

BURGESS AND COMMISSIONERS OF MIDDLETOWN MARYLAND

TOWN MEETING MINUTES

PUBLIC HEARING

April 3, 2014

The Public Hearing of the Burgess and Commissioners of Middletown was called to order on January 2, 2014 by Burgess Miller at 7:00 p.m. in the Middletown Municipal Center, 31 W. Main Street, Middletown, Maryland. Present were: Commissioners Larry Bussard, Jennifer Falcinelli, Richard Dietrick and Christopher Goodman.

PUBLIC HEARING – Ordinance 04-01 – Ordinance to establish speed restrictions for South Jefferson Street in the Town of Middletown. Burgess Miller stated that this public hearing was being held to address the traffic conditions that were occurring on South Jefferson Street. He invited any residents in attendance to speak. The following residents spoke:

Ken Gundling, 115 South Jefferson St. – mentioned the following;

Has been a resident since 1979.

Has noticed that the speed on his street has increase 5-10mph in the last 10 years.
Speed bumps will slow some of those speeders down.

Using radar, and issuing tickets with substantial fines & penalties will have an impact.

Is against the street becoming a one-way as he sees people speeding up Boileau to beat the traffic light at the Town square.

Peggy Dodge, 318 South Jefferson St. – mentioned the following;

Agrees with what Mr. Gundling said.

If you lower the speed limit most it will not work as most speeders ignore what is posted now.

Speed bumps will deter some.

Traffic and speed in the Winter is slower.

Seasonal speed bumps might be better.

Since that business opened at the top of the hill, parking up there causes traffic problems.

Pat Hansen, 303 South Jefferson St. – mentioned the following;

Loves living on South Jefferson.

Speed of drivers is excessive.

It is common.

Charlie Griffith, 331 South Jefferson St. – mentioned the following;

He seconds hitting the speeders in their pocketbook.

Suggested setting up a traffic camera aimed up the hill. If speeders get a ticket in the mail, they may slow down.

Posting any signs will not deter speeders.

Karen Southall, 325 South Jefferson St. – mentioned the following;

Parking at the top of the hill is congested. Once you crest the hill parking is not quite the problem.

Posting signs regarding right of way on the street would be helpful.

A 20mph speed limit for the street would not be so bad.

The speeders are using South Jefferson as a cut through.

South Jefferson Street is a community and we help each other.

A speed camera and ticketing would help.

Using police radar at different times would also help.

Is against making it a one way street.

Burgess Miller asked if the Town used a portable digital sign that flashes a cars speed do you as a resident think it would help. Ms. Southall replied it would be a viable alternative to try.

Commissioner Ventre asked if fines could be specified by the Town, or if they were governed by the State. Deputy Hewitt replied that fines are governed by Maryland law.

Commissioner Falcinelli stated that speed cameras can only be used in or near school zones.

Commissioner Bussard asked if the deputies have detected any speeders on South Jefferson Street. Deputy Hewitt stated that during the times she has watched South Jefferson 10 cars came down the street in an hour, 26 mph was the fastest speed she detected, and cars were slower coming over the hill with speeds of 20 mph or slower. Burgess Miller asked if police were present during rush hour. Deputy Hewitt stated that Deputy Olander has monitored traffic during rush hour but has brought nothing to her attention. Burgess also suggested using unmarked police cars to check speeds.

Chris Baker, 330 South Jefferson St. – mentioned the following;

Is a proponent of the one way street option.

Thinks portable speed bumps would help.

Amy Noel, 315-A South Jefferson – mentioned the following;

There is a tax business at 311 South Jefferson. Because of it, 6-8 cars are streaming in and out of that location 7 days a week.

The Zoning Administrator stated that he had investigated an initial complaint on a home business, but was given a wrong address. He will send a letter to 311 South Jefferson regarding an unregistered business in a residential area.

Fred Dodge, 318 South Jefferson St. – mentioned the following;

Thanked the Deputies for their efforts and traffic has slowed things a little.

The traffic congestion problem is related to the business at 311 South Jefferson. He suggested that no parking be allowed in that area to relieve the congestion.

Reduce the speed on the street to 20mph.

Agrees with the idea of using mobile speed bumps.

Most problems occur at the top of the hill on South Jefferson Street.

Bob Smart, 7525 Coblenz Rd. – mentioned the following;

Other town residents are also concerned with the traffic problem on South Jefferson Street.

Agrees the speed limit should be decreased to 20 mph.

Agrees that there should be no parking at the top of the hill on South Jefferson Street.

For tickets to be effective points should be involved in the penalty.

Commissioner Bussard asked how many cars can fit in the driveway at 311 South Jefferson. Consensus was that 2-3 cars can fit in the driveway.

Tracy Fisher, 207 South Jefferson St. – mentioned the following;

She is a new resident

Is a stay at home mother and has noticed the neighborhood has many children playing outside.

When there is no parking on the street, traffic is fast.

Is worried for the children's safety.

Commissioner Chris Goodman, 320 South Jefferson St. – mentioned the following;

South Jefferson is a unique street as it is the only street connecting 2 state roads in the Town.

Suggests there should be "No Thru Traffic" signs posted on both ends of the street

The speed limit should be painted on the street itself

Agrees that there should be no parking on either side of the road at the top of the hill, as it is a life safety issue, and is a hazard for emergency responders currently.

Suggested the use of temporary speed bumps on the street from April – October. Try it for one season and see how it works.

People cutting through are the speeders not the residents.

Burgess Miller stated the Town Board is not in favor of speed bumps. However, because of the unique features of South Jefferson Street, he can identify the specifics as to why speed bumps could be used on South Jefferson. Burgess Miller then listed all the suggestions given by the residents; a reduction in the speed limit less than 25 but greater than 15 mph, flashing speed signs, parking on one side of the street with no parking at the top of the hill, signs posted to yield to oncoming traffic for southbound drivers, signs posted stating "No Thru Traffic/ Local Traffic Only" on both ends of the street, and painting the posted speed limit on the street itself.

Burgess Miller thanked all the residents for attending the meeting and providing input and suggestions. The Town Board will take all the information into consideration. This will be an

item for discussion on the Town Board Meeting agenda, April 28, 2014, and at the workshop May 1, 2014. The Town Board will come to some decision after that.

PUBLIC HEARING – Ordinance 04-02 – Ordinance to amend Title 17, Chapter 17.36, pertaining to A-frame, T-frame and sandwich board signs; to amend the definition of such signs; to provide for conditions under which displaying such signs require and do not require a permit issued by the Town of Middletown. The Town Staff Planner reported the recommendations of the Planning Commission that businesses that display these temporary signs on their property outside of the business location do not require permits, while those businesses that display these signs at other locations, and not in front of their business will require permits from the Town. The Staff Planner also stated that while reviewing this ordinance it states that temporary signs not displayed on a business property must be displayed 0.25 miles (1320 feet) or less from the business. She recommends changing that requirement from 0.25 miles or less to 1500 feet or less. She stated that all temporary signs currently meet this ordinance.

There was no comment from the public.

This ordinance will be voted upon at the Town Board Meeting 4/14/14

The Public Hearing adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Annette Alberghini
Receptionist