

10-9-2001

**Mayor DeStefano**

I wanted to acknowledge the work of Aldermen Dwyer and Moson in bringing this issue to the forefront. But over the last few weeks since this issue, proposed legislation dealing with the Highland Ave. area, we've had several meetings including yourself on the proposed changes. We all agree that it was best; a) we bring in a professional traffic planner who is here this evening, I will introduce shortly to look at not only the Highland area, but to look at the entire area, but to look at the entire City in dealing with truck routes and dealing with traffic flows, parking, intersections and speeding and control devices. It was requested that additional enforcement be placed in the Highland Ave. area which we have done. Additional enforcement, unfortunately, we can't keep up that level forever. So we do need some solutions, permanent solutions which will be recommendations from the traffic planner. More importantly, I received several calls regarding people that live in the Highland/Watkins/Commonwealth/Royce Ave. area who did receive the letters. Some of them believing that the proposals that were made are proposals by the City. I want to clarify that these are not proposals by the City. That the purpose of us bringing in a professional traffic planner is that we recognize any changes we make on Highland Ave. or Commonwealth Ave. are going to impact other streets. I think it is important for everyone here to recognize that we can't solve one problem and create another problem with other streets. We are going to look City-wide, but we are going to direct our initial report to the Highland/Watkins/Commonwealth area at its entirety. We also need to consider the funding source as many of you know the scope of services being proposed by the traffic planner will be paid for out of Community Development Block Grant money. So there is no direct cost to the City, but we will working within a budget which is not yet defined. Our goal and objective is to address the legitimate concerns of the people of Highland/Watkins/Commonwealth initially. I know we are getting calls from Cottage St. people coming in from West Main St., East Main St. many of the main thoroughfares of the City and we do plan on holding additional public hearings over the next few months in order to gather the input from those folks also. The traffic planner will be assigned to deal with that section of the City which we are addressing tonight for the first public hearing and expand their responsibilities to the entire City. I wanted at this time introduce the firm that was hired and the representative of the firm is Philip J. Grealy, Ph.D. and PE in Traffic and Transportation Engineer. He is somewhat familiar with the City of Middletown having done some work in the greater Middletown area. At this time before the questions start with your permission, have Mr. Grealy make a brief presentation on what this firm is about and what they plan on doing.

**Philip Grealy**  
**VP with the firm of John Collins Engineers.**  
**Our main office is in Hawthorne, NY**

Our firm specializes in traffic and transportation, planning and design. We do work throughout the United States. Most of it is centered in the Northeast. Myself, I do a lot of work in Orange County. We have done some work in the City, working with the NYS Dept. of Transportation. We have some background here. In terms before we get in the specifics of the Highland Ave. I know that is what everyone here tonight is interested in. Just a little background and the approach to traffic studies and traffic plans. As the Mayor indicated we really have to look at the overall traffic flow patterns in the City. Not only traffic volumes, but truck traffic, speed, etc. The Highland Ave. corridor is one component of the whole City. When you start implementing changes to a roadway system such as in the City here you have to start... there's a lot of background information. People have given input. There are things you can see just driving around yourself. But when we prepare a traffic study and come up with a plan for improvements, there are certain steps we have to follow. The first step is to collect the data. The most important part of the whole study in terms of identifying what current conditions are. Those existing condition survey include volume and classification issues. For example, what is the mix of traffic? Trucks vs. passenger cars. That is done on both a daily basis and peak hour basis. Because certain roadways may be fine during certain hours of the day. In the rush hours you get diversions, or heavy loading. The first part of the data collection is the volume classification. Since everyone here tonight is here for the Highland Ave. there is other studies in certain parts of the City would be sub-components here. For example: speed studies, you want to know what the speed is on certain roadway. Highland Ave. may attract itself to higher speed, because of the alignment, its wide width. The other issues are what we refer to as cut through traffic, from people that use certain roadways to divert around because of congestion on other streets. As part of that you would do what is called license plate studies. For example: you match license plates to identify certain sections of the roadway, is it just local people? or what percentage of the traffic is actually cut through traffic? The other thing which is very important especially in an area like this is travel time study. For example; why do people use Highland Ave.? Is it because it is the faster roadway, you don't have the traffic signals, it is a wider roadway, are there conditions on North St. where there is restrictions. Again, for just this part of the City. In other parts of the City the something may apply where the traffic signals are not sequencing properly. So, the most important part of our study and again, will probably now be focusing more on the Highland Ave. in terms of first part of our data collection is to get a good data base. So we know all the facts and figures. One item which I didn't mention yet, but it is important is accidents. Are there accidents because of speed? Are there pedestrian accidents? We would work with getting accident information from the Police Dept. and take that into consideration too. The reason why I am saying the data collection is so important is because if you make changes to a road system, everybody drives, everybody knows if you make it harder to get through one section, people are going to find other routes. So, if you want to see what the potential effect may be on other streets, in order to do that you need to know what is going on out there. There is a

lot of information here with the Ad-Hoc committee, you will be able to get input back to us. One of the reasons why I am here tonight is that I would like to hear the comments from the public, because it also provides additional input in terms of our study.

Once we have the base conditions, there is a series of standard analysis, procedures that we have to complete to make sure whatever implementations that are being done for example; signing, are they consistent with the NYS Manual Traffic Control Devices, are there any warrants if there is area where for example a traffic signal is required?, does it satisfy signal warrants?, there are set procedures that I am not going to get into tonight. But, there are certain procedures that we have to follow that we use to assess some of the data. What is called capacity analysis, signal operations, that will help us identify what types of improvements could be done. One of the other areas that is from a planning perspective which is becoming more popular in the areas where you have speed, where you have cut through traffic, where you want to make sure your maintaining a downtown area is what is referred to as the traffic calming. It is a whole series of traffic planning improvements that are there to make it more pedestrian friendly in certain areas. To cut down on speed. There is a whole series of criteria which the NYS Dept. of Transportation has now added into their design manual a whole section on traffic comments. They range anywhere from installation of stop sign controls where you may have four (4) way Stop intersections. Not a speed bump, but what is called speed hump, which has a tendency to slow traffic and doesn't have the other problems that are associated with speed bumps. Actually in some areas reducing widths of roadways to cut down on travel speed. In other areas in looking at moving parking or shifting the alignment of roadways. Those are some of the areas that we would get into in terms of the overall look of the City. But again, with respect to Highland Ave. part, we have to look at the initial data collection, working with the committee we would come up with some recommendations. I saw some of the recommendations that has been put on the board. Some may make sense, but some may not make sense. It may be more of an impact on other street or another neighborhood by implementing these. So our recommendation is to at least get the initial feedback, come up with preliminary ideas, some alternates. The City could get implement even on a temporary basis, for example, you don't have to... its not like you're building a bridge and the bridge has to be up before you see the effect. You can implement some of these, you can package them into a series of alternates, because there's not always one (1) solution to a problem. We like to look at various combinations of solutions. We would present that again to the public through the Ad-Hoc Committee. I think whatever feedback that would come back we would be able to fine tune and we what we would call a final report to the Council for implementation. That is pretty much in general for all the different areas of the City that we would be working on, but again, applying to the Highland Ave. corridor that would be the primary things we would focus on.

**Grace Blondell**  
**107 Highland Ave.**

Good evening. I would like to speak on behalf of many of the residents on Highland Ave. One of our biggest concern is speed on Highland Ave. and the amount of traffic. I have before me several signatures of people who couldn't make... attend this evenings meeting, as representation of their beliefs on how we feel about what is going on Highland Ave. in terms of traffic, speeding, the amount, the volume, the noise level, the various different issues.

Our first issue that we would like to bring to your attention is, we would like to have enforcement of the speed limits that are already posted and existing in the City of Middletown. Highland Ave. is primarily like any other City street , there is a 30 mph speed limit and at any given moment you can find the cars doing much greater speed then what is posted.

Our second issue and our request coming from Highland Ave., we would like to have Stop signs installed at the intersections of Jay Street, Sunset Street and Prospect Street. Our hope with having those Stop signs installed, is to slow down the traffic, reduce the amount of time for the people to accelerate from the Stop light at Wisner to the Stop light which is on Wickham Ave. on West Main St. We were hoping if there are Stop signs placed at those intersections, the speed wouldn't get to be as high. People would be more aware of what is going on around them. Cars pulling in and out of their driveways, children walking on the streets, getting on and off the buses. People walking their dogs, trying to enter and exit their cars which are parked on Highland Ave. We believe the Stop signs will greatly reduce the speed of your average passenger on Highland Ave. We would also like to have additional speed limit signs posted so that people who are unfamiliar with the area, those who don't live on Highland Ave. are completely aware that the speed limit is 30 mph. In addition to the Stop signs at those intersections of Jay Street, Sunset and Prospect we would also like to have crosswalks there. Noted that this is where pedestrians can cross from one side of the street to the other. Many of the residents walk their animals, they would like to be able to go from one side to the other knowing the pedestrian has the right of way to cross. These are four (4) issues which I myself and several other residents have spoken to our neighborhood about and we hope to establish what is called the Highland Ave. Block Association. I am speaking for as a representative for most of the residents. I do have petitions here, I have approximately 65 signatures of people who are definitely interested in having something done to reduce the speed and the volume of traffic on Highland Ave.

**Pres. Dino-** You can turn the petitions into the Clerk, please. Thank you very much for representing the Highland Ave. corridor.

**Barbara Martens**  
**167 Highland Ave.**

Good evening.

I wanted to just basically... first of all say that I know this proposal that my husband and I have made are very drastic. I know they are very drastic. We actually had been talking about this with many of our neighbors for probably close to six (6) years. I applaud your decision to hire a professional planner. I think it is a wonderful idea, not just for Highland Ave. and Watkins and Commonwealth, but also for the rest of the City. Just like Grace said, our prime concern is really the safety of the children, the adults, everybody in our neighborhood. We feel that our neighborhood has lost a lot of its uniqueness because of the volume, because of the speed. We find it difficult to spend some time in our front yard, because of the volume and speed of the cars. You can't hear each other speak. So we would really like to see as Grace said, both of those things addressed.

Also, putting Stop signs at the street, Jay, Sunset, Prospect and Cantrell as well. Would also allow cars coming out of those streets, cars coming out of their driveways to safely exit. A lot of times there are a lot of cars parked up and down Highland Ave. it is very difficult to get out of those streets and sometimes very dangerous. There is a lot of traffic on the street right in front of the Seventh Day Adventist Church, as well as the Temple. It you are coming out of Cantrell, the street that the Y is on, it has happened to me several times, it was hard to get out. So with the addition of Stop signs, we feel it would slow the traffic down like Grace said and would add to the safety of the neighborhood.

But I also wanted to ask the Planner, I don't know if he would be able to give me this answer right now. I was wondering what kind of timeframe you were talking about? How long it is going to take to gather all the information? I think the gathering part, the things you said were really great ideas. I think they would all help in making a decision but, to be honest with you, we thought at doing this at this time of year, with the election coming up was very appropriate so that we could start to see some action really taken place before the election. We just don't want this to be put on the back burner after the election.

**Philip Grealy**

The first thing I guess is important to terms of time. This is the time when you would want to do the data collection. Basically now through the beginning of December. It is most representative, typical conditions. Our program was really to look at overall City. But we are going to focus now Highland Ave. Highland Ave. is going to be moved up to the top priority. We could start our data collection probably in about two (2) weeks. That would be putting out traffic counting machines, intersections counts, from the speed studies a lot of the initial data collection. So in terms of data collection over the

course of the next month which is what we would like to do and work with the City on. One of the reasons we are here tonight is to listen to some of these comments so that we know that we don't waste time, we focus on issues, the speed, the safety, we could start collecting the accident data, etc. That is really the timeframe. In terms of my personal feeling is you don't have to wait till you have a final report before you start some of the dialog. For example, if you see a safety issue, after we do a data collection and analysis, we would identify that to the Council and Ad-Hoc Committee so that something could happen may be sooner. But, I think the feeling with working with the Council is not something to be dragged on for a few years or whatever. Get the data collected now, it is going to take some time to analyze that and factor things out. The fact that there is an Ad-Hoc Committee set up, it allows the information to come back here.

**Barbara Martens**

I would assume your collection of data will be taken at all different times of the day.

**Philip Grealy**

Yes. Typically what we would do is as I pointed out before, there is manual traffic counts and there is machine traffic counts. For example, we would put out machines to identify those time period, some time in the day where your speeds are higher. Which we can do with our machines. Manual count would be typically focused peak hours, morning peak hours, midday. That is when you want to look for example the license plate matches, people cutting through an area. It would be over the course of typically weekdays, it would be our focus. Some of it would be done with machines, some of it is done manually, observation, license plate matching, video.

**Judy Diamond**  
**9 Lake Ave.**

Good evening. You spoke about Highland Ave. I like to tell you there are a number of speeders on Lake Ave. with automobiles and motorcycles. I haven't heard anyone address the overall picture in Middletown other than Highland Ave. and I think one solution would be more policing, more patrol cars at different hours of the day on different streets, make the people aware that there might be a police car patrolling that street when they decide to ease up on the gas. They might be more aware and stop trying to beat a traffic light. Any street that has a traffic light at the end of it will have a speeder going down trying to beat that traffic light. I know from experience from where I live we've seen it happen.

The other suggestions, I think have been excellent. I don't believe the Highland Ave. should be made a one way street. I think the suggestion for additional Stop signs are excellent, but Highland Ave. is the widest street in Middletown and the traffic that comes to and from are headed for Wallkill, because Wallkill is building new businesses every single day. The Galleria is adding on to their shops. People who leave the Galleria have a choice, they can go past the fairgrounds and up East Main St., there will be a bottleneck there. They can go up Rte. 211 and sometimes it is unbelievable, my husband will say to me "will you look at that line of cars" there would be a line stopping for the light, we would almost go down to North St. to end of that line of parked cars. There would be just as many cars behind us. The other solution, people have found they can drive up on Mud Mills Road, enter Highland Ave. Extension and then cruise down Highland Ave. Because it is the widest street, there is no congestion, but I can appreciate how the residents feel. But Highland Ave. is not the street it was 50 years ago. There are still many beautiful homes on Highland Ave., but we also have traffic going in and out of the Temple, in and out of the YMCA, in and out of the Elk's Club, St. Teresa's Nursing Home, Applebee-McPhillips Funeral Parlor and the Nursing Home next to the funeral parlor. But, the Stop sign idea I feel is excellent, but I do not think you should make...beautiful, big, wide road a one way traffic pattern.

Thank you very much.

**Elizabeth Bushey**  
Commonwealth Ave.

I was pretty horrified when I heard the original drafted proposal. I do kind of understand that you proposed something drastic and you hope for some action. I have to say as someone who got their driver's license in Middletown, good deal in getting a professional at least. I am delighted. I just want... I agree with almost everything everybody said. I think we need Stop signs, we definitely need more police and they need laptops too.

But I think we have to be careful. We don't want to just give the squeaky wheel the grease. We want to protect all the children in Middletown. I really do agree, children on Highland Ave. are at risk because it is a busy street. But when I bought my house five (5) years, I didn't buy it on Highland Ave. because of the busy street and I was pregnant. It is no surprise that Highland Ave. is a busy street. I think that we need to take care in our solution to not overreact.

**Pres. Dino-** That is why we hired a private consultant.

**Elizabeth Bushey-** I see side streets that aren't on these amendments that probably don't have anybody walking around getting signatures.

**Pres. Dino-** Not only the Highland Ave. corridor that we are interested in, we are interested in the entire city.

**Elizabeth Bushey-** Linden Block and North Street, I bet they have a lot of kids on those streets, too. That are probably just at much at risk as anybody else. A lot of them don't even have backyards.

**Angela Dieudonne**  
**115 Highland Ave.**

I definitely agree with most of the recommendations for the Stop signs. I would also like to bring to your attention the weight of vehicles that travel on Highland Ave. I grew up in a landmark area and eventually we have to do something about the weight class because we they are older homes. They are being exposed to tremors and shaking because of very, very heavy trucks that are not delivering to any of the commercial businesses or even to the residential media on Highland Ave., there are simply using it as a speedway at 3 and 4 in the morning. I and a number of my neighbors I am sure have been raised out of their sleep by 18 wheelers and there are even some parked cars on Highland Ave. on a regular basis. That is something that I would like to know, is it legal to park a vehicle that size on the street in Middletown?

**Chief Ogden-** Yes it is legal.

**Angela Dieudonne-** It is a kind of an interesting thing. I am sure you know the width of a vehicle that size is and there is something else that happened on Highland. I may be turning into one of the driveways and someone is passing on the right. You cannot get pass something that large and then have someone passing you on the right. Whether it be a car or a motorcycle. I would like somebody to also think about that. There has to something: No Passing sign, something of that nature. I cannot walk up the road with my dog because I know that one of us is going to get hit by somebody passing on the right. Also I would like to reiterate the weight class for vehicles.

**James Steenrod**  
**23 Jay St.**

That is the corner of Jay Street and Commonwealth . Right in the middle. I think some of the things you brought in here tonight, I don't understand how you are going to... through traffic will be prohibited. What do you mean by through traffic? Is that people who live up in Presidential Heights? They can't ... Commonwealth or Highland Ave.? I don't know. Another thing we had... I've been around for a while, we had people hired and set up one way streets, they put up special lights so the firetrucks, we had that all done. This administration, did away with the one way street which is the greatest thing that happened in a long time. Now, it behooves me to see that somebody... hire somebody to do it all over again. I heard him tell the Mayor and you tonight that something that I didn't have to be a specialist to know, that when you cut down traffic on Highland Ave., you are going to force somewheres else. You can talk about all the speeding and all you want. Their main objective is to cut down traffic on Highland Ave. that is what these people want. They are going to push it into Watkins and they are going

to push into Commonwealth. Now, we have Chorley School, Mrs. Martens knows this, she teaches there. Kindergarten, first and second grades. The walkers, live on Commonwealth Ave. and Watkins Ave. We have two (2) crossing guards. Two crossing guards on Highland, one (1) on Wisner and Watkins, we have one (1) on Sunset and Commonwealth. When you start putting traffic down on those narrow streets, I am going to tell you something else, there is not a sidewalk on Commonwealth Ave. Well think about that. Those little kids, we see them going every day. I just can't believe that a few people, I know they got a problem, but us people who live on Watkins Ave. and Commonwealth didn't cause their problem. Now they want to shift it from there to us. I don't think it right.

**Pres. Dino-** That is why we hired a professional consultant and that is why we have an Ad-Hoc Committee.

**Mr. Steenrod-** He already told me, when the traffic is set off of Highland Ave., it is going to be picked up by the other streets.

**Pres. Dino-** He will have to go by the Ad-Hoc Committee also, Mr. Steenrod. Its not only him making the choice.

**Ed Legere**  
177 Highland Ave.

I think Mr. Steenrod really hasn't gotten the pulse of all the residents of Highland Ave. I think the assertion everybody wants on Highland Ave. to force traffic to adjacent streets is totally incorrect. I think our main concern, I don't want to speak for everybody our main concern is the rate of speed and the heavy vehicles. Stop signs are excellent ideas, but I am not the traffic expert. We want the cars to slow down. I have been awoken at 3:00, 4:00 in the morning and heard motorcycles going down that street had to be doing 100 mph. Flat out. I had one guy, I'm out raking my lawn, bunch of motorcycles come flying up the road and I looked at the guy who was in the lead, he pulled the wheels up and goes all the way down the street. At least a block and a half. So it is really a joke to them anymore. I don't see many pulled over on Highland Ave. and get tickets. I don't recall. It might happen when I am at work. But my off hours I haven't seen them. May be Chief Ogden can comment.

**Mayor DeStefano-** 60 since January.

**Chief Ogden-** Those are for speeding.

**Mr. Legere-** I don't know. I am not the traffic expert, but I think my main concern is not overloading the side streets. Everybody wants a safe neighborhood. I think that is the main emphasis. As far as eliminating traffic altogether on Highland that is not feasible. The area is growing, they have a big population. It is a direct route, North St., Linden Ave. is very narrow. They have cars parked on both sides of the street that they just can't take the volume of traffic and I understand that. If we get the speeds down and get the big trucks off, make some kind of sane situation out of it, I would be happy.

**Erich Lachmann**  
**Eisenhower Dr.**

I agree with most of the people speaking tonight. I just like to remind people what they do when they go through the Village of Montgomery. (members in audience clapping) I think there's your answer. I think we have a great Police Dept. We have 60 plus and I think a few more. I know they have a lot of problems in the City, a lot of transients, etc. drug problems. I think we have a problem with traffic control. It is not only on Highland Ave., it is on Eisenhower Dr., it is through the City. It is not the fault of the Police Dept., but it is something the Police Dept. can do something about. It does seem a little political as Mrs. Martens says, I think you realize we have had this problem, it is not something that just came about. I hope it isn't forgotten as somebody said. There is another very important thing, the Fire Chief is here, I certainly hope that he will be consulted in any kind of traffic pattern that is designed, we don't want to impede the flow of our emergency vehicles. Speaking of emergency vehicles, there has never been a proper emergency way through or around Middletown. We have run up against this problem during the summer especially when our Rte. 17 Quickway gets blocked and traffic gets diverted to the City, through or around the City of Middletown. People come down or come up and get pushed off of 17 and there is no way they know or way to follow so they can get around or through the City. We've had this problem and we've had to entertain, hire or bring out the police trying to direct them. When it should be done and thought about beforehand. Not wait until it happens. Right now our national situation, it might behoove the City of Middletown to be a leader in this and show some pathway. I don't think we have a problem, it doesn't seem to me a great big 18 wheelers running through the Highland Ave. I've never seen that, unless they were delivery type vehicles. I am sure there are some. But I believe there are weight signs on both ends. Again, it is enforcement. If the Police Dept. needs more help to do it, I think that would help it and in the long run, I think we'd all live a happier, quieter life if traffic was slowed down.

**Diane Bress**  
**57 Commonwealth Ave.**

We all appreciate the Highland Ave. situation. I would hate to see it become a Highland versus Watkins versus Commonwealth situation. We experience our own speeders, rolling stoppers. What I would like to see in addition to the engineering report is the committee to look at our quality of life on the sidestreets as well as the main street. We have a lot of dog walkers. We have a lot of people walking in the evening, families

with children. We have terrible sidewalks, more often than not we are walking in the street. I really would like to see that looked at as well as how fast the cars are going. Where they are going and where they are stopping and not stopping, because that is the reason we live in the neighborhood we live in. We enjoy it and we like to continue to enjoy it and we like to continue to enjoy and have a good Quality of Life there.

**Rich Fischer**  
71 Prospect St.

The one item I have concern is Prospect St. with the Elks Club. When they come there Wednesdays or Fridays, they are parking on the side streets and they are right up by the edge. It says "No Parking". You can't turn left, you can't right because you can't see. The cars are just blocking, that is part of the problem on Highland Ave. There should be an access, there's a couple of times my son, wife, my daughter, we almost got hit because you can't see. Then we have to drive down Watkins or Commonwealth and your putting the traffic down there. The other concern we have, the few of us who live in that little section of Prospect St., is you have the parking lot for the Y now. They just come right out of there, there's no stopping. They come out... a few times I 've seen the cars jam on the brakes there's almost a few accidents. I know I spoke to Jay a few times about Prospect, I 've been to the Council a few times about Prospect, doing something with the Stop signs. Anything to control the people, the cars. An accident is going to happen. Its just not Highland, its everybody in that area we do have a problem.

The other question, how do you notify people about this meeting? The only way I was notified is I opened my daughter's mail. It was addressed to her. She is in college. She's upset that I opened her mail, but it said City of Middletown. I would just like to know, I pay the taxes and I wasn't notified.

**Charles Mitchell-** We requested mailing labels from the Orange County Board of Election for everybody who lives in the Second Ward.

**Rich Fischer-** I can tell my daughter it was the Board of Elections fault that I opened her mail.

**Charles Mitchell-** Sure, if that is what you want to tell her.

**Rich Fischer-** The other people might not have been notified.

**Charles Mitchell-** We also put it in a Legal notice in the newspaper.

**Rich Fischer-** I have to be honest with you, that is not the part I look at.

**Charles Mitchell-** By law, that is all we are required to do. But again, the Mayor, Council President Dino, Mr. Moson, Mr. Dwyer requested that the City also do the mailing so that the residents in the Second Ward would know.

**Rich Fischer-** If I didn't open my daughter's mail and if I don't read the public notice in the paper I would never have known this was going to happen unless Jay saw me, Jay said, "Rich this is going to happen". Changes are going to be made and I am going to have look in the paper now and see.

**Charles Mitchell-** Like I said, I can show you the paperwork.

**Rich Fischer-** My daughter got the mailing and I figured...

**Charles Mitchell-** Are you a registered voter in the 2nd Ward?

**Rich Fischer-** Yes. I have been here 22 years and paying taxes. I don't think it should be a registered voter. I think you're paying taxes, you should get notified. My daughter is in college, she got notified, she doesn't pay the taxes, I wish she would.

**Susan DeLieto Lee**  
31 Prospect St.

Actually I have a couple of questions. I also was not given a letter. I did hear about it and I walked up and down my street and I talked to several of my neighbors of which none of them received notification. I vote every election.

**Charles Mitchell-** I will check with the Board of Elections. We sent out 100's of letters. We did get some back.

**Susan DeLieto Lee-** This is the first that I have seen. My question is everything that is scratched out has gone by the wayside.

**Charles Mitchell-** This proposal was proposed by Judge Martens....

**Susan DeLieto Lee-** What he has crossed off is already...

**Charles Mitchell-** I would have to assume that. Without speaking with him directly.

**Susan DeLieto Lee-** Whatever I am seeing here on the paper..

**Mayor DeStefano-** Whatever you see there is irrelevant to what... That was the motivation for us to call for a public hearing, hire the traffic planner.

**Susan DeLieto Lee-** This is what they proposed for Highland Ave.

**Mayor DeStefano-** Right. That is something that is going to be presented to the Traffic Planner for his consideration along with all the comments here and the additional meetings with the neighbors. These are not City proposals.

**Susan DeLieto Lee-** My question is, I don't live in that little loop, I live one block down, but obviously as everyone says the ramifications are going to go around. One of the things I was questioning here was... the Mayor has cleared up for me. One little thing about commercial license plates on Highland Ave. I didn't understand that and I think it is kind of ridiculous and nobody can get a pizza delivery or you can't come home in your pickup truck. Just a question.

**Mayor DeStefano-** I am not disagreeing with you.

**Susan DeLieto Lee-** What I am more concerned about is, I know in Middletown, other areas have had traffic flow problems and the next thing you know, the neighbors have gotten a letter, in order to solve some of the problems which are real. I am not disputing anything anyone has said tonight. They need to widen the streets and the next thing you know, your front porch is sitting on the street. I'm just concerned that we will get all information and all ramifications of traffic. Not just we are going to reroute here and not turn here. But proposals into the future where I can be assured where my 100 year rock wall in front of my house is not going to be a part of the street and no longer a part of my front yard. I am glad. When I am reading this, I am thinking this was a proposal.

**Mayor DeStefano-** No. That is what I said at the opening comments.

**Susan DeLieto Lee-** We will try to get better communication so that homeowner's and tax payers will be receiving this information.

**Joe Czajka**  
**24 Lenox Place**

First of all I also have a degree in planning and would be interested in sitting on Ad-Hoc committee, I am volunteering myself for any kind of services that may be required. On Lenox Place as some of you know, there has been two (2) Stop signs installed where Courtland meets Lenox and I would hazard to guess 80% of the traffic does not stop on either side. Through traffic on Lenox Place is horrible. People travel down Highland, they cut down either Cantrell or Courtland, they cut through the Stop signs down to Lake or wherever they are going. We have a lot of little children in our neighborhood and we like very much at least to have the Stop signs be properly patrolled. I know it is a big City there's a lot of things to patrol. But the Stop signs really haven't done anything. As far as putting Stop signs on Highland Ave., you might want to think about the amount of noise that is created by vehicles stopping and going. Although, you have to weigh your options. I use to, I don't work anymore in the building at 53 Highland Ave. I use to be in charge of that building. I had the company that use to own it, sell it. That was not done accident, it was done by design. It eliminated about 30 cars being employed, 30 people being employed on that corner. Part of the design of getting rid of that building under that ownership, was to eliminates a lot of the traffic. Just to the people that hadn't received the public notice, get on a soap box a little bit. I believe it is

your duty and it is your responsibility to read public notices to know what is going on in your community.

**Dan Snyder**  
**President, Mid-City Transit Corp.**

Until just a year ago, I lived for 16 years on Highland Ave. I am sorry that things have gotten so bad in the past year that it would come to this point. But my main goal tonight is to especially for the planners, in and around the City of Middletown we have over 6,000 kids going to school every day. Since the new schools opened up on Cty. 78, another 1500 from the previous times were added to the rosters which included all the kids in 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th grade, all areas of the community. So, if we are going to deal with traffic, I echo Mr. Lachmann, the enforcement is the key because these kids are picked up and delivered every day. Just about every street in town, every intersection in town. Kids are being hit at corners. Stop signs, Stop lights in the middle of the blocks, so its not just Highland Ave. which is the largest street in town, with 50 mph speed limit that I recognized for 16 years. We need to encompass all of these, 6,000 kids in this plan to make sure they are safe on a daily basis.

**Ann Kelly**  
**76 Highland Ave.**

I had an experience with my grandson. I was crossing Highland Ave., somebody darted at the intersection of Wickham and Highland. My grandson and I were crossing the street together and I said come on Christopher, this guy was coming so fast that my grandson got scared and went back and I was on one side and he was on the other. Really, that is the problem. It is the speed and it is the big trucks. Those are the things I really think have to be addressed. Mr. Lachmann mentioned Montgomery. I got one time when I went through, I was going... I was in the school zone and I was probably going 25-27 mph, I saw this policeman coming the other way. He stopped me and said do you realize that you were speeding? I said no, I said I didn't. He said this is a 20 mph zone. Well, that is all I needed, because I always am careful in Montgomery. So if we had somebody there often enough to get people aware of that speed limit and they were stopped. Word would get out and people would be more careful on Highland Ave. Also as far as the big trucks go, the same thing.

**Vickie DeRocker**  
**37 Prospect St.**

Good evening. I just wanted to say more on the other side of Highland Ave. you are talking about Commonwealth and everything across Highland. Some of my neighbors after hearing about this meeting, we got together with Sue who already spoke this evening and we did talk. One of our concerns that I just thought that we should let the traffic planner know is if we are going to keep commercial traffic or big trucks off of Highland from North St. to Highland, Prospect St. where we all live is the only clear shot without

turning that strange corner. So, we just have been experiencing a rebirth on Prospect St. when I moved here two (2) years ago, there were seven (7) vacant houses and now there are none. We are building a beautiful little street with lots of children, we want to make it clear or at least be hopeful that the concerns of Prospect St. which is a narrow residential street with a lot of old, beautiful houses. Many, many children does not become from North St. to Highland to get to say to the Y, or wherever these big trucks would be going. That this wouldn't be the route that they take. If that is at all possible. I know it is going to be hard to please everyone, but that is what our concern was when we heard about this keeping them off of that road. Ours seems to be the only other clear shot.

**Charlie Morse**  
**199 Highland Ave.**

I have been there since 1952. I think our big problem is the trucks and the traffic. We solved part of this problem when we put a light on the corner of Wisner and Highland. At one span we had 11 accidents and crashes going back quite a few years. In fact, I lost two (2) cars in front of my house. That light made a big difference. I would like to suggest to the planner if he looked into putting a traffic light on the corner of Prospect and Highland? I think there is so much traffic on that corner, I think we could stand a light there. I was also a mailman on that street for many years, I think a light would be great on the corner.

**Stella Wildschut**  
**28 Highland Ave.**

That is just two (2) houses off the intersection of East Main St. That is very hazardous intersection. Main St. has a little jog in it. So when you come from the hill from the high part, you can't see what is coming. Another thing is, the cars coming up on East Main are coming so fast and usually that is natural when you go up a hill you accelerate, but they come up so fast when I try to get out of my driveway I have difficulty. Because you have just a certain amount of visibility. In the evening it is better, at least you can see the light coming from the cars. So I really believe it would be good if we could have a light or Stop signs or something there. Or even have a sign on East Main Str. that they should slow down. Of course they don't realize that they are going that fast as they make the corner.

**Jill Knapp**  
**169 Highland Ave.**

I have lived here for about two (2) years and the traffic on Highland Ave. is incredibly annoying. I bought this house because I believe very strongly in renovation of urban areas as oppose to urban sprawl. I moved into the inner city area so that I can help promote that idea. I cannot enjoy my front porch because of the traffic and noise at rush hour on Highland Ave. I think that it is ironic that we have to have this meeting to request that you enforce existing laws. Many of us are just asking that the speed limit on Highland

Ave. which is 30 mph be enforced. I think that it is quite ironic that we have to come to this point to ask our Council members to enforce existing laws. So I would appreciate it, it seems like the City has no problem in inconveniencing us on Highland Ave. when they want to have parades as many of us do keep our properties up and make it a beautiful area for the entire town. Yet, when we are asking for something as simple as enforcing a speed limit, we have to come to this.

### **Mayor DeStefano**

I don't want anyone to leave the room with the misunderstanding that we are not trying to enforce and I know there have been many comparisons made to Montgomery this evening. But, one has to understand, Montgomery has one (1) main street in and one (1) main street out. So it is very easy to do that in Montgomery. Our purpose of hiring a traffic planner is not to pit neighbor against neighbor, community against community. There are a lot of valid proposals that are being made, that are going to be examined. It is not a political issue as was mentioned by Mr. Lachmann. We are looking for solutions that is going to be good for Highland Ave., good for Royce, Phillips and all the other streets. We are going to look at traffic routes, truck routes. May be it is a long time coming, but we are there at this point now. We are going to expend the money, we are going to look at Lake Ave. and all the other places in the City. I think you heard from other people there are other problems in the City. It is physically impossible and cost prohibitive to have a policeman at every intersection in the City. Part of the goal or the assignment of the traffic planner is to look at what other permissible solutions that are doing in the State level. For instance, you can't do speed bumps in the City, he mentioned tonight in committee we discussed speed hump. There are other designs that are in the road that will slow down traffic on major boulevards. I know a lot of you are frustrated by the amount of traffic and the amount of what you perceive as a lack of enforcement. But I can assure you that the police dept. is enforcing it when they can. We get calls from West Main St., East Main St., Cottage St. If we had to physically put a police officer at every intersection where there are problems, you heard about Lenox Place about rolling through Stop signs. We can't do it. We want to focus on traffic devices as speed controls, what other communities, what the State allows, what our insurance company will allow. I know we talked about speed bumps in Davidge park a few years ago. Our insurance company said you put the speed bumps up, we are not going to insure your roads. Very simple. The choice was a few of the neighbors were very frustrated to the fact that we would not put up speed bumps up on Davidge Rd. we said we had to make a choice, we can put them up to slow your traffic down, but if there is an incident we are not going to be insured. That is what his assignment will be. I can assure you, that myself and members of the Council are committed to doing that. The Police Dept. is committed to enforcing it. I think you have seen additional enforcement up there since it was brought to our attention in the last few weeks. Some of you and some of your neighbors are going to be people who are going to get tickets. For speeding.. I know I have had two (2) calls from a gentleman who received a speeding traffic and the other was I believe a Stop sign ticket. Why so many police around the Elk's Club? Why so many police around the YMCA, we are focusing on your area, but there are other area, don't be mislead that we

are going to solve your problem with just enforcement. That is what his job is going to be. Because we have may be six (6) patrol cars on each shift maximum. Plus detectives and there are other issues we are addressing. He talked about traffic circles in some areas, just devices other communities are using to slow down traffic. Stop signs are one of them, traffic circles are another, speed humps are another. We want to make sure we are doing it right, that we don't impact Prospect St., that we don't hurt Watkins or Commonwealth. At the same time we address the issues on Highland Ave. We beg with you to be patient, we are committed, we have hired the gentleman, we are committed to funding the whole study. We are going to focus on that section of the City first. We will try to do a better notification process, the Times Herald Record is here may be they will be kind enough to put a brief in the paper next time also, besides the fact that we are taking a legal notice ad and we don't all read legal notices, I know I don't read them all the time myself. But we will try to do a better notification process. But in the meantime, if you have any written comments that you would like to make that you would like the traffic planner to look at, please feel free to send them in and then we will move on. We are committed as a Council and myself and I know the Police Dept. to improving the traffic issues. We took a step last year with parking on lawns where houses now don't have one (1) or two (2) cars, they have three (3) or four (4) cars. People are parking on lawns, so we tried to address that issue. I know immediate things we can do is, line intersections. I think one gentleman spoke about people parking to close to the intersection. That is something we can do now without a traffic planner, we can go up and line those corners with either around fire hydrants or I believe it is 20 ft. from the corner. You are not allowed to park 20 ft. from the corner whether it is signed or not. Those are things we can take now and do immediately and try to address some of those minor issues. But the bigger picture is we need to resolve Highland Ave. problems and not create problems on Prospect/Watkins/Commonwealth and all the other. I think by taking this first step behind the traffic planner will be able to do so. Don't be mislead by just putting a police officer there is going to stop it, its not. We are not Montgomery, we have a lot of streets, I believe its 70 miles of streets in the City. We are not going to be able to do it with enforcement alone and we need his help. I want to thank everyone for coming and your input and hopefully we will have... when the initial report is there, we will have more input with you. I am going to make four (4) appointments to the Ad-Hoc Committee. If you have four people from each neighborhood over there that would like to serve may be a person from Prospect, a person from Highland, a person from Watkins and a person from Commonwealth to start with, that would like to serve on the Ad-Hoc Committee dealing with that area. I would be more than happy to make those appointments and that way you can keep in contact. I know you have an active Neighborhood Watch and you can keep in contact with your folks also in case somebody does miss the advertising. Anyone who is interested can contact my office tomorrow and we will make a few appointments to the Board that way.

From the audience, **Mr. Lachmann**- Asked how much is the study?

**Mayor DeStefano-** That is in the scope of services which is being proposed tonight. Like I said in my opening comments the budget for it is not set yet. We are looking for Community Development Programs to fund the initial part of the program which is being absorbed by Community Development. If we need to absorb it, we are prepared to do so.

**Pres. Dino-** Declared public hearing closed at 9:30 P.M.

8. **Petitions & Complaints**

**Charles Mitchell-** Nothing this evening.

9. **Remarks of the Mayor**

**Mayor DeStefano**

Budget meetings tomorrow morning at 9:00 A.M. Anyone interested in attending, I would appreciate the attendance of all possible, but especially Mr. Capozella.

10. **Remarks of the Aldermen**

**Ald. Dwyer-** Nothing this evening.

**Ald. Moson-** Nothing this evening.

**Ald. Parrella-** Nothing this evening.

**Ald. Duncanson-** Nothing this evening.

**Ald. Cummings-** I have two requests- I would like to place into committee Safety & Traffic- Winner Ave.- Stop sign on both ends. Winner and South, Winner and Euclid. The reason I am asking for this as you know, there are no sidewalks down there at all. There are a lot more children and Pres. Dino and I met with a gentleman today whose little girl came up with this idea and proposed it to us. There are no sidewalks down there and coming down both ways they have no idea about stopping. I would appreciate you doing that.

Also one other item- Monhagen Ave. down by the old priory, coming down that hill, numerous times that guard rail has been hit and DPW has to replace it, may be we could put some kind of sign there before you start down the hill. "Slippery When Wet", whatever wording you care to choose. I know the DPW does a good job when it is slippery, but people have no fear.

**Ald. Hayden-** Nothing this evening.