

**MINUTES OF THE
TARA HILL AREA TRAFFIC CALMING TASK FORCE**

Wednesday, December 1, 2004

Dublin Municipal Building – 5200 Emerald Parkway

Present:

Task Force Members

Randy Luikart	John Jung	Tina Wray	Amy Gerhart, absent
Amy Salay	Vince Blaeser	Kimberly O'Brien	
Tim Lecklider	Dave Cecutti	Deborah Frazier	

Staff Members:

Paul Hammersmith, Jeannie Willis, Ken Richardson

Consultants:

Joe Sullivan, R. D. Zande & Assoc.
Dave Samuelson, R.D. Zande & Assoc.
Tina Wawzkiewicz, R.D. Zande & Assoc.
Brian Hagerty, R. D. Zande & Assoc.

Call to Order:

Mr. Luikart, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Lecklider moved to approve the minutes of the September 29, 2004 Task Force meeting.
Mr. Blaeser seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved.

Mr. Lecklider moved to approve the minutes of the October 13, 2004 Task Force meeting. Mr. Blaeser seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved.

Mr. Lecklider moved to approve the minutes of the October 27, 2004 Task Force meeting. Mr. Jung seconded the motion. The minutes were approved 8-0. Ms. Wray abstained.

Public Comment

Christian Sarych, 6905 Conquistador Ct., suggested that a double yellow line be added to the entire length of Tara Hill Drive. There is such a yellow line at the Sells Mill School. The double yellow lane would prevent passing, therefore, speed bumps could be staggered across the lanes, perhaps at 250-ft. intervals. At that distance, emergency vehicles could navigate between the speed bumps.

Charles Kuntz, 5711 Tara Hill Drive, stated that the Tara Hill residents recently submitted a petition to City Council requesting that Council ensure that the Tara Hill Traffic Calming Plan that is ultimately approved does not include the current recommendation that would significantly reduce the on-street parking on Tara Hill Drive, particularly in the section in which he lives. He requests that the Task Force make an on-site visit to study the impact the lost parking would have on his neighborhood. It would impact mail delivery, leaf collection, snow removal and the access of workmen, as well as other things. According to this plan, the street would be narrowed to 11 feet. The petitioners request that this particular section of the plan be reconsidered and

redesigned. The main entrance to the Recreation Center is on Post Road, a non residential road; yet, plans are to divert traffic from Post Road. Tara Hill, a residential street, is the back door to the Rec Center. According to Mr. Samuelson, 30 percent of the Recreation Center traffic uses the Tara Hill access. The residents are concerned that this plan has been developed without sufficient regard as to its possible impact on the homeowners in his area.

Mr. Lecklider stated that he wanted to address some of the issues raised by Mr. Kuntz. He stated that the Task Force exists as a result of an earlier Tara Hill petition for this study and for a plan to address their traffic issues. At this point, thousands of dollars have been spent on traffic consultants, and the City is poised to spend $\frac{3}{4}$ of a million dollars to implement a traffic-calming plan for the residents on Tara Hill. The Task Force has not conducted its study without concern about impacts on the residents.

Mr. Kuntz responded that they have no objection to the overall study. It is this one section which seems to disregard the needs of the residents. The existing number of on-street parking places is 78. According to the present draft, the number of spaces would be reduced to 18-22 -- a loss of 56-60 parking places. This section of Tara Hill would be unfairly impacted.

James Kincaid, 5740 Tara Hill Drive, stated that he moved to Dublin last August. He was aware of the discussion regarding traffic calming on Tara Hill. However, no actual plan existed whereby the residents could know specifically what the City had in mind for Tara Hill. The previous owner of his house had expressed the opinion that the primary issue was school traffic. The first opportunity they have had to learn the City's intentions was at the open house, where they discovered that their home will be impacted to the degree that they will not have on-street parking. They will be unable to have family over or holiday events. Their guests should not have to park three blocks away. They do not suggest that the entire plan be discarded, only that some additional attention be given to their neighborhood and a compromise reached.

Ms. O'Brien inquired what, in his opinion, should be changed in his area in this plan.

Mr. Kincaid stated that in his opinion, bumpouts do not slow traffic; those should be deleted. Two of the bumpouts negate three of his neighbors from having on-street parking.

Mr. Jung stated that he is pleased with the public comments from the open house. The Task Force was looking for feedback. Previously, the Task Force worked amongst themselves with no feedback. This draft of the plan is only that -- a draft, and it will remain a fluid document for the next few months. It is not a cut and dried plan. The Task Force is seeking input regarding this set of original suggestions, then the plan will be taken back to the drawing board. It will be several months before a final draft is realized.

Mr. Luikart stated that the Task Force members are not traffic experts, although they have learned much. The Task Force has held approximately 10 meetings. He acknowledged that, realistically, until there is something on which to provide feedback, it is difficult to attempt to do so. With the presentation of the plan at the open house, that is now possible and appropriate.

Ms. Salay noted that at no point in the process, even when the plan moves to construction, would the City cease to work with the homeowners to refine the details and honor their needs. Consensus of the Task Force was to conduct a license plate survey of Option A and Option D.

Mr. Luikart suggested that because one of the items on the agenda tonight is the discussion of on-street parking, that item be moved forward. He requested a report from the traffic consultant.

Ms. Wawzkiewicz showed a PowerPoint presentation depicting the on-street parking places proposed by the plan for the entire study area and specifically the neighborhood referred to by Mr. Kuntz. She explained the formula followed for determining the number of parking spaces. Using that formula, there are approximately 59 spaces between Muirfield and Wichita.

Ms. O'Brien noted that there is no parking on the north side of Tara Hill from the Athenry to Wichita. It was posted as a "No Parking" area several years ago, due to a trash problem in that area. It was dealt with as a safety issue.

Ms. Wawzkiewicz stated that would reduce the number by six spaces, for a total of 53 spaces in that segment of Tara Hill. She noted that the version of the plan they are now using is Concept 7, which was presented at the open house. In the next section of Tara Hill, the formula indicates 31-34 parking spaces after traffic-calming implementation. In the next segment, Wichita to Shady Nelms, the current 81 spaces would be reduced to 36-37 parking spaces by traffic-calming implementation. There is a nice area for parking between curb bulbs between Beery and Raymond.

Mr. Lecklider stated that the proposed reduction in parking spaces does appear to be dramatic; however, in the present situation – pre traffic-calming, there is not full use of the available on-street parking spaces.

Ms. Wawzkiewicz agreed. On a daily basis, the 81 spaces between Shady Nelms and Wichita are not all needed. The only occasions on which they are all utilized are City events, such as the Fourth of July and Irish Festival, and school events, such as the football games.

Mr. Lecklider questioned if there is actually parking all the way down Tara Hill to Wichita for the high school football games.

Mr. Cecutti indicated that has occurred.

Mr. Sarych asked if it is appropriate to reduce the parking by more than 50% for these homes – 81 spaces to 36.

Mr. Samuelson stated that there is some parking to the sides of the homes, for instance, on Fallen Timbers. The Task Force did attempt to eliminate parking directly in front of the residences on Tara Hill.

Mr. Sarych questioned the inconsistency. On one hand, the Task Force rejects vertical traffic-calming measures due to the impact of a couple of seconds in response time for emergency

vehicles. In this case, a proposed traffic-calming measure would also have a significant impact on some Tara Hill residents, yet, the Task Force will not review or reconsider this component of the plan. Shouldn't both situations be treated similarly? If not, it would appear that the reduction of parking spaces is in itself a high priority.

Ms. Salay responded that Tara Hill is a main response route for the Washington Township Fire Department to approximately 2,000 homes, and they have indicated a preference that no traffic calming be implemented on Tara Hill. However, if the City should proceed with a plan, they particularly requested that the plan not include speed bumps. Navigating speed bumps causes significant wear and tear on the equipment, but primarily, the issue is one of safety and comfort for emergency patients. An incident in Waterford Village after the speed bumps were installed there revealed the seriousness of this issue. With the on-street parking issue, the Task Force attempted to place traffic-calming measures away from driveways so as to cause the least impact to those homes. In addition, actual impact is not a reduction of 81 parking spaces to 36 spaces. Because a much smaller number of vehicles use the parking, the impact is corresponding smaller.

Ms. O'Brien noted that in addition to those considerations, there is also the issue of property values. Speed bumps tend to reduce the property values of the homes on a street, as they "announce" that there is a traffic problem on that street.

Mr. Luikart stated that the dialogue tonight has been beneficial. The Task Force will make certain that it properly balances the loss of parking with the other factors that should be considered.

Mr. Buckhan, 5729 Tara Hill Road, stated that in his immediate area there are seven homes with seven parking spaces between Ketchum and Literary. There are four drivers in his family with parking needs. The proposed plan eliminates all the parking in front of his home. There is one spot between his home and his neighbor's and one across the street, but those neighbors will have needs for those spaces. This plan particularly impacts his family.

Ms. Wawskiewicz stated that it would be possible to shorten the choker to permit 4-6 additional parking spaces.

Mr. Buckhan stated that, in addition to the choker, the plan includes a median above Ketchum Court and a median below. With the medians, is a choker even necessary? It is the choker that eliminates the parking.

Ms. Wawskiewicz responded that the choker could be reduced, but one criteria to which the consultants were attempting to adhere was the spacing of the devices. If a device is placed every 300 feet, the plan is more effective. If the choker were entirely eliminated, it could reduce the effectiveness of the traffic-calming plan.

Ms. Salay stated that a trade-off could be made, however. If these residents were willing to concede that the traffic calming would not be as effective in front of their homes, the choker could even be eliminated.

Mr. Buckhan stated that he did not believe simply reducing the choker would return the necessary spaces.

Ms. Wawskiewicz stated that the current choker includes an area between driveways, which could be redesigned as parking space.

Ms. Salay suggested an alternative – traffic bulbs with striped parking places between.

Ms. Wawskiewicz agreed that would be possible.

Mr. Lecklider stated that, initially, the Task Force's reaction was also that the plan had too many devices, but the consultants explained the need for so many devices.

Ms. Wawskiewicz stated that studies indicate that if the space between devices is increased more than the recommended 300 feet, that for every 100 feet over, speeds are increased by 1 mph. 300-foot spacing is optimal.

Mr. Buckhan inquired if an alternate plan with speed bumps existed. Mr. Buckhan stated that if the plan presented at the open house is not a final plan but a working plan, and other options or concessions could be made, would it be possible for the public to view the other plan and perhaps, combine the two?

Ms. Wawskiewicz stated that such a plan was developed. In the Stage 2 report, a plan for speed bumps was the first option; however, with the optimal spacing of 300 feet, that would result in 14 speed bumps on Tara Hill Drive.

Mr. Buckhan suggested that perhaps speed bumps could be used in only one area or two, not the length of Tara Hill. For instance, the use of speed bumps in their area would have removed the need to eliminate so many parking spaces. Would it be possible to see the other plan?

Mr. Hammersmith stated that staff could provide copies of the Stage 2 Study Report to them.

Ms. Frazier stated that the only equitable solution is to individually consider all of the homes which would be impacted by the loss of parking spaces. She added that, initially, most of the Task Force members anticipated developing a plan that consisted primarily of speed bumps. However, after learning the negative aspects of speed bumps – noise, loss of property values, difficulties for emergency response, ineffectiveness of “soft” bumps, the use of more aesthetic and also more effective traffic-calming was preferred.

Mr. Buckhan stated that their intent is not to critique the Task Force, just to critique the plan.

Mr. Kuntz stated that this plan impacts many homes too severely with a total loss of parking. Those homes cannot have visitors or service calls. That should not be necessary in the City of Dublin. Traffic designers should be able to work out a traffic-calming plan that does not impact any homes so significantly. He requested that the Task Force and traffic consultants look at this issue in the field, and, subsequently, the traffic consultant suggest a better plan for their area.

Mr. Kincaid stated that he completed the same tour that the Task Force took to view traffic calming measures within the Columbus area. He did not observe one instance in which the use of all the devices was combined in one area. He observed the use of only one device in an area.

Mr. Sarych inquired the width of the streets and the diameter of the traffic circles. There are 18-wheelers with 53-foot trailers that travel east on Tara Hill as a shortcut to Post Road or Perimeter. Could an 18-wheel truck unexpectedly encountering a traffic circle successfully navigate it?

Ms. Wawskiewicz responded that it could.

Mr. Sarych inquired if these large tractors could be prohibited from using Tara Hill as a shortcut.

Ms. Salay stated that there are streets that are designated “no trucks permitted,” however, it is necessary that alternative access to their destination is available. Obviously, moving vans and delivery trucks will need to travel Tara Hill.

Mr. Sarych asked the Task Force to remember that in the winter, the snow on Tara Hill is not cleared to the curb, therefore, the road becomes much narrower.

Ms. O’Brien stated that it would, then, be possible to post Tara Hill as “no through trucks” as there are alternative routes.

Mr. Hammersmith affirmed that would be possible, however, the City has not observed an abundance of through truck traffic on Tara Hill.

Mr. Sarych inquired how moving days would be addressed in these narrowed areas; the moving vans could block the street for the entire day.

Mr. Hammersmith responded the resident would contact the City to inform them of their plans, and the City would grant a special accommodation for the one-day event. The road would then become one lane for the day. It would be similar to when a utilities truck must block a street lane for utilities work.

Mr. Lecklider stated that at Belvedere the entrance was designed with a median. There is no on-street parking in that area. Whenever someone moves, traffic must be diverted to the other side of the median.

Ms. Salay stated that the Kendall Ridge and Ballantrae were designed to have on-street parking on one side only or on neither side.

Mr. Lecklider stated that streets are now created narrower than they were previously. There are several reasons it is desirable to have less asphalt.

Ms. Wawskiewicz stated that it would be possible to reduce or shorten the bumpouts to permit more parking in these areas and to shorten the choker.

Ms. O'Brien inquired if there are any homes that would lose all their on-street parking with this plan.

Ms. Salay observed there were two.

Ms. O'Brien stated that for those homes, at least, it would be essential to re-evaluate and revise the plan.

Ms. Wawskiewicz stated that the choker could be shortened to allow one space on the other side.

Ms. Salay suggested protected parking between the chokers.

Ms. Wawskiewicz stated that the space is insufficient to provide that.

Ms. Salay stated that the medians were chosen for the visual aspect, but perhaps protected parking between two curb bulbs could be a better alternative.

Ms. Wawskiewicz responded that it is necessary to provide a 26-foot gap between the bays.

Ms. Salay stated there is an example of this on Norn Street in front of the Balgriffin Park. While traffic-calming is achieved, parking space is also maintained.

Mr. Lecklider inquired how far east the first phase would extend.

Ms. Wawskiewicz responded that the first phase would extend to Literary Lane.

[microphones could not pick up – unintelligible]

Mr. Hammersmith stated that this is a conceptual drawing. It is anticipated to draw comments and suggestions. This drawing will be revised and details addressed in the final design stage. At that time, the consultants and staff will return to the field to address the finer points. He noted that a typical, residential, non-collector street in Dublin is 28 feet, and parking is prohibited on one side of the street. Throughout the community, parking is generally prohibited on one side of the street. If Tara Hill were a typical street, it would have 50% less parking than it presently has. Parking on both sides occurs only on Dublin's wider streets, and they tend to be the more problematic.

[Citizen comment unintelligible]

Mr. Hammersmith responded that speed bumps tend to encourage the driver to speed after crossing them. That has been the experience on Martin Road. He noted that the concept plan attempts to maintain consistency in devices, not to have an extensive variety of devices.

Mr. Jung stated that the issue is whether it is possible to provide more parking than this plan proposes. It is certainly possible, and if more parking can be provided with more aesthetically

appealing devices than speed bumps, that is a win-win situation. The majority of the residents he has spoken with prefer not to have speed bumps.

Discussion re. Open House

Mr. Luikart stated that he was pleased with the turnout for the Open House. He heard some new viewpoints, one was that traffic calming on Tara Hill is unnecessary. Another individual preferred only stop signs be used. He spent considerable time discussing the different traffic devices. He believed the exchanges were good.

Mr. Blaeser stated that he became involved in discussions regarding the traffic studies and the data regarding volumes. There was surprise at the number of homes that must use Tara Hill and the fact that those homes generate 2,000 of the 4,000 trips per day down Tara Hill.

Ms. Frazier stated that she spoke with some individuals who had expectations that the City would be addressing traffic outside Tara Hill.

Mr. Cecutti stated that there were several individuals who inquired why the City was implementing any traffic calming on Tara Hill. One person, a Tara Hill resident, shared that she had seen a significant reduction in traffic volume on Tara Hill over the past year -- perhaps because of the opening of the new high school, and that volume was ceasing to be the issue it once was.

Mr. Lecklider stated that he was pleased with the turnout. He discussed the stop sign issue with one individual, who was reassured by learning the City's intention not to remove the stop signs unless an alternate device replaced them.

Ms. Wawskiewicz noted that, excluding staff, the consultants, and Task Force, 80 individuals attended the Open House. She presented a summary of the written comments received from the public. The Task Force discussed those comments.

Ms. Frazier stated that in reference to the concern about the volume of traffic using Tara Hill to access the Recreation Center --when the Post Road left turn is constructed, that should be alleviated.

Ms. Salay stated that in reference to the gating of the Downpatrick entrance to the Rec Center -- even if Downpatrick were to be closed, traffic would use Tara Hill to reach either Coffman Road or Muirfield Drive and from there, reach Coffman Park Drive or Post Road. However, the left-turn lane onto Post Road will be implemented in the near future, and many residents will use the Post Road entrance to the Recreation Center.

Ms. O'Brien stated that she has requested a timeline on other City road projects outside the study area that could impact the traffic volume on Tara Hill.

Mr. Hammersmith responded that staff will develop that report for the Task Force.

Ms. Salay stated that some individuals had expressed to her that the implementation of the Post Road left-turn lane and the possible implementation of a traffic light at Sells Mill and Muirfield would make a significant difference in their evaluation of the Tara Hill traffic-calming plan.

Ms. O'Brien agreed. Depending upon the impact of those two projects on Tara Hill, some of the proposed devices may not be needed.

License Plate Survey

Mr. Samuelson stated that several meetings ago, the consultants presented four options for conducting license plate surveys to address through traffic on streets other than Tara Hill within the study area. Option A – survey of Adventure Drive through trips; Option B -- survey of Adventure Drive trips which include Tara Hill. Option C – survey of through trips on Shady Nelms Drive. Option D – survey of through trips on Sells Mill and Shady Nelms which include Tara Hill. The suggestion was to combine Option A and Option D, which would raise the survey cost to \$8,200. It is a complex issue to look at all those license plates and analyze their routes. Surveying all those intersections would involve 16 surveyors for each hour of the study. The cost of the data collection represents 60% of the fee.

Mr. Jung stated that it would be beneficial to know the number of trips that originate from outside the study area, coming from Muirfield Drive or Coffman Road to culminate at the Recreation Center.

Ms. Salay inquired if it would make more sense to collect that data after the Post Road left turn lane has been opened.

Mr. Jung stated that the expectation is that the Post Road left turn will reduce the amount of back door traffic to the Rec Center, but it will be impossible to evaluate that unless the amount of traffic before implementation of the left turn is known.

Ms. Salay inquired what the Task Force or City would do with that information. It would not likely precipitate any Council action. She does not anticipate that the City's professional staff or City Council members would advocate closing or gating the Downpatrick entrance to the Rec Center. There is a high volume of traffic to the Rec Center, and closing one of the three access points to the Rec Center would impact too many people. Reducing this particular impact on Tara Hill would impact too many other people. When this request was made to past Councils, they did not remove the access.

Ms. Frazier responded that may be the case. However, the Task Force has received numerous requests that the Downpatrick entrance to the Rec Center either be closed or gated, and the Task Force should attempt to address the issue or give them a satisfactory answer.

Mr. Luikart agreed that they are owed an answer, but it may be to communicate that closing the entrance is not really an option for Council. Collecting the data would give false hope that something more might be done.

Ms. Frazier stated that she disagrees, due to the number of comments the Task Force has received concerning the issue. A license plate survey is not one of the more expensive studies.

Mr. Hammersmith stated that he agrees with Ms. Salay. He does not see a future scenario in which that entrance would be closed. If the Task Force simply wants to share the data, it can be collected for that purpose. He added that the Post Road entrance will definitely happen. It is in the Coffman Park Expansion plan. Also, a significant number of residents like the Downpatrick entrance; it is a convenience for them. Determining what percent of the traffic from Tara Hill to the Rec Center is from outside the study area, however, would require the license plate survey.

Mr. Samuelson stated that the only other alternative for collecting that information could be the Rec Center membership records. Theoretically, it should be possible to determine the same information, a little less precise, perhaps.

Ms. Salay suggested placing a tube counter at all three entrances to the Rec Center to collect raw numbers regarding how many people are using that entrance, even though their point of origination could not be known. When the Post Road entrance is complete, the count can be taken again and the impact could, in general, be determined. She suggested that the decision be made by Council regarding whether or not to collect the data or save the money.

Mr. Hammersmith responded that, if that is the Task Force's direction, staff will pose the question to Council.

Ms. O'Brien stated that she believes the numbers are important. After all of the events that have occurred to Tara Hill, it is perceived that the traffic volume has increased; however, no actual data collection has occurred. It would be helpful in moving forward with plans on Tara Hill to be able to evaluate effectiveness. In addition, the history on the issue seems to indicate Council's intent to look at the amount of Rec Center traffic volume generated on Downpatrick.

Ms. Wray agreed that the historical information provided at the last meeting indicated that the decision to gate the access at Downpatrick was deferred to a future date when the Rec Center traffic through that access could be evaluated. This would seem to be the appropriate time.

Mr. Luikart stated that the majority of the Task Force members seem to want this information. Therefore, the surveys should be completed.

Mr. Hammersmith suggested that the surveys could not be completed until Spring. In addition, at the beginning of the January would probably be a good time to provide a Task Force status report to Council. Perhaps the request to complete the license plate survey could be included in that report.

Discussion of Emails

Mr. Luikart deferred this discussion to the next meeting.

Ms. Willis stated that blanket response letters were sent to each person who sent an email to the Task Force.

Ms. O'Brien suggested that staff evaluate the timing of the traffic signal at Post/Coffman/and Emerald Parkway. To avoid using Tara Hill, she tries to use Post Road, but she often must sit at the light for a lengthy period of time. Mr. Hammersmith indicated that is the case, but staff would be looking at signal timing in terms of progression in the near future.

Mr. Samuelson stated that actually the City is attempting to favor direction to the right and north at that light.

Next Meetings/Next Steps

The next Task Force will be held on Wednesday, January 12.

Mr. Hammersmith indicated that a draft of the Task Force status report would be provided to Task Force members on the 12th so that they can discuss and revise the report and it can be included in Council's packet for the January 18 Council meeting.

Mr. Cecutti inquired about the proposed meetings with the residents of individual streets, such as Adventure.

Mr. Hammersmith suggested that they all be scheduled for the same night, but at three different stages.

Ms. O'Brien inquired when the temporary set-up of the devices in the first phase would occur.

Mr. Hammersmith indicated it could probably be set up in March.

Ms. O'Brien stated that would give staff and the Task Force April and May to complete the final plan.

Ms. Frazier requested information regarding comparative costs – what have similar projects cost?

Mr. Hammersmith reported that, by way of comparison, the Muirfield-Brand roundabout was approximately \$1.6 million. A speed hump costs approximately \$5,000.

Consensus of the Task Force was to conduct a license plate survey of Option A and Option D. The Task Force meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Submitted by:

Deputy Clerk of Council