

Route 9 Monitoring Committee Meeting Minutes

7/17/2018

An audio recording of this meeting is available at <http://www.wilmapco.org/Route9/>. Please note that the recording is not complete and does not cover the full meeting due to technical difficulties.

Attendees

- James Brunswick, DNREC
- Carlos Dipres, First State Community Action Agency
- Caitlin DeCollo, Senate on behalf of Senator Henry
- Lauren Devore, DNREC
- Ken Dryden, DCR4EJ
- Penny Dryden, DCR4EJ
- Renae Held, DNREC
- Lee Jarmon, OVGGP Civic Association
- Caleb Jervay, Resident
- James Johnson, State Representative
- Philip McBride, New Castle County Land Use
- Randi Novakoff, WILMAPCO
- James Parker, Oakmont Civic Association
- Renie Roberts, Oakmont Civic Association
- Kyron Robinson, ProRank LLC
- Sandra Smithers, New Castle Prevention Coalition
- Jeanette Swain, Rose Hill Civic Association
- Bill Swiatek, WILMAPCO
- Jake Thompson, WILMAPCO
- Dora Williams, Rose Hill Garden Civic Association

Minutes

- **[0:00:30 in recording]** The committee reviewed the previous meeting minutes.
 - There were no comments. The committee accepted the previous meeting minutes.
- **[0:01:30 in recording]** Bill Swiatek reviewed the mission and vision statements.
 - JJ Johnson said that it is a good idea to review the mission and vision statements once in a while.
 - Bill Swiatek said that the mission is to look at the plan and implement it in a collaborative way that involves the community and addresses the community's concerns. He said that there are other issues in the community that come up and tend to take over the meeting, but it is most important to focus on our mission during meetings.
 - Lee Jarmon said it is important to make sure that everyone understands the mission and vision statements.
- **[0:04:00 in recording]** Bill Swiatek began a discussion debriefing the public workshop. He said that comments from the community were mostly positive. There were some concerns about

traffic and about certain neighborhoods being represented. The format of the workshop did not go as planned; we wanted people to discuss in focus groups, but participants did not move between stations.

- Caleb Jervay asked if we have looked at statistics from roundabouts in other areas, such as in New Jersey.
 - Bill Swiatek said that some roundabouts have been implemented in Delaware. He said that roundabouts almost eliminate fatal crashes, and they are safer than conventional intersections.
 - JJ Johnson said that a good example is the roundabout near St. Georges Technical High School.
 - Carlos Dipres said that there is a brand new roundabout near Lums Pond State Park, and someone on a motorcycle sped through it and died. He said that these are small roundabouts, but roundabouts in the Dominican Republic, his home country, are much larger and are very popular there.
 - Carlos Dipres asked how traffic coming from I-295 would be accommodated with smaller roundabouts, especially large trucks.
 - Bill Swiatek said that the proposed roundabouts have a mountable truck apron that is designed to give truck drivers more space to navigate the roundabout.
- Lee Jarmon said that younger people at the public workshop seemed excited about the plan and what was happening along the corridor. He said that it would be a good idea to get more young people involved in communication about the plan. He said that we have tried many ways to get the word out about the plan, but there were still many people who were not aware of it.
 - Bill Swiatek suggested that we talk to younger people in the community and ask them what platforms are best to get the word out. He asked for Mr. Jarmon to provide us names of young people looking to get involved, and we could ask them for support and advice in disseminating information/gathering feedback.
 - Caleb Jervay said that he was surprised how many people were not aware of the plan.
 - Lee Jarmon said that some people at the workshop were not aware of the work that was being done. He suggested to them that they go online and read the plan.
 - James Brunswick said that the workshop was largely positive, and about 10-15 people came to DNREC's station. The Department of Public Health said that they received some questions at their station about cancer rates, but once they were able to explain the situation people were satisfied with their answer.
- **[0:21:00 in recording]** Randi Novakoff gave an update on the outreach subcommittee. She said that the outreach subcommittee met a few weeks before the workshop. They made sure that they were doing everything they could to let the public know about the workshop and the work of the monitoring committee. They brainstormed a few ideas to promote the efforts of the monitoring committee, such as recording a video to promote the plan, creating a 1 or 2 page summary of the plan, or doing a survey during the workshop to solicit more ideas from community members about the best way to reach out to them.
- She handed out copies of the results of the survey. In the results, the majority said that email updates were the best way to reach out about the plan. The majority of respondents said they agreed that the corridor should be rezoned to separate residential and industrial. The majority of respondents agreed that enhancements should be made to make it easier and safer to take the bus, walk, and bicycle, as well as that retail, office, and residential development should be

located closely to one another in key areas, such as near the new library. This showed that in general, people agreed with the recommendations of the plan.

- She said that the subcommittee posted flyers all over the area to promote the workshop. The subcommittee is working on scheduling their next meeting, and they will likely be scheduled on an as-needed basis. She said that the subcommittee is open to anyone if they are interested in participating. She also said that they registered for the health event on July 28th at Dunlieth Park and Bill will be there to discuss the Plan and that there is a need for more volunteers.
 - Caleb Jervay asked if the subcommittee gives civic organizations ample time to reschedule personal or local events they may have when planning outreach events.
 - Randi Novakoff said the subcommittee plans events no less than a month in advance.
 - Ky Robinson asked if she asked residents whether they were interested in separating residential and commercial zoning, in addition to separating residential and industrial, when conducting the survey.
 - Randi Novakoff said that the questions did include retail and office development, but she would have to double check the exact wording of the questions, as these are a summary.
 - Caleb Jervay said that his impression of the master plan was that it recommended separating residential and industrial, but residential and commercial should be coexisting.
 - Sandra Smithers said it has to do with what kind of commercial. She said that retail would be complementary to the area, but other types of commercial may not be wanted.
 - Caleb Jervay said that, for example, residents would want a supermarket close by.
 - Bill Swiatek said that throughout the outreach process for the master plan, people approved the idea of having commercial mixed in with residential. For this question in particular, the specific land uses that were proposed near the new library were mentioned, including office, residential, and retail.
 - Jeannette Swain asked if we have a business development person that would help incorporate these changes.
 - Bill Swiatek said that the plan has a vision for what the area will look like in the future and how zoning should be changed to accommodate that. He said that Tamarra Morris is the economic development director for New Castle County, and she is very involved with the plan. He will reach out to see if she can attend a future meeting to provide more information.
 - Sandra Smithers asked what the process would be to change the zoning in the area.
 - Phil McBride said the County could do a re-zoning specific to this area so that certain uses would be permitted that would align with the goals of the master plan.
 - Bill Swiatek said that it involves getting the recommendations from the plan into the county's comprehensive plan.
 - Sandra Smithers asked how a citizen group could initiate that process.
 - Phil McBride said that there would be a public outreach process as part of re-zoning.
 - Sandra Smithers said that if the county has a process, that should be clear to residents as to how it is done.
 - Caleb Jervay asked if there is a rule or regulation to separate industrial and commercial uses.

- Phil McBride said that if you have two separate uses, currently a buffer in landscaping is required to separate those uses. For example, if a commercial property is located next to industrial, there must be a landscaped buffer between those properties.
 - Phil McBride said that it would have to be legal non-conforming.
- **[0:43:30 in recording]** Jake Thompson reviewed the draft transportation project prioritization process. Pages 11-24 in the meeting packet were available at the public workshop as display boards or handouts. Page 11 is an overview of the transportation project prioritization process. The 20 transportation projects in the master plan were scored and ranked using 12 factors, which are described in detail on pages 19-24. Page 12 is a ranked list of the 20 projects, showing their draft final scores. Pages 13 and 14 are two examples of projects with their draft scoring breakdown. Page 15 is the crash score map, showing the frequency of crashes for intersections and road segments along Route 9 and Memorial Drive. Page 16 is a crime heatmap, including all crimes that occurred in the area from September 2017 to February 2018. Violent crimes are scored double. Page 17 is the social determinants of health (SDOH) map. This shows the potential public health concern for all block groups in the area, using a technical scoring process that incorporates several factors that have been shown to impact public health. Page 18 is a chart of the data that went into the SDOH scoring process. Pages 19-24 contain descriptions of the 12 scoring factors that went into the transportation project prioritization process.
 - Carlos Dipres asked for clarification about the road diet project on page 13. He said that there are a lot of senior citizens in the area, and the road seems too wide to cross safely.
 - Bill Swiatek said that this is one project representing a road segment. Ideally, people would cross at intersections. He said that at some intersections, features such as bump-outs and roundabouts will help pedestrians cross safely.
 - Carlos Dipres asked if the pedestrian crossing time can be extended so that people can have more time to cross the street. He said that would be a cheap alternative to redesigning the street and would reduce jaywalking.
 - Bill Swiatek said that with roundabouts and road diets, the speed of traffic is decreased, so crashes will be less severe. Less space will be dedicated to car traffic, so crossing distances, even for jaywalkers will be reduced.
 - JJ Johnson said that the state of Delaware has a high rate of pedestrian fatalities. He said that these recommendations are a measure to help reduce those crashes.
 - Sandra Smithers said that other states have dangerous and aggressive drivers, but their rates of pedestrian crashes are not as high as Delaware's.
 - Jeannette Swain said that a lot of crashes are caused by out-of-state drivers, such as New Jersey drivers coming over the Delaware Memorial Bridge.
 - James Parker asked how roundabouts could handle the traffic coming off of interstate highway ramps.
 - Bill Swiatek said that the roundabouts were reviewed by the Delaware River and Bay Authority (DRBA) and DelDOT very positively. The design had to be changed to accommodate more traffic. They looked at the traffic volumes and said it would work. A full traffic analysis is available in the Master Plan showing that the roundabouts are able to handle projected 2036 traffic with the same or better flow as today.
 - Ken Dryden asked how Safe Routes to School (SRTS) funding would be used.
 - JJ Johnson said that when we do a budget, we provide extra funding for Safe Routes to School. There are certain regulations where if you live within a certain

distance of a school you don't get bus service. As a result of the master plan, SRTS provides extra funding towards bus service in the area.

- Bill Swiatek said that I-295 is a physical barrier. There is another project to create a connection across I-295. He said that when we did the SRTS project at McCullough, the focus was around the school as well as Memorial Drive. There are kids who live on the other side of Memorial Drive and Route 9 who don't walk because it is too dangerous to cross.
- Ken Dryden said that he thought part of SRTS funding was about walking and getting across some of those streets.
- Bill Swiatek said that projects to improve the Route 9 intersections are part of the recommendations in the master plan and are expensive projects that would be funded by DelDOT's capital program. For the McCullough SRTS program, we were more focused on making improvements to Memorial Drive to make it safer for students to cross.
- Sandra Smithers said that years ago, we talked about getting a walkway in that area. She said the research concluded that a walkway would be cost prohibitive.
- Randi Novakoff said overpasses can cost \$20-30 million, which far exceeds SRTS funding. SRTS provides about \$100,000.
- Bill Swiatek said that there was a prioritization subcommittee that helped put this process together. He asked the monitoring committee if there were any concerns about the prioritization process
- Ken Dryden asked why the project examples in the packet had a score of zero for truck management.
 - Jake Thompson said that the road diets projects do not have elements that are intended to improve truck traffic. There are other projects on the list on page 12 that are intended to manage trucks.
 - Bill Swiatek said that on page 22 in the packet, the truck management factor in the prioritization process is described. He said the road diet projects are not intended to manage trucks. There are other projects that are intended to improve truck management.
- James Parker said that at Route 9 and Terminal Avenue, truck drivers have to back up to make the turn. He asked how trucks will be able to turn through a roundabout.
 - Bill Swiatek said that roundabouts have a mountable apron that give additional space for trucks to maneuver through the roundabout.
- Bill Swiatek asked if the monitoring committee would like to accept the draft transportation project prioritization.
 - Lee Jarmon made a motion to accept the draft transportation project prioritization. Caleb Jervay seconded.
- James Parker asked about the job growth scoring factor.
 - Bill Swiatek said that projects that will generate jobs would have a higher score in this factor. Projects of potential economic significance receive 5 points. Projects of little economic significance, but of a large scale that may generate short-term construction jobs receive 2 points. Projects of a moderate to low scale receive 1 point.
 - James Parker asked what guarantee the local community has for these job opportunities.
 - Bill Swiatek said that is something the OJT Subcommittee is working on and their update will be later in the meeting.

- The monitoring committee unanimously accepted the draft transportation project prioritization.
- **[01:15:00 in recording]** James Parker discussed the “Refreshing Our Community” initiative. He said that it will bring the community together by meeting with organizations that want to come into the area. James Parker said that initially, the master plan had two separate meetings that were not communicating with each other to make discussions about the plan. He said that the community wants to be at the table to discuss the future of the community. Refreshing Our Community is about getting the community together to make a stand and be a voice that matters in the community. He said that we want to make sure that we start putting in policies that provide jobs to community members.
 - Jeanette Swain said that economic development creates jobs in the area, but she does not see that in the plan. She wants to know why the economic development specialist for New Castle County does not come to these meetings and talk about economic development opportunities.
 - Ken Dryden said that the plan was a vision by not only DelDOT and WILMAPCO but also other community leaders that became a part of the steering committee. He said that there has been constant discussion with the community since the monitoring committee was started. He said we wanted to make sure that what was in the plan was what the community wanted.
 - Sandra Smithers asked Ken Dryden to clarify who he was talking about when he mentioned the steering committee.
 - Ken Dryden said that the master plan lists the organizations that were a part of the steering committee.
 - Bill Swiatek said that the steering committee was invited to be part of the monitoring committee, plus other interested people and members.
 - Ken Dryden said that there was a steering committee for the plan itself, and there was a list of organizations that were a part of it. There were some agencies on the steering committee that are now a part of the monitoring committee. He said that the monitoring committee is doing nothing but helping to implement the vision of the steering committee. He said that there were many questions about the actual plan because the community thought the plan was about youth, seniors, and development in the area. He said that we wanted the steering committee to come in to the monitoring committee meetings, but that never developed.

[The audio recording ends at this point in the meeting (1:24:58) due to low batteries.]

- Bill Swiatek said that the plan is focused on transportation and land use, which touch on many issues and set the stage for economic redevelopment. There are other critical issues that should be looked at, but were beyond the scope of the Master Plan.
- Ken Dryden said that there was also discussion about residents being displaced from their homes.
 - JJ Johnson said that that is a separate issue. The survey is being driven by the County to see if residents are interested in relocation.
 - Bill Swiatek said that the plan says that no one is going to move unless they want to move. The survey is a way to see how everyone in the community feels about the possibility of relocating.

- Lee Jarmon said that New Castle County requested WILMAPCO to develop a 20-year master plan to help guide future land use and transportation development in the area. He said that he believes that this committee has been focused on that throughout the process, and that we should continue to focus on our mission and vision.
 - Penny Dryden said that the plan is in place, but there are modifications that must be acknowledged. She said that there is a safety issue that we may have missed, and it should not be dismissed because experts looked at it.
 - Bill Swiatek said that there was a huge process to put the plan together. There was great agreement among steering committee members throughout the planning process. He said that we have to maintain our focus on guiding the implementation of the plan, which does have strong support.
 - Sandra Smithers said that we have new people here and they need to have a background on the plan. She said that when the plan started, there were two committees: the management committee and the advisory committee. She said that Mr. Jarmon said that there can't be two separate committees, and the committees were merged into one steering committee. She said that it's important to understand the history of the planning process, and that we can't afford to have any divisions among the group.
 - Bill Swiatek said that planning is a process. This is a 20-year concept plan, and the concepts will have to be studied and discussed. He said that, to Penny's point, there is a lot more left to do detail-wise and continuing community discussions that need to occur.
- Jeanette Swain said that she brought economic development up because the plan says that the retail sector is stagnant, and the plan will encourage more businesses to locate in the area. She said that that will bring jobs to the area. She asked why there is not an economic development person here to explain the vision on how to move the community forward from a stagnant retail sector.
 - Sandra Smithers said that we need to have a plan to bring in a younger population that will support the retail sector.
 - Jeanette Swain suggested bringing in office development to create jobs and help support the retail sector.
 - Sandra Smithers said that we can also create housing that will accommodate younger residents. This demographic is likely to spend more money in the retail sector than seniors. We do not have the resources to handle a senior citizen community. A lot of young people come back to the community to visit, but they do not have a place to live.
 - Bill Swiatek said that the marketing study tackles all of those issues, including housing, retail, and offices. He said that he will invite Tamarra Morris to talk about economic development. We can hear from her what the County's vision is to implement economic development opportunities.
- Bill Swiatek gave an update on the OJT (on-the-job training) subcommittee. He said that they have been working on a map that identifies local labor preference areas based on poverty rates and unemployment rates.
 - Ky Robinson said that the New Castle County economic development person should be working with the OJT subcommittee.
 - Ky Robinson gave some background on the OJT subcommittee. He said that the committee identified that there was a lack of opportunities for local residents in local construction jobs. The OJT subcommittee is working on figuring out a way to implement

DelDOT's OJT program at a smaller scale. The subcommittee ran into some issues figuring out how to make sure that the people who benefit from those programs live in the community. We looked at models in other states and found that other states are doing exactly what we are trying to do.

- Renie Roberts asked how they are going about recruiting, and if there are any restrictions to hiring, such as a criminal record.
 - Ky Robinson said that construction is perfect for hiring people with criminal records, as there are no restrictions against having a criminal record. The OJT subcommittee is working on making a local hiring process as part of this OJT program. First, the program would have to be put into place. We created a pre-enrollment process online, where people can pre-enroll for the Route 9 OJT program.
- Bill Swiatek asked Sandra Smithers if she had any updates on the hometown overlay.
 - Sandra Smithers said that we have not made progress. She said she does know that Councilman Street would be supportive of it.
 - Ky Robinson said that on March 7 we put together a formal request to Councilman Street, asking what the next steps would be to move forward with the process. We haven't heard back yet.
- Bill Swiatek gave an update on the Eden/Hamilton Park Survey. He said that it was reviewed by the University of Delaware institutional review board.
 - Caleb Jervay said that we started doing the survey today. He said that we started on Pyles Lane, which was designated to be the first area in the Hamilton Park community. Dr. Perez hopes to finish this Hamilton Park section in the next two or three weeks. He said that he does not think it will take that long. After that, we will move on to Eden Park. He said that the slow part was getting the approval for the survey from all of the officials and making sure that the right terminology was chosen to ensure that no one would be offended.
- Randi Novakoff let the committee know about a community event. She handed out a flyer for the Community Health Fair on July 19.
- James Parker handed out a flyer for Castle Unity Day on July 28.
- The next Monitoring Committee meeting will be held on Tuesday, August 21 at 4:30 pm in the Scriptorium of the Route 9 Library.