

May 20, 2014

Special meeting of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Victory Gardens, held on May 20, 2014.

Mayor Holeman called the meeting to order and declared a quorum present.  
Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of Our Country.  
Please remain standing for a moment of silence for our military.

This meeting has been advertised in one newspaper, The Daily Record, in compliance with the New Jersey Open Public Meeting Act.

ATTENDANCE: Councilwoman Cegelka, Councilwoman Cheatham, Councilman Glass, Councilwoman Hedgepath, Councilwoman Garcia Montes.

ABSENT: Councilman Lorenzo and Attorney Feintuch.

NEW BUSINESS:

DISCUSSION ON FRANKLIN ROAD/SOUTH SALEM STREET ROAD IMPROVEMENTS -

The Mayor said we have Debra Dellagiacoma and Christopher Vitz with us tonight from the Morris County Department of Planning and Public Works. They are here to help us with the plans for the improvement, to answer questions we may have and to bring us to a vote on which of the concepts we are looking at for the improvements.

Motion was made to open the meeting to Chris and Debra for the road improvements at Franklin Road and South Salem Street. Motion made by Councilwoman Montes, seconded by Councilwoman Cegelka and approved on verbal vote. None opposed.

Chris said he is the County Engineer and Debra is the Assistant in charge of traffic. We have been contacted by Randolph for the past few years regarding issues with the lights and traffic at this intersection. There are timing issues, no pedestrian signals, no crosswalks. This intersection has not been looked at since the 1980's. We decided it was time for a new look. We took traffic volumes and safety issues as we made plans.

We came up with different concepts when we hired Stonefield Engineering. They came up with several concepts which were A through D originally. We gave three concepts to the Town Engineers and we had a meeting with them. It was agreed upon at the meeting that we would go with Concept A.

It is about an exact replacement of what is out there except the left turn lanes on signal heads on the Franklin Road approaches. The reason for that is it wouldn't include any major changes to the lanes at the intersection. You would still have 2 through lanes on South Salem Street in both directions and the lane configuration on Franklin would stay the same. we will include ADA curb ramps, pedestrian signals, push buttons, LED signal heads, video cameras for the detection of vehicles instead of loop detectors in the roadway - just to bring it up to current standards.

My understanding is that when this was brought back to the town, there were additional questions and concerns. It is our understanding that you wanted better improvements, and wanted us to try to do some capacity improvements. Specifically the left hand turn lanes on South Salem Street.

We had our Engineer draft up to other concepts after we heard your concerns. We have a new D and E concept plan. They all include opposing left turn lanes on South Salem Street and the two through lanes. Along with that it does have property acquisition of the Salem Plaza property. That would also include a number of parking spaces being lost with his frontage. We could replace some of them with paralell parking but it wouldn't be all of them. We haven't gotten into that yet to determine how many it would be and how many we can give back.

We are here tonight to go over these different concepts with you and ask for your input. We are not looking to force any specific one upon the town or Randolph. You are going to be the ones living with this concept the most. We want to put something in that will last.

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Chris said he would go with Concept A if there are no property acquisitions. If the town wants to do the property acquisition then I would go with E. That will last 20 to 30 years in the future.

Councilwoman Montes said with the way Concept A is right now that is not going to help our residents or make it safe for our residents. Chris said that is right. E is the best one with safety and all other concerns but it is the property acquisition. Chris said that the County was just made aware that this intersection is number 2 on the list for the worst in the County. This makes it qualify for funding. Under this funding property acquisition is included. Our application is due on June 2. If there is too much in property damage done to the Salem Plaza we can push back our plans and go back to the regular Concept A and just go with the improvements - put in what is there now - replace all the items and just go with the other safety improvements.

Debra said that one of the concerns with Concept A was that it didn't change anything. Other than pedestrian safety we weren't changing anything. Councilwoman Montes asked if there was a traffic study done on accidents? We did do a crash analysis on it but I don't have those figures with us tonight. The State gave us accidents from 2010 through 2012 and there were 20 accidents. 13 of them were property damage, 6 were injuries and 3 were moderate injuries. That is how they came up with the rankings. For the County this intersection was # 2. For the whole State it was 125. This is the intersection that we would go for the grant. If the grant is approved the money would not be available until 2015 or 2016. That would give us time to go through the property acquisition and finalize all the plans. If we are denied the grant then we will fall back to Concept A.

Councilwoman Cheatham asked how many parking spaces the plaza would lose? There are 28 there now. We may be able to give him some back - maybe 12 would be lost. The Clerk asked if this would do anything to Salem Plaza with our Planning Board and him not having the amount of spaces they required him to have when he first moved in? The Planning Board can't do anything. The only time they can say anything is if the Plaza comes back in for some type of Planning Board approval.

Councilman Glass asked if they are saying they can't do this project without taking this property? Not if you want two through lanes. Why not just one through lane? There will be too much of a backup. I come home at rush hour and I don't think it can't be any worse. You would be taking property from the park also? Yes. Why would you put a third lane on one side of Salem Street and not the other? The other side was done years ago so it is already accommodating that 5th lane.

Councilwoman Cegelka asked if we ranked #2 in the County for having problems here why is the concept the same? The main reason is because we didn't want to have to take property. There is no all red phase on these signals. We tried doing this but anytime there is a power outage or another occurrence it always keeps reverting back to the old signals. What we have to do now with any improvements to intersections is to make them ADA compliant. Concept A would make all those corrections.

Councilman Glass said you should stay with concept A and then dedicate a lane for left hand turns. Put split phase signals in and it would make it safe. You may have a little back up but it will serve the purpose. Don't put an extra lane in and this way Salem Plaza will not lose any of his parking spaces.

Councilwoman Montes said this would be good. You would not be taking the mans land so you aren't hurting his business. It would be a dedicated left. Chris said we would have to look at this and see about the backups. Split phase signals would be in.

Split phase would be that only one group can go at a time at the intersection. That is fine. There may be some delay but we have delays now. The County has to look. I know you want the left hand turn. We will look into it.

There were no other comments or questions from the Council. The Mayor asked for a motion to open the meeting to the public.

Motion to open the meeting to the public by Councilwoman Montes, seconded by Councilwoman Cheatham and approved on verbal vote. None opposed.

Jim Janone - I drive this area all the time and coming home I make the left turn lane from South Salem onto Franklin. I think it makes sense to use the lanes we have and not take another lane and have to acquire land. I don't know why Randolph liked Concept A with 2 thru lanes. It is fine on their side but not ours. There should be consistency. I am surprised that we haven't had more accidents in front of town hall. You can't see around box trucks when trying to make the left turn. The split phase does work. I have been in other Counties that do it and it works. Someone will wait eventually but with the cameras it works well. Can any Open Space money be used if there is an aquisition of land? No. With all these improvements will curbing and sidewalks go in and how far back will they go? There is nothing on the ShowPlace side but parking lot. How far back will this go? That is something we spoke to Leon Hall about. He has to look into that and find the right of way lines. Leon will have to come up with something for us to go with our plan. He has to see where drive ways can go in. With this grant we can expand sidewalks. Whatever concept we go with we will expand on it.

Motion to close the meeting to the public by Councilwoman Montes, seconded by Councilman Glass and approved on verbal vote. None opposed.

Councilwoman Montes said that she likes what Councilman Glass proposed by not taking any land. We would have our left hand turn lane and our people would be safe. It would be a dedicated left hand turn. Mr. Vitz said he would look at it. You can vote on it but I have to look and see if it is viable.

Motion was made by Councilman Glass to keep Concept A with modifications of a dedicated left hand turn signals at all entrances to the intersection with split phase lights/signals and also the widening of the turn on Block 195 Lot 1. Motion seconded by Councilwoman Cheatham. Roll call:

Councilwoman Cegelka	Yes
Councilwoman Cheatham	Yes
Councilman Glass	Yes
Councilwoman Hedgepath	Yes
Councilwoman Garcia Montes	Yes

Chris Vitz said the Consulting Engineer will go through this and see if it goes and then we will have another plan. The Clerk asked if this has to go to Randolph? Yes. What happens if they say no? Then everyone will have to get together and go over this.

The Mayor and Council thanked Chris and Debra for coming out tonight and going through all this with them.

Motion to adjourn the meeting by Councilwoman Montes, seconded by Councilwoman Cheatham and approved on verbal vote. None opposed.

Submitted By:

*Deborah Evans*

Deborah Evans  
Borough Clerk