

7. Public Hearings & Grievances

John Naumchik read the following-Public hearing to present concerns and impacts of speeders on City streets.

CITY OF MIDDLETOWN NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Whereas, in response to concerns from many Middletown residents, including people who reside on Highland Avenue, Alderman Joe Masi requested a meeting with Mayor DeStefano, Chief Bethencourt and Commissioner of Public Works, Jacob Tawil to address the concerns of speeding on City streets, specifically Highland Avenue, and

Whereas; this hearing will be an opportunity for the public to present their concerns and impacts of speeders on City streets, specifically one street that is very wide and is used as a main thoroughfare connecting three of the City four wards, and

Whereas; this will give City officials an opportunity to listen to possible solutions and their impacts on quality of life in the impacted neighborhoods.

Therefore, be it resolved that the City of Middletown Common Council will hold a public hearing on Tuesday, October 6, 2015 at 8:00PM in the Common Council Chambers for the purpose of hearing any and all on the issue of speed control options.

John C. Naumchik
Clerk of the Common Council
THR 9/22/15 & 9/23/15
City Website

Pres. Rodrigues opened the public hearing at 8:15 pm

Mayor DeStefano-I want to give you a little history.

As Mr. Naumchik read, Mr. Masi did approach me regarding the issue of not only on Highland Ave. but other parts of the City. Highland Ave. goes all 3 wards. 1st, 2nd and 3rd Ward; he had a concern.

Just to give you a background, I think the only 2 people around in 2001 were myself and Ald. Masi.

Back in October 2001 we had the same issues and this is 14 yrs. later. I guess they haven't been mitigated to the point of satisfaction of the community up there.

At that time we hired a traffic planner; John Collins Assoc. We are trying to track down the study, all the documentation that we have right now is backup and support and public comments at the time. Some of the issues that were raised, from speed bumps to

grooves in the road, I think some of the recommendations were slowing down the traffic on Highland would require some build out at the intersections to narrow the street, I think suggestions about bike lanes and narrowing Highland Ave. There are a whole list of things including commercial traffic that doesn't belong on Highland Ave.

A lot is enforcement. I know the Police Dept. is here to address the enforcement side of it. As I made comments back in 2001 is the enforcement alone is not going to resolve the issue because we are not going to have a Police Officer on Highland Ave. 24 hrs. a day enforcing traffic. That is just not feasible.

I believe what they are looking for in '01 was some type of solution that would come out of the traffic study/ traffic consultants recommendations. What we did, the Council at the time formed an Ad-Hoc Committee made up of neighbors. They issued a report and I do have the report and I will be sharing that with the Council members and I will be sharing it with the neighbors, post on our website all the information from 2001 including all the public comment for people to see. What we hope to do tonight is get more public comment; I don't know if it is necessary to hire a traffic consultant. To look and see what was done in '01 I really don't recall a heck of lot of construction being done. Also to once again examine the alternatives that the traffic consultant made and also the neighbors made. I know one person talked about the grooves in the road and the other side of that when you get into it, you don't want to hear that at 1 am in the morning when you're sleeping. You will hear that noise like when you approach a toll booth. At the time we are trying to reaffirm with our insurance company now, speed bumps were not allowed. No insurance company would insure us on public streets with speed bumps it creates other problems with plowing. Just the liability issue of City not being able to insure our streets became an issue back then. We are trying to verify some of that information now.

We are not looking for answers tonight, we are looking for public input and hopefully we will give it a closer look this time apparently than we did in 2001.

That was the purpose of working with Mr. Masi to request the public hearing.

Michele Ellerin-Thank you Mayor DeStefano. We appreciate the opportunity tonight to come here and speak to all of you.

I have lived on the street myself for 16 yrs. I have been a resident of the City my entire life.

I have seen Middletown change as we all have. One of the things I have seen is the increase in traffic, increase in commercialism which is great. Wonderful to see downtown Middletown reaching its stride again. Seeing business coming in, I love to see cars down here, love to see the restaurants busy. But I also know that Walkkill is just on the other side of the City of Middletown; in fact they made it quite clear with the installation of a lot of Town of Walkkill signs that I see absolutely everywhere when I start driving in certain ends of the City. One of those ends of the City is Highland Ave.

So for Highland Ave. its not just that it reaches across the wards, but it also serves as a conduit from the City into the Town of Walkill. I think that is part of the problem as well as the increase in traffic, the increase of commercialism in the area. Highland Ave. becomes essentially almost ring road, constant method of getting from one end to another. That invites not just residential traffic but serious commercial traffic. What we have seen on this street in the 16 yrs. that I have been there is just an increase in the number of cars which is fine if they were actually coming close to the speed limit; which is 30. Even if they were going 35 it would be fine. They're not. Its reached a point for us on the street where it is impacting the quality of our lives. I myself as I have been in that home have had two (2) cars in the last 5 yrs. come up off the roadway onto the pavement onto the sidewalk hitting a telephone pole on both sides of my house. It had to be replaced on both occasions. They take out shrubbery that is in the middle of the night.

Recently down towards St. Theresa's Nursing Home, there was a car that literally flipped over in the middle of the day on Highland Ave. I don't believe anyone was drunk, I believe it was speed. That is just in my small area of Highland. Highland represents as you know and the Mayor so eloquently told us a very wide road, it invites speeding. It looks like its got plenty of room and if there's no cars on the street it just invites you to really take off.

As a result of that we would like to find the mechanism to slow it down. We recognize that speed bumps and speed humps are an issue. We understand they are an issue for snowplows and now I hear they are potentially a liability issue which I can recognize. I don't know about the toll plaza strips, we haven't considered that. We were looking at something as simple as adding Stop signs to three (3) different corners. Those being the corners of Prospect/Jay/Sunset. The problem that exist besides the fact that is a $\frac{3}{4}$ stretch between the light at Wisner and the light at Wickham where it intersects with Highland Ave. If one of those lights happens to be green it is an absolute straight shot and I can tell you after people turn the corner onto Wisner onto Highland, by the time they reach the first 30 mile speed sign on the right hand side they are already well beyond 30 miles an hour. If you're not going as fast as they want you to go, I have them constantly it feels as if they are in my trunk. Most of us on Highland Ave. have to back out, some may turn around before we get into our property and back into our property. Both of those moves requires a lot of care on a regular residential street let alone on a street where cars are not slowing down, do not care if you make it out of your driveway. Even if you believe they were back at an intersection when you pulled out and thought you had plenty of room they are on top of you in no time. For example, my mother who is elderly was backing out of my driveway; usually I turn the car around so that she can get out. I decided to step out into the street and was hoping somebody would slow down and he did and then he rolled down his window and asked me if I was a police officer and told me if I was not a police officer I ought to get out of the road. Very frustrating. I have this power point that my husband who left for India yesterday.

☞We cannot cross the street comfortably

☞We cannot have ingress and egress out of our homes comfortably

°It is noisy on our street

°Drag stripping going on in our street

°We cheer when we hear police sirens and we are very grateful for the increase police presence.

We totally understand you can't post a police officer which is a very precious resource to any city for speed purposes on a residential street. The emphasis here is on residential street and this is not a commercial street, it is a residential street primarily single family homes. It is a jewel in the crown of the City of Middletown that all of you are striving so hard to keep growing in a forwardly motion. We would hate to see the bucolic nature of that street, historical nature of that street really ruined. I understand there was a move on in 2001 to do something about this. I think when I first came on to the street I was aware of a list being circulated with regards to some action about traffic. It seemed to drop, it ended. I don't know if whoever was doing it moved away or what happened. But since that time the increase of speed and traffic on the road particular commercial traffic has gone through the roof. I have lost pets on the street and although that is not my primary concern it does add to my quiet enjoyment at my home as well. I can't cross the street comfortably to speak to my neighbors you have to be really careful. You can't even call across the street because you can't be heard over the sound of the traffic.

We are looking to the City to help us and partner with us and try to resolve this. We are looking for up to 3 Stop signs; I may have neighbors who showed up here tonight for which I am very grateful to have some other ideas.

Michele went through power point presentation

°to us it has become a high speed beltway

°street is no longer safe for these reasons

°regular speeding

°motorcycles that is a constant issue on our street

In fact there are specific times of the night when I can guarantee you that there will be a couple of cars, small cars that race down the street on the motorcycle. I can almost tell you what speed they are going simply by the sounds that I got use to hearing.

I already spoke about the ingress and egress

Highland and Courtland horrible accident(s) at that intersection

Point being made here is that because of the $\frac{3}{4}$ stretch of road that is uninterrupted by traffic lights we just can't slow anybody down, we have no way to impede the building up of traffic, certainly if the light is green we are in a lot of trouble.

We are not suggesting we need to put another light on Highland, we really just suggesting we need to slow the flow.

We appreciate the temporary electronic speed alert signs that you've placed, they only work for the moment. I don't know if anybody has done any studies on these unless you leave those out for a long time, once they are gone the idea is gone. The speed goes up again.

Again we love the police presence but we understand that it can be only given on a limited basis

Those are our proposed solutions, stop sign. I do understand there are other people here from different ends of Highland Ave. that may have other concerns that we haven't dealt with just our $\frac{3}{4}$ mile section. We felt they were fairly covered because they were some stop lights; as we realized later on those stop lights are green they are really not covered at all.

Kevin Gomez-I am a parent of 4 children. I am very much concerned over the blatant violation about vehicular law.

On more than one occasion I have witnessed drivers disregard the stop sign, the school busses as our children are getting on the busses. I have eye witnessed cars tailgating a school bus just this morning as my daughter was boarding the bus to go to Monhagen Jr. High School. The car was tailgating the school bus. What are they getting out of this other than putting a danger to the most innocent of our residents?

Yes there are a number of solutions that could be considered. Looking at the excellent power point, between Wickham and Wisner there are no other stop light. So that is the particular stretch where drivers sometimes get a little out of control and abuse the speed limit. Maybe we might need another stop light. As far as turning green at the same time; we could operate them that when one is green the other is red. I know some communities do that especially in school zones. That could help slow down the traffic. I think it might be a good idea. I would suggest my corner Prospect/Highland particularly it tends to get congested when my neighbor the Elk's holds events or the YMCA. That might be a good middle point. We do appreciate the efforts by the Mayor and the Common Council, Ald. Masi and all distinguished members of the Council to bring this to light and I'm happy to join my neighbors in asking there will be some relief provided. No one has the right to strike against public safety and of course definitely drivers don't have that right.

Adrian Tymczyszyn-I live directly across the street from Temple Sinai. I will speak specifically to this intersection. Michele made many good points so I don't want to beat a dead horse.

Some of the things that I see at this intersection. The traffic that comes in out of the YMCA and Temple Sinai you have traffic coming south turning into Courtland. Most of the time to go to the Y and cars impatiently coming behind they are trying to pass; they can't wait.

Similarly on the other side you cars traveling north, they slow down. I'm over here mowing my lawn and I have to jump back onto the grass because there's cars again try to pass the traffic over to Cantrell.

Sometimes just a slow driver and I have seen cars come down and if they are trying to get around a slow driver. I have seen people just pass. Michele's points it is a wide open road and I think it just invites people to speed.

With regards to lights that Michele had suggested-I agree Stop sign at Sunset and Stop sign at Jay is roughly 1,000 ft. increments that will go far in slowing down the traffic. I'm partial to a light at Cantrell. However, with respect to this gentleman's concern with the Elk's Club I have seen that also. Friday night bingo issue. When a driver gets off at Wisner they see a drag strip. Unfortunately, a lot of young kids with souped up cars. Even if they are going 25-30 it sounds like they are going 100.

Motorcycles, Sunday afternoon is drag racing time.

One other point I want to make quickly. The light that is down at 211 and Highland I think that adds to drivers' impatience. I don't know if something can be to modify the timing of that light.

Mayor DeStefano- Are you talking about North St. and Highland. Wickham and Highland.

Chief Bethencourt- Did you refer passing slower vehicles or passing on the right for vehicles making a left hand turn on the right shoulder of the road.

Mr. Tymczysyn-Yes.

Chief Bethencourt-Or were you referring vehicles that were going straight ahead and vehicles were passing a slow moving vehicle?

Mr. Tymczysyn- Both. Vehicles traveling north on Highland Ave. are being passed on the right hand side. I have seen vehicles traveling south towards Wickham Ave. just pass a faster vehicle that was going straight ahead.

Shane Hatcher-Thanks for everyone allowing us to speak our minds here and let you know that we are concerned about the issue in our area. I really appreciate the police dept. for their efforts; they have really done a super job. Of course, enforcement alone cannot solve this.

My particular situation is this, I'm afraid to edge the grass right on the sidewalk. People absolutely have no care about my life. I really have to jump back onto the sidewalk in order from getting hit. People are so worried about anyone trying to turn, slowdown, they just pass them, ride in the center of the yellow line. I have witnessed on multiple occasions motorcycles up on one wheel, which is just absurd. Just like 3 months ago in front of our house people tailgating each other and ran into each other. I was outside my house when that took place.

I use to work for the Dept. of Transportation, particularly the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. If congress actually passes a transportation bill there most likely there would be federal grant money available for traffic calming from the Federal Highway Administration which is something that we could look into as a city as a whole. Most of those grants require us to put up about 20% meaning us as a city and the federal government provides a grant for the remaining 80.

Anything that can be done I would greatly appreciate it. I don't know if lowering the speed limit would even say anything, I don't think anyone would pay attention to 20 vs. 30. If they are blatantly disobey the law they are going to do it no matter what the speed limit is.

Mary Lou Dietrich- Mine is from a walking point of view. I walk all over. I'm always walking downtown, sidewalks kind of kill me. When I get to the corner of Highland and W. Main, there is a crosswalk; I always try to go in that crosswalk. Bad enough the cars that have the stop sign don't want to stop, they kind of roll and then stop. If they are coming up W. Main St. they will go around me as I'm in the crosswalk. I'm going to get killed in that area one of these days because they come up flying up that hill. They will go right around me as I'm in the crosswalk. Maybe a sign or something, it is really dangerous in that one area right there.

Emily Theroux- I don't live on Highland, I live on Royce Ave. which is a small one block street parallel to Highland. Chappell Parkway on one end and Wisner on the other end. I walk a lot too with my dog and I think the only reason nobody has done that to me is because they are looking at the dog and thinking they don't want to hit the dog. But I have wondered if those signs saying "Drivers must yield to pedestrians in crosswalk". Does anybody think that would help at all? I have thought about that.

We have a problem with cars that want to beat that light at the corner of Highland and Wisner; so they cut around onto Royce Ave. Even the City put in a Stop sign some years ago, they either ignored the Stop sign or slow down a little bit and they ...up Royce Ave. We have a lot of children on our street, a lot of pets. In the winter when there is a lot of snow and people don't shovel their sidewalks and I'm out walking my dog, I have to go around into Highland you are really taking your life into your hands when you do that. I put reflective leashes

and those yellow vests that people in grocery store parking lots use. I wanted to agree with Mary about how hard it is for pedestrians. The noise is terrible.

Bob Dietrich- When we figure out traffic and trying to slow traffic; one of the things that Mary had said when she was up here, think of the walkers. One of the things is we have such bad sidewalks especially where we had old bluestone and it hasn't been replaced for 50 yrs. or taken care of. Which forces walkers to walk into the street? If we compound this with what some people said about people speeding, people not paying attention, passing on the right and that sort of thing. It is very difficult for walkers. What I would like to see is the Council to consider a complete street resolution which might be a start. Something that some of the other communities in the county have done. One of the other things is I think someone had mentioned trying to have something where perhaps people jogging in Middletown would pay more attention to crosswalks. If we drive through Goshen, Warwick people are stopping in the crosswalks and letting people cross. If I drive down 211 someone let's say by Gobeo's, I stopped one day to let someone cross almost 3 people rear ended me because I did stop. Having something that could be moved perhaps by the businesses put in the middle of the street that reminds people they should stop for people in crosswalks. Might be a positive thing, you have to change the culture in Middletown so that people will stop for pedestrians. What you can't do in Warwick and Goshen you should be able to do in Middletown and Newburgh. We need to as a City think in the same manner.

I'm not on Highland Ave. that much but from what the residents were saying it is horrible. My street is one block and we have people speeding up and down the street. Day time, night time, like Highland we do have kids playing in the street.

Marty Dragone-I live on the corner of Alaska and Highland. When my kids come to stay with us they have to turn on the noise machine because of the traffic. The motorcycles. We have a quad across the street that goes round and round his house and it wakes the baby up. They come in from the Town of Wallkill from North St. to try to make the traffic light up on Wisner Ave. as fast as they can go. When they are done with the traffic light on Wisner Ave. they shoot down Highland Ave.

Lorraine-Resident on Highland Ave. as Michele had mentioned a vehicle that has been hit and turned over which was my vehicle. You do need a Stop sign, we need the help. School busses, my grandson was getting on the school bus, I had to run from the porch, pull him off the school bus a young kid speeding almost hit behind the school bus. We need something done.

Kelly Florez-I don't live on Highland Ave., I live on Cty. 78 but I travel Highland Ave. every day to bring my daughter to and from school. That is where everybody learns to take their road test, it is on Highland Ave. Everybody

speeding on the street is not demonstrating to them what good ethics it would be of pulling out in front of somebody and speeding past them. They are willing to get their driver's license and we are showing them what not to do when you get your driver's license. If that is a designated spot we made as rule permit area it should be well enforced.

Chief Bethencourt-Thank the residents for coming and Mr. Masi for holding this so that I can listen to their ideas and their perspectives because it is your neighborhood and your community. I am here to serve you.

Since we've had the increase complaints and activity on Highland Ave. I can give you a brief perspective of what the Police Dept. has done in reference to the complaint.

We have increased enforcement and some of the residents have noticed that as in what they have said. Increase enforcement up on Highland Ave. exponentially. We have called in the NY State Police to assist with their commercial vehicle enforcement unit in reference to the 18 wheelers. The law on Highland Ave. says that it is local deliveries for these commercial vehicles and that would mean that somebody is delivering to basically to Highland Ave. for the delivery.

I know that in the past we have tried different ideas, we have deployed the speed trailer which is out of commission right now we are working on getting that back up and running. One of the residents said is I still believe this a cultural; we have to affect cultural change. I don't believe that simply by placing Stop signs at the various intersections that you are going to have a difference in people who abide by the law or don't abide by the law. I think the affect then might be that they speed as fast as they can between the Stop sign. Then we have people that are going to be running the Stop signs which is going to be a secondary issue.

I don't want to downplay anything that we are going to do in the future, whether we are going to do a traffic study, whether I am going to work with Commissioner of Public Works to figure out what the best solutions might be and then may be come back to the Council and make some type of recommendation. Because at the end of the day it is your decision on how we move forward. I am going to continue the efforts that I have at this point and try to come up with different solutions for enforcement. Before I forget one of the things when I talk about cultural enforcement, the cultural change side of it is, when you go through the Village of Montgomery they have long stretches of road, I think everyone knows, it is known throughout the County that is not an area where you go through and go speeding. They will pick you off basically. You would be leaving there with a ticket. We are not in a position such as the Town of Montgomery. We have a very busy city here, vibrant city, there's a lot of duties and responsibilities and there is abundance of roadways to be covered. I continue

my conversations with the State Police today, we had a meeting earlier this morning and we were talking about Highland Ave. and the different ideas they might have. But we were also talking about roadways in the City such as Dolson Ave. which has similar characteristics and similar problems just on a larger scale. We were talking about different ideas that we might put into play there.

I want to thank the residents again for coming out. I love to hear your ideas, what the effect is on you and your family, I can have a very define way of trying to bring solutions to the floor and enforce those solutions.

Michele Ellerin-Chief, how can we reach out to you and do that?

Chief Bethencourt-I think we have started it here in this process. If you would like to e-mail me my e-mail is rbethencourt@middletownpolice.com, it is on the Middletown Police website, middletownpolice.com. If you have an idea which you feel I need to hear directly I encourage you. You can stop by the Police Station or call or make an appointment with me and express your concerns directly. I have no problem with you coming to see me.

Like is said I will report back to the Common Council statistics that we are going to take from up there. What are enforcement is, whether we get through speed trailer. If we go forward with the traffic study obviously my department would be ready to assist in any way we can with that study.

From the audience- Do you mind telling us if you have been issuing tickets or warnings?

Chief Bethencourt introduced Lt. John Ewanciw. He is Bureau Commander in Charge of Patrol Operations.

Lt. Ewanciw-Thank you for your suggestions. We do take them into consideration. Regards to the question pertaining to enforcement- we have had an increase of enforcement in the area and we will continue to do such. Over the last month and a half we have issued 99 tickets in or on Highland Ave. 53 for speed. Our directives right now are to give a zero tolerance approach to traffic concerns up there. There will be some warnings at time, I cannot take the total discretion away from all the officers; but we are encouraging them to take a zero tolerance approach to the speeding.

Chief Bethencourt-The same with the State Police.

Shane Hatcher- What is the fastest speed crossing the road?

Lt. Ewanciw- I personally haven't been out there and I don't know what the fastest speed is.

Shane Hatcher-I used the radar from my app on my phone and I have clocked people going 66 miles an hour on our street.

Discussion ensued

Lt. Ewanciw-As I said we will continue our efforts of enforcement. As the Chief said we are working on putting speed trailers back out, getting it up and operational. Hopefully in a week we will have a better idea of the timing of that. But you will continue to see police officers in the area.

Ald. Ramkissoo- I know a small section of Highland down by West Main in the 3rd Ward and I also happen to live on street that is a little bit of a thoroughfare on California Ave. I don't know if anyone is familiar with it people use it as well; I understand your pain on Royce.

I live one house up from a Stop sign. I want to speak to this because I appreciate what you want to do. People will pass my home in excess of 50 mph with a Stop sign right there. So the Stop sign unfortunately I have to agree with the Chief on this I don't know if this is going to fix it. I don't mean it to burst a bubble, I see it. Bob spoke about people on Chestnut with children playing in the street. My children are not allowed to go near the street. It is a residential street, there are no businesses there, we are all families and my kids cannot go near it. Because it is dangerous and it is an issue. It is cultural. I understand Highland; I drop my daughter at Presidential every day. I have a nice habit of coming to the right with my very large vehicle to make a left hand turn letting anybody in the road who is trying to get out; get out. ...rear ended because it is a problem. I see people being stuck at intersections and we have lost that respect for other people. I am really interested in being a part of this solution. I think Highland is an absolutely a huge issue; but we have many others in the City where it is also a problem. I think a city wide effort that we do more and look into; I bring it up know because it is kind of related is Neighborhood Watch next week. We are actually having a Neighborhood Watch meeting where the Chief will also be present with us. We are hoping it will also be a big meeting; we can draw a crowd like yourself, perfect opportunity for us. Like you said, police cannot be sitting on your street all day on any city road all day. But we as neighbors maybe we can find a way to help them do what they need to do and bring us more to that cultural of Montgomery. I understand, I live on one of these roads; I have 4 children under the age of 10.

Ald. Kleiner- Thank you Ald. Ramkissoo and Bob Dietrich for bringing up a few things.

Neighborhood Watch, we need people to come out, we need people to be in communication with us. We all have constituent meetings, we have Neighborhood Watch, Neighborhood Watch has been the 2nd Tuesday of the month for years. Sometimes Kate and I and Sgt. Khalil and Officer Bailey are the

only ones there. We really need to hear from people; we have heard at the constituents meeting that Highland Ave. has been an issue for a long time. I want to thank the Chief and Sgt. Khalil, Lt. and Officer Bailey who has been out there and they have been that speed has been going down. You are not allowed 39, in Montgomery if hit 31 you are going to get a ticket. But, they have been doing 34-35 and from what I understand it has helped, its not going to solve the problem. You certainly hear it all over Middletown about speeding. We had the 2 Stop signs put on Randall Heights, Park View and Highland View it doesn't stop the speeders who blow through both Stop signs. I am sure it helps reduce the speed a little bit and of course that is a major cut through from Oliver Ave. and that side of town. Highland Ave. to park side and anyone going out that way or Presidential Heights. We do get it. I do encourage people to come out; we are going to try and change Neighborhood Watch so it's not every single month. Not to be in the coldest months but may be every other month in the spring and ask the Chief if he could come or ask someone from the Police Dept. But make it more of an event so we can really address the issues.

I thank Bob Dietrich for mentioning the sidewalks because I almost hit somebody coming down tonight to the Council meeting. Because they are walking out in the road at dusk with dark grey shirt. I have had people yell at me for speeding when I was doing 20 mph. The problem was they are treating the road like a playground and its not. So that is also a part of changing the cultural, you talk about people at West Main St. and Highland Ave. at that intersection people going down that hill that sidewalk is almost impassable on the one side. It is difficult on the other side and we do really need to pay attention in having safe sidewalks so people don't have to be in the road.

I thank everybody too for coming out because we need to hear the concerns and start hopefully coming up with solutions.

Michele Ellerin-I did forget to thank Mr. Masi who was totally instrumental in putting us on the calendar tonight and he was wonderful. He listened to my thoughts and he immediately reacted to it and all of us are very grateful for that. Personally and everyone who is here.

I did want to speak briefly with regards to Mr. Dietrich's point about runners and walkers and the issue of civility. There is a change on the level of civility, I can't imagine everyone here hasn't felt it living in this community and other communities. One of the ways you measure it is when you start to leave the NY area, may be go to other areas you start to find things slightly more civil in other less metropolitan areas. We are now becoming very metropolitan even though we are still referred to upstate by the down staters. The point being that in NY City along the Hudson River they put in a sidewalk for runners/walkers/bikers. When I drive into the City and take the West Side Highway it is beautiful, it makes me feel really good about being there, it feels clean, it feels up, it feels interesting and it feels safe. Having walkers and

runners as we do on Highland Ave. which is a center piece of the City of Middletown, historically and physically. They are not safe when they are on this street at this time. Allowing them and they are out there all the time children, adults allowing them to be able to bring that type of civility and outdoor experience that exudes a level of safety in a community is very relevant. I would love to see that be able to happen comfortably and give that to the City. In terms of the resolutions that we were speaking of you are not dampen our spirits, we are not experts. What we are thinking is 2-3 Stop signs may physically just slow them down. One is definitely not going to do it. We are totally open to any other suggestion and that leaves to my final question and I'm sure other people here are wondering it as well. What comes next? What do we do or how can we partner with you next in order to facilitate a further discussion and ultimate resolution?

Ald. Masi-Michele thank you very much, I thank everyone for coming out. Jerry to your comments with Neighborhood Watch you want people to come out. We have a room full of people, they did come out and they told us what they want, what they are looking for. I'm not sure whether a Stop signs will alleviate the problem or not alleviate the problem. However, I have no problem with the idea of installing them with 2-3 and let's see what happens. If it doesn't alleviate the problem we can always remove them, we've removed them before. This is what they would like to see, they've come, they've spoken, now its whether or not we listen. Are there other remedies? I'm certainly hoping that we can find one, I realize law enforcement, they are not always in favor of Stop signs. We've had this in the past, I don't live where Kate lives, and my street doesn't have a Stop sign on it. If the residents believe that this may be one of the solutions I have no problem with that, if it turns out that its not and its shown that there's nothing appreciable comes out of it, we can always remove it. We are saying we want people come and speak to us and give us their thoughts all you have to do is look out there, I didn't hear one person out there say they don't want a Stop sign. May be there are some and maybe we will hear from them. But until I hear that I would personally be in favor of at least putting them up and let's see what happens. A month, 3 months, 6 months down the road.

Ald. Johnson- I think it has been a good discussion, I guess I am always aware of unattended consequences. Intersection that abuts between the 2nd and 3rd Ward and I got to know that area. It was a 4 Way Stop and then it became a traffic light and the people who lived in the vicinity said, well it kind of made things worse because now people race to get the yellow light and not hit the yellow light. They actually found it might be more dangerous. So I'm not saying what is right or what is wrong but you do have to think about when you do that what is going to happen. Racing around or going around a Stop sign to go through another side street to miss the Stop sign. I think it is much more complicated than we realize, I know it's a problem and we all understand that. If you really go door to door you will find a lot of residents in our town that are worried about prolonged discussion in DPW about a street that makes a left hand

turn; its one street. That resident is concerned because people drive into his house because they don't slow down when the road curves. Lengthy discussion about what can we do for them? So I think we need to listen, we need to address it; I don't think there are any easy solutions. The bottom line is people who don't have civility and not interested following the law; I like you ...when I'm doing the speed limit I usually have a person younger than I and that is most of the population, sometimes they give me a signal that they don't agree with my perspective, that is the way it goes.

Ald. Jean-Francois-Michele where did you come up with the idea with the yellow slow down signs on Highland.

Michele Ellerin-For the walkways or...

Ald. Jean Francois-On the lawn.

Michele Ellerin-No actually that gentleman is sitting right here. Shane.

Ald. Jean-Francois-That was a great idea. That seems to work. Every time I drive on Highland they usually catch my eye.

Ald. Kleiner-The 2nd Ward Constituents meeting yesterday, we did have 4 people there and 2 who live on Highland Ave. all who were opposed to Stop signs. I did bring the issue up and I knew that we wanted to discuss it. Yes there are people who don't want. They do want the traffic slowed down. It might be a catch 22.

Pres. Rodrigues- I personally want to thank everyone for coming out. We are all for listening, solutions that I hear narrowing of the road, making a bike lane, runners lane, adding 3 Stop signs. I am all for it, whatever is going to work to slow it down.

In 2001 it was brought up. I was on this Council. 2015 and we can't lower the speed limit. We definitely can put out signs. We are starting to put out cameras, we have cameras in the downtown, we are adding plate readers, we are adding cameras to lights. There are definitely a lot of things that we can do and should do it, everybody that is here now I encourage you to come back and remind us about the Stop sign, about speeding and we want to keep you guys involved. Come to the Neighborhood Watch, go to the constituents meeting, e-mail and we will keep on track. We talk with the Police and State Police; we can bring in the Sheriff's Dept. to come and help us. That is one of the things that we did talk about coming through Montgomery; you do slow down. It is a cultural thing. If you can do it in Montgomery you can definitely do it in Middletown. I walk Monhagen Ave. and that is a raceway also. It's not just Highland, we will look at the arteries of our city, definitely look at Cty. Rte. 78.

Thank you for coming out tonight.

Mayor DeStefano-To sum up we are going to post the traffic recommendations and all the public comments from 2001 because a lot of it is similar. What is not similar is I reached out to a NYCOM website where we can talk to other communities. The best example of something that may accomplish everything, 1) many people warn about a Stop sign and the Chief may have touched upon it. A Stop sign especially on a street that wide may not get the result that you want. It may create more of a hazard. Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, we as a group should go up and look at what they have done, mini roundabouts and intersections. Right in front of the college and these are traffic calming devices. I would caution against jumping too quickly, let us put up all the comments, put up the traffic study, examine it again and lets look at what other communities have done. We've always treated Highland Ave. as a thorough fare, may it is time to change Highland Ave. from a thorough fare to what they did at Vassar which is a very long street pretty narrow road and they have changed the whole neighborhood by putting in these mini roundabouts. That is another option to consider. What I'm saying is let's put up all the public comments, Barbara Martens I don't know if she still lives on Highland Ave., but she did a critique of the traffic study at the time and a very detailed critique in traffic consultant plan.

What I would like to do is replicate a little bit of what they did back then have a couple of the residents who live there, not only on Highland but also on Commonwealth, Royce and some of the surrounding streets because what we do on Highland may impact what happens on Commonwealth too. There are solutions out there that we are not in our creative minds aware of yet. Just to jump too quickly I think would be a mistake. The traffic calming devices that are out there now of narrowing the street at the intersections, then 4 lane road basically. Another which Michele brought up I believe was talking about bike lanes. Syracuse has gone to bike lanes especially around Syracuse University narrowing their streets and doing something similar to what I am talking with some of the little roundabouts. There are so many solutions we can may be get a couple of people on an Ad-Hoc committee and work with a couple members of the Council, myself, Jacob, Police Chief, meet a couple of times, analyze the report and lets see if we can come up with some recommendations.

Some of it might entail if we do a bike lane on one side, the loss of on street parking in order to narrow the street a little bit or putting in a bike lane along the sidewalk and then move the parking out. From what I have read and all the communities that have similar problems is that a wide like a Newburgh type Broadway in the middle of your City within the City is very difficult to control. If you go to Newburgh you will see on Broadway, you will see a traffic light with no intersection. From what I understand that is one of the most abused traffic lights that they have because say there is no intersection there so why obey the traffic light.

May be if we can get a few people, have a couple brief meetings; not ending long winded analyze the data, talk to the Chief, speak with the engineer, we can talk and consult with John Collins the traffic consultant and planners that did the original study and come back with some recommendations for everyone to look at.

I want to thank everyone for coming and input. Thank Mr. Masi for putting everything together.

On motion of Ald. Masi seconded by Ald. Burr to close public hearing at 9:15 pm.

All in favor.