct a one-month trial with four split phases to see if it works. Ms. Drummond stated that East Whiteland would defer any decision on this matter until July. Mr. Williams noted that PennDOT generally does not support split phasing and would be unlikely to approve any trial experiment.

Mr. Caban asked for clarification about whether adding a split phasing would add 3 seconds or 6 seconds to the delays. He also stated that McMahon and PennDOT are biased in favor of roundabouts. He read a section of a March 2018 memo from Rick Smith to the East Goshen Board of Supervisors. He also pointed to a post from a PennDOT blog that noted that there are circumstances in which a roundabout is not advisable, including when there are substantial impacts on private property and grading concerns. Mr. Williams acknowledged Mr. Caban's concerns about roundabouts and noted that McMahon had explored every possible split phasing option.

Chris Kantrowitz, East Whiteland, raised concerns about a roundabout making it harder to get from Cottonwood Drive onto King Road. Mr. Williams explained that a roundabout wouldn't add to the queue times at Cottonwood. Mr. Roberts stated that a left turn out of Cottonwood would be much harder with a roundabout. Mr. Kantrowitz raised concerns about increasing housing density in East Whiteland and a lack of transparency.

Tina Habecker, East Whiteland, observed that there are only 20 hours of rush hour in a given week and that improvements at that intersection would not be cost effective. She also raised concerns about vibrations and storm water runoff if improvements are made.

Mr. Stuart asked whether there are other traffic engineers in the area; why the cost of engineering in the report was so high; and which traffic engineers would be considered for this project if it moves forward. He also raised concerns about McMahon having a conflict of interest.

Frank Reban, East Whiteland, raised concerns about fire trucks getting through a roundabout. He also stated that as it's currently configured, the intersection is not a problem, and that other intersections in East Whiteland are just as bad, if not worse.

Leo Sinclair, East Goshen, asked if there will be a wall lining the outside of the roundabout. He noted that drunk drivers, in particular, have difficulty navigating roundabouts and frequently crash into homes. He also stated that he is concerned

about the disparity in traffic flows from King Road compared to Route 352 and worried that this could create unbalanced traffic in the roundabout. He also asked whether McMahan had sponsored any events at the Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors conference. Mr. Williams responded that they had. Ms. Drummond stated that all traffic engineers sponsor these types of events.

An East Whiteland Township resident asked what the impetus for the study was. Ms. Drummond stated that she had received multiple complaints from East Whiteland residents. The resident also raised concerns about overdevelopment in East Whiteland.

Ben Holland, East Whiteland, stated that he does not see a problem with the current intersection and that he does not see why the townships should spend money and take land to improve the traffic for commuters.

Bob Logan, East Whiteland, stated that existing signage at the intersection of Cottonwood and King is ineffective and called for greater traffic enforcement to deter cut through traffic.

Henry Gatello, East Whiteland, asked why East Goshen didn't build a roundabout at Paoli Pike and North Chester Road several years ago. He also encouraged the Supervisors to distinguish between the process, which is on-going, and the project, which has an end date.

Mr. Pierre, East Whiteland, stated that none of the Supervisors would want what is proposed to his home to happen to theirs.

Ms. Rogan raised concerns about the conceptual sketch plan.

Mr. Netten advocated for a 4 split phase intersection to avoid the dangerous left turns from Route 352. Mr. Lutz explained that adding split phasing never improves traffic flow and PennDOT generally opposes adding phasing to an intersection. He also observed that introducing split phasing and then changing it later could cause drivers to develop bad driving habits that could lead to more accidents.

Mr. Caban stated that East Whiteland has done nothing to improve Carol Lane, which is why this intersection is now an issue. He also observed that the traffic circle heading to Wegman's and Vanguard is now overloaded and asked what would prevent the same thing from happening here.

Ms. Stuart, East Whiteland, asked how much of the existing queuing was caused by the difficult left turn from Route 352. She also asked about how the future traffic projections were calculated and whether they reflect the introduction of driverless cars. Mr. Williams stated that McMahan used future traffic increases of 1.5% annually. He also observed that while driverless cars had not been modelled into the analysis, such technology could be a game changer for traffic.

Mr. Logan raised concerns about eastbound King Road traffic making a left turn onto Sproul Road interacting with traffic coming out of Malvern Borough on King Road also turning left onto Sproul Road and suggested that a sign be erected on King Road westbound to warn motorists about the intersection.

Ms. Drummond thanked residents for attending and closed the meeting at 10:39pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jon Altshul

Recording Secretary, East Goshen Township