

**Meeting Minutes**  
**State College Borough Transportation Commission**  
**May 14, 2019**

The State College Borough Transportation Commission (TC) met on Tuesday, May 14, 2019, in Room 304 of the Municipal Building. Raymond Najjar, Chair, called the meeting to order at 12:15 p.m.

**Members Present**

Raymond Najjar, Chair; Richard Garis, Vice-Chair; Rick Gilmore; and Hugh Mose

**Members Absent**

Paul Jovanis; Diana Malcolm; and Mieke Haeck

**Others Present**

Deborah Hoag, Director of Public Works; Alan Sam, Arborist & Environmental Coordinator; Lt. Barrett Smith, State College Police; P. Rick Ward, Director of Parking; Jackie Sheader, CATA Public Relations Manager; Albert Carlson, PennDOT; and Stacy Hall, Administrative Assistant

**Approval of Minutes**

Mr. Najjar asked if there were any corrections to the April 9, 2019 minutes. Mr. Mose motioned to approve the April 9, 2019 minutes after a few minor corrections were made which he discussed with Ms. Hall prior to the meeting. Mr. Gilmore seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

**Public Hour**

No one wished to speak during the Public Hour.

**Discussion Items**

Penn State West Campus Parking Structure TIS Update

Ms. Hoag stated the Penn State University (PSU) resubmitted a revised draft Traffic Impact Study (TIS) to the Borough and PennDOT on April 4, 2019, that proposed only one access point for the West Campus parking structure from Atherton Street only at the intersection with White Course Drive. She said the study proposed constructing a southbound right turn lane on Atherton Street at the traffic signal with White Course Drive. She added that the study also proposed to lengthen the northbound right turn lane on Atherton Street at the traffic signal with Park Avenue. She said both improvements were proposed to be constructed with PennDOT's Atherton Street Improvements Project and traffic signal timing adjustments were also proposed as mitigation for the increased traffic due to the development. Ms. Hoag introduced Aaron

Fayish of Stahl Sheaffer Engineering who explained in more detail the current proposal for the project. She added that, due to a prior commitment, PSU staff were not available to answer any questions.

Mr. Fayish reviewed the background of the project and stated in the original TIS PSU proposal, there were two access points to the West Campus parking structure. He said after being reviewed and discussed with PSU and reaching out to project stakeholders at a meeting in January 2019, adjustments were made to the TIS. He explained it was then proposed to have only one access location. He showed several maps of the proposed plan outlined that included bus stops and pedestrian access connectors. He then showed the details of the pedestrian and vehicle flow paths that included sidewalks leading to Atherton Street from the parking garage. He presented how the flow would occur around the garage intersecting with White Course Drive. He explained the revised access plan was resubmitted in April 2019 and PennDOT would review the study separately due to the impact on Atherton Street. He asked for any questions based on the review process thus far.

Mr. Najjar asked, if in addition to providing more parking, was the purpose of the parking structure for future development of the West Campus. Mr. Fayish answered yes.

Mr. Mose expressed his disappointment in cutting back to one access point versus two because it seemed the absence of access from West College Avenue was going to put an added burden on the already busy intersections of Atherton Street with Beaver Avenue and College Avenue. He also expressed concern about the need for buses coming from the west to access West Campus and without that second access point from West College Avenue, that now was an impossibility. He added with the continued development in Ferguson Township, both with PSU's presence on Science Park Road and the proposed Town Centre sometime in the future along Blue Course Drive, it would be extremely important to have that linkage. He asked if the design accounted for the future development of a second access point. Mr. Fayish said did not know the answer as he was not part of the design team.

Mr. Gilmore stated he shared Mr. Mose's concerns and asked Mr. Fayish if he could share what comments were added that took the second access point out of the revised plan. Mr. Fayish said it was a decision made by PSU. Ms. Hoag stated there were comments from both Ferguson Township and the Borough relative to the impact on the neighborhoods if that were to become a primary access point. She added there was also an environmental concern brought up regarding stormwater when the original project was presented to Borough Council.

Carrie Jackson, President of Holmes-Foster Neighborhood Association, said she was present at the Borough Council meeting when PSU presented the original TIS. She noted there was concern about that route causing backups on College Avenue with traffic finding alternate routes through the Holmes-Foster Neighborhood and given its proximity to the elementary school caused concerns. She said it was then suggested the access be routed through Blue Course Drive and then the stormwater issue was brought up by Council.

David Stone, who resides on East Foster Avenue, stated he had reviewed both TIS's and two-thirds of the traffic was already going to come off of Atherton Street and he agreed there should be another access point, but it should be some sort of connector out to Blue Course Drive. He noted in terms of environmental constraints, he agreed there were issues. He said he was part of an environmental group that would support an alternative route and now was the time to push for it. He also suggested having a road going through with remote parking located across from The Waffle Shop where PSU owned land with a trail or small van system to bring people in.

Wes Glebe, who resides in Ferguson Township, suggested a fly-over be done to assess the environmental issue of Blue Course Drive to take a better look at the recharge area. He stated he thought going out through Blue Course looked like the most logical solution and from an engineering point of view, it was very doable. He talked about the amount of traffic in his neighborhood between 3:30 to 5:00 p.m. and stated it was hard to cross College Avenue on foot. Mr. Najjar commented he was concerned as it was his understanding that traffic was to yield to pedestrians crossing in a crosswalk. He suggested some signage be placed to remind drivers of that fact.

Mr. Gilmore asked Mr. Fayish to speak to what the proposed structure would do in terms of changing the parking capacity on that end of campus. Mr. Fayish answered there would be an increase of parking. Mr. Gilmore asked how many spaces were there now and what the proposed parking would be. Mr. Fayish said the new structure would include 1,670 parking spaces replacing 799 of the existing 812 Red A parking spaces on West campus; therefore, doubling parking capacity.

Mr. Gilmore asked if the scope of the TIS reviewed included an estimated projection of traffic patterns on adjacent streets to the structure itself. Mr. Fayish said the study area for the project was quite large and listed the streets included in the TIS.

Mr. Gilmore asked if part of the technical review included a comparison of the one-access point versus the two-access point study that was proposed earlier. Mr. Fayish answered no, the two-access study was pulled, and a totally new study was resubmitted.

Mr. Najjar asked if bicycle parking would be available in the garage. Mr. Ward said yes, the garage would be bicycle friendly. Mr. Gilmore asked to be shown on the map where the expected flow of bicycle traffic would be. Ms. Kerner pointed out the bicycle path on the map. She said there would also be a connector to the West Gate Building.

Mark Huncik of 505 East McCormick Avenue, and President of the Highlands Civic Association, said at the last meeting the Neighborhood Coalition requested that PSU and/or the PSU consultant make the presentation, not the Borough's consultant. He said he did not think the large scale of the project was understood. He added that the comments from the Borough's consultant were recently released and there was still an ongoing review as PennDOT had not yet commented. He said he hoped the topic would be continued as an agenda item for the TC. Mr. Najjar asked Ms. Hoag if the PSU staff and/or consultant could attend the June 11 meeting and she said she would work to make that happen.

James Greif of 1360 Linn Street stated traffic burdens should be spread across multiple streets so there was not such a burden on one particular street. He noted he thought the White Course Drive connector seemed to be an unnecessary duplication of College Avenue. He added he hoped PSU was looking to increase spending on the red link as more people would be utilizing that.

Mr. Mose commented that a traffic signal between Atherton Street and Corl Street would be helpful for pedestrians and bicycles crossing the street. He suggested the TC hear from PSU staff so questions could be asked directly, and it would be interesting to hear what PennDOT's comments were. He said due to the size of the structure, there would be certain ramifications that would need to be dealt with.

Mr. Stone noted discussion about connection to Blue Course Drive needed to be opened and now was the time to push for that to happen.

Steve Smith, President of the College Heights Association, stated there was another alternative that was not on the map. He noted the exit/entrance could be made below what the map showed. He added it would cost money but could easily be done if PSU was willing to purchase some property. He said he did not understand how new traffic could run in and out of Atherton Street without an incredible amount of congestion and an alternative needed to be considered other than the one-point access.

Mr. Najjar asked Ms. Kerner to show where the second connection was proposed. She showed him on the map stating it came around West Campus apartments and looped onto Buckhout Street.

#### Input from the TC for Priorities

Ms. Hoag explained at the January meeting the TC discussed providing input on topics for discussion and a list of suggested topics received thus far was attached to the agenda. She reminded the Commissioners to submit topics for consideration and review aligning with the founding Ordinance the Commission duties. She said the information would be used to assist with building the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).

Mr. Najjar noted he sent a reminder to the Commissioners recently and the majority of input should be received in the near future.

Ms. Mose said he was frustrated about the previous discussion regarding the West Campus Parking Structure. He thought the TC should had been asked to weigh in at the beginning of the process.

Mr. Najjar stated he thought it was a TC-related item since the Commission acted on behalf of the community to provide advice and thoughts and the TC was asked for input after the fact. Ms. Hoag and Ms. Messner reviewed the planning process with the Commissioners.

Mr. Glebe gave a couple examples of projects he was involved with in the past and he agreed there was a system problem that needed to be solved. Traffic study issues should be discussed at the beginning of a project and not at the end.

Mr. Stone suggested when the scoping part of a project happened before a traffic study was done, it be brought to the TC. He also thought consultants should look more at pedestrian safety. He thought there was still time for change and there needed to be more cooperation earlier in a project.

Mr. Mose hoped the TC had more meaningful involvement in projects within the Borough as it related to transportation issues.

Mr. Gilmore suggested the TC move to ask Borough Council to refer matters related to a TIS and other transportation matters as appropriate to the TC at an early stage so that the public might weigh in on those matters. Mr. Mose suggested the motion be refined so that it would ask for the Chair of the TC to write a formal request to Borough Council. Mr. Garis seconded the motion. All were in favor. Ms. Messner suggested the letters to Borough Council be specific and reviewed by the entire TC before submission.

Ms. Messner stated the TIS presented today was not presently completed. Mr. Najjar asked Ms. Messner when she thought input from the TC would be most valuable. She said if staff was aware of a land development plan the TC could be notified. Mr. Najjar asked Ms. Hoag the same question and she said it was difficult to say depending on the process. Mr. Gilmore stated the TC should have had the noted on the meeting agenda last fall when it was submitted for review. Ms. Messner stated it could be put on the agenda for information only at that time. Ms. Hoag explained there were various people involved in the process.

### Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)

Ms. Hoag noted the CIP was in Administration's hands for review and summary to then be presented to Borough Council in June. She added that would be followed by review sessions with Borough Council and public meetings for comment prior to the final adoption of the CIP. Mr. Najjar stated that there was no action required on the TC's part.

### Upcoming Meeting Date

Mr. Najjar announced the next TC meeting would be on Tuesday, June 11, 2019.

### **Liaison Reports**

MPO/CRPA/COG Transportation – Ms. Hoag reported there would be a public meeting on May 15, 2019, at 5:30 p.m. at the Mt. Nittany Middle School regarding the proposed amendment to the Centre County Transportation Improvement Program, particularly the State College connector.

Centre Area Transportation Authority – Ms. Sheader said CATA announced the 2019 proposed service changes and she provided a copy of those changes for review. She said a public hearing would be held on May 16, 2019, at the Schlow Library Community Room. She reviewed some of the proposed changes.

Mr. Mose asked if any of the changes would impact Borough residents. Ms. Sheader answered no.

Penn State Transportation – No report given.

PennDOT – Nothing to report.

Borough Planning Commission – Ms. Messner reported the James Building was a Land Development Plan in the 100 block of South Burrowes. She then introduced Greg Garth who would be her replacement.

Borough Engineer – Ms. Kerner reported the traffic signal on Westerly Parkway and School Drive would be turned on after a few items were worked out with the contractor.

Environmental Coordinator – Mr. Sam reported on the activities of Bike Month which included Bike-To-Work Day. He said several other bike-related events were listed on the Borough website. He added sign boards were up to remind motorists to stay four feet from bicyclists. Mr. Najjar asked if anyone could participate in the Bike Share survey online that he received via e-mail. Ms. Sheader said the survey went to the end of May and anyone could participate.

Parking Office – Mr. Ward reviewed the first two months of the Highlands Neighborhood Pilot Parking Study for overnight parking that began on March 1, 2019. He said warning violations were given out during the first two events which were the Blue/White Game and PSU Graduation. He added the plan was for actual violations be written during the Festival of the Arts in July.

Mr. Mose applauded the Parking Department's diligence with the project. Mr. Garis commented he had more cars parked in his neighborhood during events after the start of the parking pilot.

State College Police – Nothing to report.

## **Adjournment**

There being no further business to discuss, Ray Najjar, Chair, adjourned the meeting at 1:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Stacy Hall  
Administrative Assistant