

**Record of the Community Meeting to Discuss Traffic Issues  
Luxmanor Citizen's Association and Others  
Tilden Holding School, 7:00 - 9:00 pm  
Wednesday, September 15, 2010**

LCA President Della Stolsworth opened the meeting at 7:25 pm by welcoming everyone and emphasizing that the purpose of the meeting was to define and discuss the traffic concerns in the neighborhood, not to make final decisions about remedies. She urged all to listen respectfully to each other and to put aside acrimony in the service of civilized, constructive community discussion and problem-solving. If we should decide to hire a traffic engineer to consult with us, we need to have a clear idea of what the issues are. Tonight's agenda is to go through the report of the Traffic Committee, available on the Luxmanor website, point by point. Comments will be limited to 2 minutes. Ken Hartman, representing Bethesda/Chevy Chase Regional Service Center was introduced. Reporting to the County Executive, his job is to advocate for county residents, helping them to identify and address issues of concern.

Renee Howell, chair of the LCA Board Traffic Committee, introduced and thanked the members of the committee. Representing different areas of the community, they solicited input from their neighbors and collaborated to produce a report listing specific traffic concerns with proposals for dealing with them. Committee members are: Jeff Abend, Bruce Dincin, Sandra Friedman, Dee Knapp, Carol Liu, Debbie Orsak, Ellen Paul, and Peggy Souza.

Renee reviewed the general objectives, strategies, and proposed timing for action contained in the traffic report.

**Objectives:** To increase safety for walkers, bike riders, and motorists; to preserve the aesthetics and residential character of the neighborhood; to increase a sense of community; and to put into place measures that do not require enforcement.

**Strategies:** Provide traffic calming and safety devices that add to visual appeal and enhance the sense of community without disrupting established traffic patterns; hire a traffic engineer to help ensure that actions taken will be effective.

**Timing:** The traffic committee and the LCA Board will prepare revised suggestions from tonight's meeting and present them to the community via the website and Greensheet in early October. The final form of a *Luxmanor Community Request for Action to the Department of Transportation* will be voted on by the LCA membership at the Luxmanor General Meeting on 10/21/10.

**Discussion of specific concerns identified in the traffic committee report.**

1. **Speed and cut-through traffic on Wayside Drive and Lux Lane between Ralston and Old Georgetown Road (OGR) in Windermere (led by Bruce Dincin).** Bruce pointed out that there is a great need for speed limit signs in this area. Most speeders are

residents, especially those in the Oaks development. The following options were discussed:

- a. 4-way stop signs (It was pointed out that getting stop signs, while taking effort, is one of the easier traffic calming remedies to accomplish.)
  - b. Traffic cameras
  - c. Electric signs that display the driver's speed
  - d. More police enforcement
  - e. No right turn out of the Oaks
  - f. A barrier on OGR to assist right turns out of Lux Lane (very poor visibility)
  - g. Speed bumps (While the county has taken a tougher stance on these than in the past, it might be worth a try to get some.)
  - h. Rumble strips
2. **Speed and pedestrian and bike safety on Tuckerman Lane between OGR and West Lake Drive, and effects on community and side streets (led by Ellen Paul).** Ellen pointed out that the current work on Tuckerman Lane is essentially just resurfacing. The two traffic lanes will be made a bit narrower, with wider shoulders. No bike lane will be installed. A new study of Tuckerman between OGR and Gainesborough is planned for 2012. The county has right-of-ways of 80 feet along this stretch, just as they do on Tuckerman between OGR and Rockville Pike. Thus, there is the potential to turn it into a 4-lane road, although this is not favored at this time. It is imperative that we have our priorities for this stretch of Tuckerman clearly worked out so that we can influence future plans for the road. Ian Lockwood, a traffic expert, suggests that communities must insist that traffic traverse their communities on the community's terms. Specific issues are:
- a. **Speed.** Need more speed limit signs and speed cameras. Ellen pointed out that being near schools helps to get on list for cameras, but the list is very long. We need to pursue this. It was suggested that future studies of traffic must be cognizant of the LONG rush hour (7:30 am – 8 pm) and measure volume during those extended hours; in this respect, previous studies have been flawed.
  - b. **Crosswalks.** Everyone agrees that crosswalks are needed. It was suggested that we ask that lines be painted now while the current paving operation is ongoing. Pedestrian walkways like the ones on West Lake and Jefferson (near the JCC) were mentioned as desirable. It was pointed out by several people that crosswalks, like those on Connecticut Avenue, can be dangerous if cars don't slow down. It was suggested that crosswalk lights that can be activated by pedestrians might be a good idea.
  - c. **Sidewalks.** Everyone wants sidewalks (they are being planned for the stretch between West Lake and Gainsborough in FY 11-14)
  - d. **I-270 overpass.** It is very dangerous for pedestrians and bikers.
  - e. **Traffic egress onto Tuckerman Lane.** Turning out of Arroyo, Whisperwood and Lancelot onto Tuckerman is SCARY. Drivers on Tuckerman passing on the shoulder put left turners out of our streets at

added risk. A suggestion was made to add access lanes to make right turns easier, although Ellen said that the county has nixed this idea. The issue of traffic lights was raised, with a request for a review of the explicit history of attempting to get a light at Marcliff/Tuckerman (Renee: Part of that history is on the LCA website). It was stated that 55/56 homeowners on Whisperwood want a light. Ellen stated that lights create increased exhaust fumes when cars are idling. It was pointed out that technology now can facilitate the movement of traffic by triggering lights when traffic arrives at the intersection. **The visiting Regional Services Coordinator was invited to comment, and said that he would attempt to obtain comprehensive information on this issue for us.** The point was made that it takes insistent pressure on the county to get results with these types of traffic issues.

f. **Road maintenance.** More is needed.

3. **Speed, cut-through traffic, and school bus traffic on Marcliff Road (led by Sandra Friedman).** Speed and cut-through traffic are the greatest issues. DOT determined that 50% of Marcliff traffic is cut-through (as measured by cars having out-of-neighborhood plates). We also have the holding school, which generates out-of-neighborhood traffic. Sandra explained that the existing speed bumps on Marcliff were flattened and are now ineffective. Who authorized the change is unknown. The no left turn from Tilden onto Marcliff at the evening rush hour that was proposed by DOT is opposed by the majority of Marcliff residents. Speeding school buses run onto residents' lawns. The following issues and possible remedies were discussed:

- a. A roundabout in the area of Cushman and Rosemont on Marcliff.
- b. Sidewalks. Sandra said that only 3 Marcliff residents want them. There is concern that homeowners will have to pay for them.
- c. Excessive parking on Marcliff during sports and school-related activities at the Middle School. It was suggested that we request that parking be restricted to one side of the street, and that schoolbuses be restricted.
- d. It was asked if there were any plans for Old Club (in Farmland) to be put through to Tuckerman Lane. 45 years ago, an "enraged" neighborhood defeated this proposal and surely would oppose it again. It was pointed out, however, that no options for decreasing cut-through traffic on other streets (e.g., Marcliff) should be dismissed, since "we all have to share in solutions."

4. **Impact of Green Acres School traffic on Danville and Cushman (led by Renee Howell).** School buses and parents driving kids to/from school are the problem. The LCA is talking with the school to address these problems—our relationship with them is good. Ultimately, it is hoped that an alternative entrance to the school on Executive Blvd. will be approved as part of the White Flint II planning effort (which will begin in a couple of months). It was suggested that we follow the planning process carefully and help Green Acres lobby for the new entrance.

5. **Continued speed and out-of-neighborhood cut-through traffic on Tilden Lane between OGR and Marcliff Road, and community concern with pedestrian safety and safety aspects of new lane markings on Tilden Lane (led by Carol Liu).** Carol commented that the new striping on Marcliff has had the desired effect of reducing speed. One Tilden resident with young children expressed her satisfaction with the new configuration, feeling that her children can now walk safely to Luxmanor Elementary. Another resident voiced the STRONG opinion that the best interests of children walking to/from school must be paramount. Suggestions for further dealing with the dual issues of volume and speed were:
- a. Request that the speed limit be reduced from 30mph to 25mph.
  - b. Increase the reduced speed zones around the schools. It was pointed out that, in Miami, larger school zones, lowered speed limits, and enforcement works very effectively to slow traffic.
  - c. Ask someone from the police to come talk to us about enforcement.
  - d. Install an island at the entrance to the neighborhood at Tilden and OGR.
  - e. Install a roundabout at Tilden and Marcliff.

The new striping on Tilden has created concerns. Some parents at the school have complained that the absence of parking on both sides of the street has pushed traffic into the side streets. The buffer on the south side of the road is much narrower than it was before, possibly posing safety issues for pedestrians on that side of the street. A major concern is that the new bike lane runs only in one direction (west), and the narrow south buffer is being used by bikers traveling east. Elliott Applestein a biker from Old Farm, gave a power point presentation to point out the problems that now exist for bikers. He photographed bikers, cars, and buses traveling east on Tilden between Marcliff and OGR at 8am on a recent weekday. Passing eastbound bikers, cars routinely pulled out over the center lane. Had there been a vehicle in the westbound lane simultaneously, it might have had to move into the westbound bike lane, putting bikers or joggers there at risk. The south buffer is only 32" wide, not the 48" required for a legal bike lane; further, the gutters slope in such a way as to make the buffer effectively even narrower and more hazardous. Of the opinion that the current lane configuration actually dissuades people from biking, Elliott is in favor of eliminating the new bike lane, the new north parking lane, and the narrow south buffer and returning the road to a configuration that (a) retains the narrower car lanes (to reduce speeding) but (b) restores wide shoulders on both sides of the road that can be shared by bikers and parking. It was pointed out that, in truth, Tilden is not wide enough to fully accommodate cars, bikers, joggers, and parking. The configuration that we have now is a compromise, worked out during a long process between the neighborhood, the biking interests and the county. The question was posed: how do we revisit the previous community decision that resulted in the present striping? Renee replied that we can simply put the issue to a new vote if desired. Several voiced a strong concern that we will jeopardize our credibility with the county and our ability to advocate for other serious neighborhood concerns (especially speed and safety on

Tuckerman Lane) by perseverating on the Tilden Lane issues. The problems on Tuckerman have never been addressed and should be our priority now. We must choose our battles, since the county will not deal with every issue that we raise.

6. **Safety of pedestrians crossing at Tilden and OGR at Nicholson Lane (led by Carol Liu).** Della commented that this intersection is universally recognized as being problematic. The stoplights are not placed properly, pedestrians are at risk, and the lighting is poor. She pointed out, however, that the county wants to improve conditions in connection with opening the Josiah Henson cabin to the public. Ideas that were discussed were:
  - a. Crosswalks north to south across Tilden to the Synagogue and across OGR.
  - b. Improved safety for pedestrians crossing OGR, including “Stop for Pedestrian” signs, setting the lights to allow longer crossing times for pedestrians (4 feet/second is best), and signage that informs drivers that pedestrians are crossing.
  - c. Advocating to make sure that streetlights are well-maintained and always lighted. The lights at Sedgwick and OGR are usually not on after dark.

Della asked if there were any objections to hiring a traffic consultant to work with the traffic committee. None were voiced, and one person made the point that an outside consultant would bring an objective viewpoint, not influenced by personal concerns.

The meeting was adjourned by Della at 9:36 pm.  
Submitted by Joan Suwalsky, Recording Secretary