

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

September 29, 2004

Dublin Municipal Building – 5200 Emerald Parkway

Present:

Task Force Members

Randy Luikart

John Jung

Kimberly O'Brien

Amy Salay

Amy Gerhart

Dave Cecutti

Tim Lecklider

Deborah Frazier

Tina Wray

Vince Blaeser

Staff Members:

Paul Hammersmith, Jeannie Willis, Ken Richardson, Sandra Puskarcik, Cristie Keller-Wilt

Guests:

R.D. Zande Consultants: Joe Sullivan, Dave Samuelson, Brian Hagerty, Tina Wawszkiewicz

Call to Order:

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

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Jung moved to approve the minutes of the September 8, 2004 Task Force meeting.

Ms. Wray seconded the motion.

Vote on the motion: Ms. Salay, yes; Mr. Luikart, yes; Mr. Blaeser, yes; Mr. Cecutti, yes; Mr. Jung, yes; Ms. Gerhart, yes; Ms. Frazier, yes; Ms. Wray, yes; Mr. Lecklider, abstain; Ms. O'Brien, abstain.

Public Comment

There was no public comment at this time.

Neighborhood Communications Plan

Mr. Luikart noted that he had forwarded a communications plan matrix to Task Force members preceding tonight's meeting. He suggested that beginning with that matrix, the Task Force further develop the plan. To assist the Task Force, Ms. Cristie Keller-Wilt, City Community Relations Division, was present to explain the City's typical communications strategy.

Ms. Keller-Wilt stated that it is important to keep the residents of the Tara Hill target area informed of the Task Force's work. Currently, the City has attempted to communicate the Task Force's efforts through postings at the City's website and the *Dublin Villager's* "In Touch" section. Utilizing the GIS database, the City could also provide mailings to the residents in the focus area. The objective is to involve the neighborhood and achieve the residents' buy-in for the Task Force traffic-calming plan for the Tara Hill neighborhood. Ms. Keller-Wilt suggested additional methods include:

- Neighborhood block captains providing updates through email, phone, door-to-door contact, or neighborhood phone trains -- residents sharing the communications responsibility by each being responsible for communicating to certain households.
- Including information in neighborhood association newsletters
- Including the City's website address in other communications

- Posting the Traffic Calming Plan at the Community Recreations Center, Kroger, and the Shoppes of Athenry.
- Placing sandwich signboards at designated entranceways within the neighborhood.
- Holding neighborhood block parties
- Including additional information for the Task Force in the local papers [the City would do this].

Mr. Luikart inquired about the TV public access channel – could the City’s list of meetings be updated in a timelier manner?

Ms. Keller-Wilt responded that Community Relations provides updated information for that channel on a two-week basis.

Mr. Luikart noted that many of Ms. Keller-Wilt’s ideas have already been suggested by the Task Force members and are the initial entries on the communications matrix. He invited the Task Force members to discuss Ms. Keller-Wilt’s additional ideas.

Chris Sarych, 6905 Conquistador Ct., suggested that Radio AM 1610 could also be used to inform the public. He added that the government access channel could not only provide Task Force meeting dates but could also display an illustration of a speed bump or traffic circle.

Mr. Cecutti inquired if the database of mailing addresses could be separated by subdivision.

Ms. Keller-Wilt responded that the data could be separated.

Ms. Salay stated that verbal communications have the inherent danger of miscommunication. To enable block captains to be consistent in their communications, there would need to be written materials to supplement those communications.

Mr. Luikart stated that currently the Task Force has only one page with links to additional pdf files. It requires the Internet user to have the ability to read pdf files. Rather than links, could the present single page be developed into more than one page?

Ms. Keller-Wilt responded that option is available.

Mr. Luikart stated that the Task Force has discussed the advantages of posting a map of the tour route previously taken by the Task Force to view existing traffic-calming devices. This would enable the residents to become educated regarding the different devices and to experience the “feel” and effectiveness of those devices.

Ms. Keller-Wilt noted that the City has a separate page devoted to the City’s traffic-calming plan. It provides information about different traffic-calming devices.

Ms. Willis stated that the Tara Hill Task Force page does provide a link to that page.

Ms. Salay stated that the advantage in providing the actual tour route is that it would enable an interested individual to drive to the sites and experience the traffic-calming devices as a motorist. That provides a deeper understanding of what traffic oval or traffic deflector would achieve. She found the tour to be very educational.

Ms. Frazier suggested that displaying photos of the specific sites could also be helpful.

Ms. Wray agreed that posting the route would be beneficial to those who are interested.

Ms. Gerhart stated that in addition to development of the Task Force page on the City's website, it would be helpful to have a brochure summarizing the key points of the Tara Hill traffic calming efforts and plan. This would provide a consistent message.

Ms. Keller-Wilt inquired the focus of the communications plan.

Ms. Frazier responded that it would summarize the Task Force's task and the concept plan for the area. It would bring the neighborhood up to date. It would also provide important snippets of data, such as the reason Tara Hill Drive qualified for this effort – the number of households in the area, the traffic volume, etc.

Mr. Luikart stated that the brochure would allow someone coming on board at this point in the process to quickly understand the purpose and scope of the task and where the Task Force is with that task at this point.

A resident inquired if, when the Task Force took their tour, they were able to question residents regarding their opinions of the effectiveness of the traffic-calming devices.

Ms. Salay responded that the Task Force was often able to learn the residents' perspectives. In Westgate, for instance, one resident shared that she purchased her home due to the traffic circle in that area. It was aesthetically pleasing, received rave reviews from the neighborhood and gave the resident assurance that there would be no future problems with traffic speeds in that neighborhood. Ms. Salay noted that, on the other hand, a street with numerous speed bumps appeared to provide a negative image. The Task Force members were able to make many observations regarding the effectiveness of the devices, many from the perspective of a pedestrian.

Mr. Lecklider stated that it is important for the neighborhood to know that the Task Force is not "guessing" at resolutions. Their recommendations are based on studies and conversations with professionals, including the City of Columbus Engineering Division. The Task Force has dedicated time and diligence to verify the expected effectiveness of these devices before the City expends a large amount of money to construct them.

Mr. Hammersmith suggested that the website include a link to the "running summary" of the Task Force meetings.

Ms. Gerhart stated that she would like to see a summary of the statistics posted – the numbers that justify the work, device descriptions, and the results that are anticipated.

Mr. Hammersmith noted that it would, in essence, be a “toolkit” of information – the critical facts, that could be used in conjunction with the meeting summaries.

Mr. Blaeser stated that the rolling summary should provide directions for obtaining additional information. He suggested that the information be provided in City of Dublin envelopes door-to-door in each of the affected neighborhoods. They would not need to be mailed. The civic associations could distribute the information, although some neighborhoods have associations; others do not.

Ms. Salay stated that Dublinshire does not have a civic association, so an alternative method of distribution would be needed for that neighborhood.

Mr. Hammersmith stated that a certain percentage of the residents are unaware of the information that is available at the City’s website. Perhaps signs could be placed that include the City’s website address.

Ms. Gerhart stated that the front page of the City’s website provides several links to key information. As soon as the Tara Hill Task Force page has been revised, the City’s front page could provide a link to that page.

Ms. Keller-Wilt suggested that the City’s website address be included in all Task Force communications. It could also be included in the “In Touch” ad.

Mr. Luikart referred to Ms. Gerhart’s earlier suggestion. He would like to see the front page of the City’s website provide a link to the Task Force page.

Ms. Keller-Wilt stated that could be done for a limited time.

Ms. Gerhart stated that should occur after the Task Force page has been improved from what is presently provided [mission statement, agendas, minutes, Task Force contacts].

Ms. Keller-Wilt stated that she hears two stages or phases of communication described – a summary of the Task Force’s mission and meetings and, then, the plan itself.

The Task Force consensus was that phase one of the communications plan would be to revise the Task Force page to include: the Task Force mission and history, general statistics, future meeting dates, a rolling general summary, the Task Force tour route, a link to a description of traffic-calming devices, and a link to contact Task Force members. The Task Force page would be accessed from a link on the City’s front page.

Ms. O'Brien suggested that a one-time mailer including all the above information be provided to the homes in the Tara Hill area. The mailing would indicate that continued information would be available online.

Mr. Jung stated that a bulk mailing to 2,200 residents would cost approximately \$350.

Ms. Puskarcik agreed that a one-time mailing, taking a step back to let everyone know how the Task Force has arrived at this point, would be a good idea. From that point forward, the residents would know how to obtain updates.

Mr. Jung suggested that an electronic contact for residents' comments also be provided.

Ms. Salay agreed. An electronic contact was utilized with the Coffman Park Expansion Task Force and proved to be a good source of public input.

Mr. Luikart inquired if staff would be able to move forward on these recommendations immediately.

Ms. Willis stated that it would take some time to condense the general information.

Mr. Hammersmith stated that a draft of the general summary would be provided to the Task Force when it is completed. If it cannot be ready for the 10-13-04 meeting, it will be provided for the 10-27-04 meeting.

Mr. Luikart inquired if the revisions to the website page, including the general summary, could be anticipated by mid-November. At that point, the direct mailing could be done.

Ms. Keller-Wilt responded that date would be feasible.

Mr. Hammersmith stated that mailing should include the date of the open house, which has been tentatively suggested for the month of November.

Mr. Luikart requested that the Task Force e-mail contact be established immediately, independent of the remainder of the plan.

Staff indicated they would establish the e-mail link immediately.

Mr. Luikart thanked Ms. Keller-Wilt for her assistance.

Task Force Working Draft of Traffic Calming Plan

Mr. Samuelson stated that at the last Task Force meeting, the Task Force separated into two teams. Utilizing two wall maps, each team developed a proposed traffic-calming plan. The Task Force then asked Zande & Associates to combine the best features of both into one draft plan for tonight's meeting. Two copies of that combined plan are displayed on the opposite walls of

Council chambers. The Task Force also requested preliminary investigations concerning potential traffic calming on other streets in the study area, if/when those might be considered.

Ms. Wawzkiewicz presented a PowerPoint presentation, which focused on the merged traffic-calming plan developed by the Task Force for Tara Hill Drive and reviewed the solutions suggested for each intersection/problem area, including: pavement treatment at Muirfield Drive, an oval, chicanes, medians, chokers, sidewalk in area lacking sidewalk, narrowings, curb bulbs, and a mini-circle. She noted that vertical traffic-calming elements were not used in this plan (Concept 6).

Lengthy discussion ensued concerning the pros and cons of alternatives for various intersections/sites along Tara Hill Drive. Ms. Wawzkiewicz noted that the spacing of the devices would affect the success of the devices. The plan places the devices at the recommended 300-600 feet apart.

The Task Force discussed implementing the traffic-calming plan in phases. Mr. Hammersmith noted that one advantage of phasing the plan is that the effectiveness of the elements in one phase can be evaluated before proceeding to the next phase. He suggested beginning either at the west end, which has the greatest number of complaints regarding speed, or the middle, which would address cut-through traffic. Some traffic-calming elements already exist on the east end, such as stop signs, tree canopies, and on-street parking. He noted that other traffic plans for the neighborhood or community could indirectly affect the Tara Hill traffic-calming plan.

Ms. Wawzkiewicz stated that in regards to cut-through traffic, there are approximately 217 homes that must use Tara Hill on a daily basis, or 2,200 trips. Presently, the daily volumes are approximately 4,100.

A resident inquired what level of increased noise the traffic-calming devices would cause.

Mr. Hammersmith responded that consistent speed produces consistent engine noise without the sounds of braking. One of the pleasant surprises of the Muirfield-Brand roundabout is that the intersection is now quiet. Previously, the intersection was much noisier. The speed humps on Martin Road also produce noise – braking and rattling sounds as the vehicles cross the humps and the sound of vehicle acceleration between the humps. This is a source of annoyance for the neighborhood.

Mr. Lecklider noted that some residents have complained that stop signs produce a similar noise level. Air pollution is another byproduct of the vehicle acceleration.

Mr. Hammersmith stated that with the Tara Hill traffic-calming plan, the objective should be to use devices that create a consistent traffic speed.

Mr. Samuelson stated that the last intersection study was completed in 1996, and Sells Mill and Tara Hill were two of the twelve studied. At the time, Tara Hill was not signalized. The traffic volume at the Sells Mill/Muirfield intersection during the morning and afternoon peak hours was

approximately 60 cars more per hour than it is today. The general rule is that peak hour volume represents 10% or more of daily volumes, so sixty cars implies that 600 cars/day have been diverted to Tara Hill Drive. The additional implication is that if the Sells Mill intersection is signalized, the traffic could shift back to Sells Mill.

Mr. Lecklider agreed. That is a primary reason Adventure Drive is used – the traffic stops on the eastern end of Tara Hill.

Mr. Hammersmith noted that the initial study included speed data on Adventure Drive, therefore, it will be possible to gauge the effect of the Tara Hill traffic calming on Adventure Drive.

Ms. Frazier inquired if the data included cut-through traffic analysis.

Mr. Hammersmith stated that it did not. That requires a license plate survey, which is labor intensive to complete. Cut-through analysis was conducted at one other location – Roscommon Road. He added that the cut-through on Adventure Drive is probably within the City's allowable threshold of 20% of the daily traffic volume, per the City's traffic calming program.

Ms. Wawzkiewicz stated that the cost of Concept 6, the plan presented tonight, is estimated at \$775,000. The project could be completed in three phases.

Ms. Salay inquired if three phases costing approximately of \$250,000 - \$300,000 each appear reasonable.

Mr. Hammersmith responded that he believes it would be reasonable.

Ms. O'Brien noted that when some of the other traffic improvements under consideration are completed, it could affect what is needed on Tara Hill. Perhaps less would be needed in phase three than initially planned.

Mr. Hammersmith responded that could be true. For instance, the intersection at Sells Mill and Muirfield is close to meeting traffic signalization warrants. Also, in next year's budget process, he plans to request money for an intersection evaluation for Valleyview/Tullymore/Avery-Muirfield. If that were to be signalized, it would relieve the Tara Hill area.

Mr. Jung responded that even if the Valleyview intersection does not warrant traffic signalization by volume alone, it would be warranted for other reasons. The curve on Avery-Muirfield limits the sight distance and creates a dangerous situation.

Mr. Hammersmith stated that there may be better alternatives than signalization.

Mr. Jung noted that the west end of Tara Hill looks as though it will require resurfacing soon. Perhaps it would be economically advantageous to schedule the resurfacing in conjunction with that phase of traffic calming installation.

Mr. Hammersmith stated that it would be coordinated.

Ms. O'Brien inquired when the intersection improvements are scheduled for Post and Avery-Muirfield.

Mr., Hammersmith responded that intersection is currently under design, with construction expected next year. The Coffman Park Expansion Plan contains the caveat that the southbound left turn on Avery-Muirfield not be implemented until the redirection of Post Road is completed. He will recommend that the redirection be done as soon as possible, as it would also improve movements at the intersection of Post/Emerald Parkway.

Ms. Salay stated that Council is cognizant of the fact that in the future Dublin will be surrounded by development. Commuters from outside the City will want to reach destinations within Dublin or I-270. It would behoove the City to decide in advance which roads the City wants the cut-through traffic to use and to train traffic now to travel that direction. Hopefully, Perimeter will become the road of choice, and the effect on the neighborhoods will be negligible.

Mr. Hagerty pointed out that a cost for resurfacing has not been included in the estimate for traffic calming for Tara Hill. It includes the treatment at the end of Tara Hill and the cost of treated crosswalks. The type of treatment has not been selected. It could be bricks, bomanite or pressed asphalt.

Ms. Salay stated that the Task Force had suggested entry feature walls and neighborhood identification features.

Mr. Hammersmith stated that entry features at both ends of Tara Hill were included. There was hesitation to consider internal features, however. They are expensive and do not have any effect on traffic speed.

Mr. Lecklider suggested that a "soft" identification of the neighborhoods be used. It would not be necessary to use a neighborhood name. This would be a lower priority than the traffic calming devices.

Ms. Frazier inquired if any further considerations have been made concerning a gate at the Recreation Center.

Mr. Hammersmith stated that Ms. Willis is researching the history on the issue to determine if the gate was a requirement or condition of approval.

Ms. O'Brien stated that the gate should be implemented in conjunction with the left turn onto Post Road, not before.

Staff will continue their research concerning a gate at the Recreation Center and report their findings at the next committee meeting.

Ms. O'Brien stated that residents in that area have indicated that Council previously gave that direction to staff and assurance to the residents that a gate would be installed that would be opened when events indicated a need.

Ms. Salay stated that while residents in the immediate area of the Recreation Center may still embrace the idea, residents within the study area and to the north of Tara Hill may not be in favor of such action. They would have to take a more circuitous route to reach Coffman Park.

Ms. Frazier noted that the future expansion and enhancement of Coffman Park would draw more traffic to the area and more cut-through traffic through the Tara Hill area. Tara Hill Drive is the quickest route to the Recreation Center. When the Post Road access to the Recreation Center is made a meandering drive, as the Coffman Park expansion plan provides, access from the Tara Hill area will be preferable. She added that many residents recall that the gate was a condition of approval for the Recreation Center.

Mr. Lecklider stated that, unfortunately, none of the Council members who served at the time the Recreation Center was approved remain on Council. He recommended that the Task Force be careful not to convey false hopes pending direction from the present Council.

Ms. O'Brien stated that the complication in the discussion is the use of Coffman Park by Dublin Coffman High School students for school parking space.

Ms. Salay stated that she is interested in the City having a discussion with the schools concerning a mutual understanding regarding parking. Residents have complained about the driving behavior, specifically speeding, of the high school students. One component of the mutual understanding could be that if a student receives a speed violation, he/she no longer has parking privileges at Coffman Park.

Mr. Lecklider inquired how many parking spaces are used for Dublin Coffman parking.

Mr. Hammersmith estimated 150 spaces.

Mr. Jung inquired if an agreement exists allowing for the school's usage of the City's parking lot.

Ms. Salay responded that the City agreed to permit the students to use a certain area of the municipal parking lot. The school issues parking permits by lottery. Some students may be using Downpatrick to access the Coffman Park parking area.

Mr. Samuelson noted that their study indicates the school is permitted to use 180 parking spaces. He stated that at the last Task Force meeting, Zande associates were asked to consider possible traffic-calming measures on the other streets in the Tara Hill area, remembering that there are several projects that could divert traffic from the Tara Hill area – the roundabout at Brand/Muirfield, the southbound left turn at Muirfield/Post, and the possible signalization of the Sells Mill intersection.

Ms. Wawszkiewicz displayed a map of through streets in the Tara Hill area that are more than 22 feet wide, which would be eligible for traffic calming. On Sells Mills, they suggest a raised crosswalk near the school, protected marking, and possibly, medians. On Shady Nelms Drive, they propose the median/bulb option and mini circles. On Adventure Drive, which is the longest route and the same width as Tara Hill, they suggest chokers, medians, and perhaps a couple of mini circles. On Roscommon Road, they propose a 6-foot median and 3-foot chokers. The study indicates that Adventure Drive would be the most heavily impacted. Adventure Drive has numerous driveways, so at only one or two locations would traffic circles be feasible. However, Adventure Drive has the advantage of a natural traffic-calming element, road curvature.

Mr. Hammersmith stated that it would be necessary to define the appropriate triggers or benchmarks that would warrant traffic mitigation on the side streets. Otherwise, if traffic calming were placed on one street, such as Adventure Drive, residents on the other streets would expect the same. The intent was to pursue traffic mitigation on additional streets only if they proved to be impacted by Tara Hill's traffic calming. He suggested that staff assist in identifying those triggers.

Ms. Salay inquired if discussing these other options would indicate a deviation from the City's current traffic calming program.

Mr. Lecklider stated that any deviation would be justified on the basis that traffic calming on Tara Hill had impacted those streets.

Ms. Willis responded that would be true, unless it were internal traffic shifting to another location within the same neighborhood – internal cut-through traffic.

Ms. Salay suggested that a cut-through traffic survey be completed on Adventure Drive, Sells Mill, and the other larger streets to provide preliminary data for assessment.

Mr. Samuelson stated that Zande associates could do a license plate survey to determine the cut-through traffic volumes and to determine specifically who is using Adventure Drive.

Mr. Hammersmith stated that a survey could be conducted on Adventure Drive and Shady Nelms but probably would not be necessary on Sells Mills.

Ms. Gerhart stated the survey could be costly, and they may not want to spend money on more studies that could be used for a traffic-calming element.

Mrs. Frazier inquired the cost of the survey.

Mr. Samuelson responded that the cost would be minimal.

Ms. Frazier suggested that volunteers could conduct the surveys.

A Tara Hill area resident observed that the neighborhood does not realize the magnitude of the traffic calming proposed for Tara Hill. To him, it appears to be much more than is needed. He suggested that the City's law enforcement division focus on speed enforcement in the neighborhood, thereby reducing the need for other means of traffic calming.

Mr. Hammersmith stated that the City has a five-member traffic enforcement unit. However, they cannot focus all their efforts on the Tara Hill neighborhood, and their effectiveness is determined primarily by their presence. If the City wants to regulate driving behavior through the enforcement method, the fines should be \$500 or more.

Ms. Salay stated that she is very interested in Dublin trying the Neighborhood Pace Car program, as suggested by John Sliemers, Columbus City Engineer.

Ms. Wawszkiewicz summarized that the cost of the traffic calming for the side streets is estimated at \$320,000 bringing the total cost of traffic calming for the area to \$1 million.

Future Task Force Meetings/Plans

Ms. Gerhart inquired about Council's expectations and typical reception of recommendations provided by task forces.

Mr. Hammersmith responded that the Task Force would be expected to provide justification for their recommendations, and that, if their choices are validated, Council would be receptive. He noted that the Coffman Park Expansion Task Force provided an interim report to Council. This Task Force may also want to do that.

Mr. Lecklider suggested providing the rolling summaries to Council as well as an interim report.

Ms. Salay stated that the timing of that report could be coordinated with the open house/public forum.

Mr. Hammersmith stated that if the open house is scheduled in mid-November, the report to Council should probably occur at their November 1st Council meeting.

Mr. Jung inquired about a location for the open house.

Mr. Hammersmith suggested the Community Recreation Center.

Task Force consensus was to hold the open house/public forum in place of the November 17 meeting.

Ms. Salay stated that it would be critical to provide in a very visible manner the email opportunity to residents to offer their suggestions and comments regarding the proposed traffic calming in the Tara Hill area. Those initial responses from the public will be helpful in preparing for the public forum.

Ms. O'Brien expressed concern regarding staff's ability to complete all the necessary tasks for a mid-November open house in such a short timeframe.

Ms. Willis stated that most of the tasks would not be a problem. The general information section for the brochure and website would be more time consuming.

Task Force members indicated that they would each e-mail lists of critical general facts to Ms. Willis to assist her in identifying the information to be included in the general summary.

Mr. Hammersmith indicated that preceding the next meeting, staff would:

- develop the communications component
- identify a list of "triggers" for traffic calming on the Tara Hill area side streets
- obtain a cost estimate on conducting the license plate survey for cut-through traffic on Adventure Drive and Shady Nelms

The next meeting of the Task Force will be held on Wednesday, October 13. Additional meeting dates are October 20, November 17 (open house/public forum) and December 1.

The Task Force meeting was adjourned at 10:15 p.m.

Submitted by:

Deputy Clerk of Council