



**PETER C. SCHWARTZKOPF**  
*Speaker of the House*  
STATE REPRESENTATIVE  
14<sup>th</sup> District

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
STATE OF DELAWARE  
LEGISLATIVE HALL  
DOVER, DELAWARE 19901

COMMITTEES  
Legislative Council, Chair  
Ethics  
House Administration  
House Rules  
Veterans Affairs

**Route 1 Pedestrian Safety Task Force**  
**December 16, 2014**  
**Minutes**

Speaker Schwartzkopf called the meeting to order at 6:04pm. Present members of the Route 1 Pedestrian Safety Task Force included Co-Chairs Speaker Pete Schwartzkopf and DelDOT Sec. Shailen Bhatt, Sen. Ernie Lopez, Sussex County Councilwoman Joan Deaver, Sussex County Councilman George Cole, Mayor Samuel Cooper, State Police Lt. Mike Nelson, and Roger Roy. DelDOT representatives present included Mark Luszczyk, George Spadafino, Bobbie Geier, and Shante Hastings. Mayor Diane Hanson was present as well.

The group began the meeting by reviewing the DelDOT plan for the corridor. The plan calls for increasing lighting from just north of the Five Points (US 9) intersection to the Lewes-Rehoboth Canal Bridge. Unfortunately, DelDOT shared that due to financial constraints they cannot light the entire corridor. Sidewalk improvements are a key component to the DelDOT plan. The committee acknowledged the merit of multi-use paths but noted that will take years to implement due to right-of-way acquisitions.

Lt. Nelson shared the good work of the Department of Corrections to maintain the existing sidewalks. Inmates have hauled the grass off the sidewalks. Lt. Nelson called on DOC and DelDOT to maintain this project moving forward acknowledging that during the spring and summer it will be more difficult to get a DOC crew to Route 1. There is a challenge getting transportation for inmate to the work sites. Sec. Bhatt offered to work with Lt. Nelson to make sure this project is maintained and committed to work out the logistics.

The committee then went through the ADA crosswalks established in the DelDOT plan. Once the project is completed there will be 8 total ADA crosswalks- 6 new crosswalks and 2 existing. DelDOT's original plan called for 12 new ADA crosswalks which they reduced to 6 per the input of the group.

**Crosswalk 1- Dartmouth Drive, Lewes NEW**

Speaker Schwartzkopf confirmed with Mark Luszczyk that the pedestrian crossing would only be triggered if a pedestrian was present and pressed the button. Mark clarified that if the beacon is triggering without a pedestrian present there is a malfunction and DelDOT will be sent out to fix it. Speaker Schwartzkopf noted that emergency vehicles can throw off a light sequence for 2 or 3 cycles, which is unavoidable.

**Crosswalk 2- Postal Ln & Melson Rd EXISTING**

The committee discussed the existing problems at this intersection. Lt. Nelson specifically noted that eastbound traffic turning northbound have to sit at the light which only lets 3 cars go at a time. This causes road rage and frustration. Typically these people are coming from Plantation Road. Mark Luszczyk suggested a review of that intersection to make it more efficient.

**Crosswalk 3- Road House Midway NEW**

#### **Crosswalk 4- Rd 274/Old Landing Rd NEW**

Speaker Schwartzkopf suggested moving the crosswalk to the south side of the intersection due to the Hotel and Atlantic Liquors. The Speaker reiterated the need to place these crossing where convenient for pedestrians, so that the crosswalks get used. Lt. Nelson suggested moving the DART bus stop to be with the crossing. George Spadafino explained that DelDOT is reviewing all the bus locations to line them up with the crosswalks. Speaker Schwartzkopf asked if there will be bus shelters at the bus stops. Sec. Bhatt explained that the shelters are placed based on ridership. Each shelter costs \$30,000. Roger Roy suggested selling advertising space on the shelters to cover the costs. Councilwoman Deaver disagreed citing the existing sign clutter along the corridor as a distraction to drivers. Speaker Schwartzkopf suggested that DelDOT at least install benches so people won't sit on the curb with their feet in the bus lane. Lt. Nelson suggested contacting DOC for assistance with the benches.

#### **Crossing 5- Camelot Dr. NEW**

The group noted the KMART located across from Camelot Dr.

#### **Crossing 6- Holland Glade NEW**

This crossing will be located on the north side of the intersection between the Tanger Outlets. This will be a HAWK beacon crossing. Speaker Schwartzkopf suggested that if the area gets developed further they can consider making this a full crossing. Mark Luszczyk noted that they will need the cooperation of the outlets. Sec. Bhatt added that DelDOT is interested in getting partners to solve the traffic problems created by increased development.

#### **Crossing 7- Rehoboth Ave NEW**

There will be a HAWK beacon by Applied Bank. It will be a split crossing system. So a pedestrian would cross half of the road and stop in the median. Then they would push another crossing button to cross the rest of the way. There will be two independent crossing systems at this location. Mark Luszczyk noted that DelDOT is still reviewing this crossing plan to make sure it is a safe option.

#### **Crossing 8- Bay Vista Rd EXISTING**

Speaker Schwartzkopf suggested moving this crossing to Big Fish at Church St. where more people are crossing. Mark Luszczyk explained that the placement of this crossing was because there was already a light at Bay Vista Rd. He added that the traffic study showed that a lot of people were using this crossing. Roger Roy noted that YMCA is a big draw for pedestrians. Mark Luszczyk suggested keeping this crossing at Bay Vista Rd and monitoring its usage. A HAWK beacon could be considered later on.

Speaker Schwartzkopf summarized the crossing plan that now consists of 8 total ADA crosswalks, a reduction from the original DelDOT plan calling for 14 ADA crosswalks.

Sen. Lopez noted that he has received positive feedback on addition of a new crosswalk at Old Landing Rd.

Se. Lopez motioned for the committee to agree with the DelDOT's lighting plan. Roger Roy seconded and the motion was unanimously accepted.

Roger Roy motioned for the committee to agree with DelDOT's sidewalk plan. Councilman Cole seconded and the motion was unanimously accepted.

Roger Roy motioned for the committee to agree with DelDOT's crosswalk plan. Councilman Cole seconded and the motion was unanimously accepted.

Councilwoman Deaver motioned for the committee to encourage DelDOT to have seating at all bus stops. Councilman Cole seconded and the motion was unanimously accepted.

Sec. Bhatt motioned to accept the minutes from the previous meeting. Sen. Lopez seconded and the motion was unanimously accepted.

Sec. Bhatt explained the timeline for the DelDOT improvement project. The construction will start in the fall of 2014. Lt. Nelson noted that speed limits are still an issue and residents are looking at status quo next summer if construction is beginning in the fall. The committee discussed the current speed limits up and down the corridor. Speaker Schwartzkopf emphasized the need to slow people down before the Nassau Bridge. Lt. Nelson noted that when a HAWK beacon is installed you will have people approaching pedestrians at 45 mph.

Sec. Bhatt shared his concerns with speed limit changes and highlighted enforcement is a key component in speed control. Councilwoman Deaver inquired about the current use of radar speed signs. Speaker Schwartzkopf said that there are 3 radar speed signs up right now that he has put up with Sen. Lopez. Mark Luszczyk said that they do not have any data showing that the radar speed signs are effective. DelDOT is doing a study with University of Delaware to look into it. DelDOT currently allows legislators to pay for radar speed signs using Community Transportation Funds.

Mayor Cooper agreed that enforcement is important. Mark Luszczyk said road features make people slow down more than signs. He then explained DelDOT's procedure to determine posted speed limits. Speeds are based on data to set a reasonable maximum speed limit. Councilwoman Deaver suggested lowering the speed limit and then raising it in the winter. Mark Luszczyk said that DelDOT has changed speed limits seasonally in the past, but they no longer do that. Councilwoman Deaver noted for the record that she supports lowering the speed limit.

Sec. Bhatt said that lower the speed limit can cause crash rates to go up because a drivers' depth perception is off when the differential speed between cars is too great. Speaker Schwartzkopf added that the speed limit sign in Dewey works to slow down the first car. Sec. Bhatt agreed to take the reducing speeds as a suggestion. Mark Luszczyk stressed the importance of keeping the speed limit set based on the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile which is an industry best practice, but ensuring that the limit is being more strictly enforced and upheld in court. Speaker Schwartzkopf noted how difficult and dangerous it is for law enforcement to stop someone on Route 1 for a speeding ticket. Sec. Bhatt agreed to take the speed concerns as a suggestion.

Roger Roy reminded the committee of the lightening problem at the Forgotten Mile. Speaker Schwartzkopf pointed out that a lot of the lights at existing poles are very dim. Mark Luszczyk explained that the wood poles are owned by the utilities.

The committee recommended doing a light audit in the Forgotten Mile to improve lighting. Consistent lighting is important to prevent very bright spots making dark spots even more difficult to see. Mayor Hanson asked if there was a decision on barriers. Sec. Bhatt said that the committee is giving pedestrians more options by adding crossings but has not come to a consensus on barriers.

Councilman Cole suggested identifying dangerous crossings and putting up signs that say “pedestrians yield to cars”. Anytime cars are driving over 25 mph, signage should not be encouraging pedestrians to enter the roadway.

George Spadafino added that those types of signs could definitely be considered in the areas where there are no crosswalks. Speaker Schwartzkopf identified the Forgotten Mile as a long strip in the corridor with no crosswalks. The committee noted the importance of clear striping of the crosswalks to make them visible. Councilman Cole motioned for the committee to recommend DelDOT do a complete study of the Forgotten Mile. Roger Roy seconded the motion, and it was accepted unanimously.

Speaker Schwartzkopf noted that cars travel southbound out of Dewey at 50 mph while northbound drives 30 mph. Fatalities are not happening in Dewey, but outside where the speed limit is higher. Mayor Hanson also noted that Dewey puts up barriers on nights and weekends to prevent people from going into the roadway. Councilman Cole asked if it is the State’s responsibility to maintain pedestrian safety in Dewey. Mark Luszcz explained that the town is responsible for maintaining the lighting and signs. The committee recommended that DelDOT work with Dewey.

Speaker Schwartzkopf asked the committee to entrust the rest of the committee action to the co-chairs and legislators. Councilman Cole motioned to entrust the committee to those members. Roger Roy seconded, and it was agreed upon unanimously.

Mayor Cooper added that markings need to be improved in the bus lanes. Speaker Schwartzkopf asked why the bus lanes are even being used in the winter if the rest of the lanes are running smoothly.

Sec. Bhatt commented that the bus lane is not meant for all buses, just DART buses. Shutting down the bus lane for parts of the year will impact driver expectations. Mark Luszcz added that Sussex Cyclists has requested more separation between bike lanes and bus lanes. Mayor Cooper asked if the lane could say that they are meant only for DART buses.

The committee discussed striping improvement options including using solid line to separate the bus lane and through lanes, rumble strips, tapers to clearly denote when you should enter the right turn lane. Roger Roy motioned for the committee to recommend the addition of rumble strips and updated striping along the corridor. Councilman Cole seconded, and the motion was unanimously accepted.

Speaker Schwartzkopf suggested a concerted effort to educate bike riders where they can and can’t ride the sidewalk. You can ride on the sidewalk in Dewey but not in Rehoboth.

Sec. Bhatt said DelDOT will be doing a sign audit to remove clutter. They will be consulting with the State Troopers to make sure they are not removing any signs needed for enforcement.

Ray Quillen, a Lewes resident, requested help for bicyclists trying to cross Route 1 before the Nassau Bridge. There is a trail that connects at that point, but it is difficult to get across that curved road with cars going 65 mph. DelDOT did a study at the request of Rep. Briggs King. The project would cost \$500,000. He would like a dirt path to provide a safe way for people to cross temporarily.

Sec. Bhatt explained that this crossing will be addressed when the Georgetown to the Lewes trail is complete in a couple of years. They cannot put in a temporary path since the work needs to be ADA compliant.

Lloyd Schmitz suggested adding a full intersection light at St. Jude's Church where they currently have flashing lights. There is access from Janice Rd. and Red Mill Pond. Mark Luszcz said the flashing light is paid for by the Church. DelDOT has looked at that intersection, and it does not warrant a full signal.

Virginia Donnelly pointed out an especially dangerous situation near the Pelican Square. At the southbound lane left turn cut outs, you will have people trying to make a U-turn in the wrong lane. She suggested added cones so that people don't turn into the wrong cut out. She added that jay walkers should be getting tickets. The fire company could get volunteers to give out tickets.

Debbie Donovan expressed the need to educate the residents and visitors to the rules of the road. She suggested calling on the realtors, schools, and business owners to educate people because the general public has no idea. She asked if there were plans to improve the bus routes.

Sec. Bhatt explained that DelDOT is trying to add more fixed routes in Sussex County. They are adding a new transit facility in 2015 in Five Points.

Lloyd Schmitz asked if Dartmouth Drive will be safe to walk northbound. Sec. Bhatt said once the transit facility is up there will be a HAWK beacon at that crossing.

Jim Miller, a resident of Lewes, identified an intersection that should be examined, Kings Highway coming on to Route 1. The light does not let enough people through, so they cut through the berm of the road.

Karen Zakarian asked for the caution light in the forgotten mile to be up before the summer. Speaker Schwartzkopf and Sen. Lopez agreed to split the cost of the caution light through the Community Transportation Funds program and get it up by the summer.

Karen Zakarian complimented Dewey; it is evenly lit, has decent crosswalks, police enforcement, lower speeds, and signage. She asked the committee to consider reducing the speed limit throughout the corridor.

Dave Wilson, representative of the Corrado family, expressed concerns that a full intersection is not being installed at Holland Glade Road. This may negatively impact Corrado Inc.'s ability to lease their land at that intersection.

Roger Roy thanked Speaker Schwartzkopf, Sen. Lopez and Rep. Smyk for putting this task force together. The meeting adjourned at 8:10pm.