

Takoma Junction discussion group

Meeting 3 – February 17, 2010 – Meeting summary

Location: Takoma Park Community Center

Attending: Colleen Clay, Kay Daniels-Cohen, Jim DiLuigi, Steve Dubb, Seth Grimes, John Hume, Andy Kelemen, Sam Kittner, Diana Kohn, Howard Kohn, Lorraine Pearsall, Susan Raab, Dan Robinson, Mary Rooker, Bruce Williams

Handouts: An aerial map of the Takoma Junction area; a schematic Takoma Junction Revitalization Plan from May 1996 with design & development recommendations; Jim DiLuigi's "Specific Idea for Improving the Carroll/Ethan Allen Intersection... Re-presented 1/13/10."

1. Attendees introduced themselves.

2. Discussion agenda:

Howard Kohn reviewed the group's process and goals including creation of a written report to be transmitted to the council. "It is our thinking that a more official group, appointed by the council, will replace us."

Jim DiLuigi: There had been a committee looking at the whole stretch, including people from the city planning department. Have they been involved? It's beneficial to have planners involved from the beginning.

Howard: When we go to the council, we would ask for assignment of city staff.

Bruce Williams: Tentatively, the next discussion of the Junction is on the council's agenda for March 22, a continuation of the last discussion.

3. The group went around the room for comment and response:

Kay Daniels-Cohen: For pedestrian and vehicular traffic, there's a quick fix of things we can do now, as discussed two years ago by SS Carroll. And we should have some reason to "foot traffic your way over there." We have to make it easy to get across the street, to make it a viable, community friendly place to be.

Dan Robinson: Route 410 ownership within city limits is being discussed with the SHA, which has been maintaining it for many years.

Bruce: Segments are state owned and segments are city owned including Ethan Allen and segments of Philadelphia. The city has been maintaining in order to respond to resident desires. "Everybody agrees that Ethan Allen needs attention. State Highway couldn't get to it before 2014." If the city is going to take over, we need a new road, but SHA wants to keep it and is offering trade-offs, for instance, for Flower.

Dan: Got a petition from residents requesting a sidewalk from Jackson (Mar Thoma Church) to B.Y. Morrison Park, but that's an area where the ROW goes only to the road edge.

Lorraine: It's important for the city to control its streets.

Bruce: Senate Bill 285, Smart, Green, and Growing - The Sustainable Communities Act of 2010, is the governor's attempt to consolidate programs (community legacy, main street, historic preservation credits). It puts certain elements at risk. People may wish to go to the D20 night in Annapolis, Monday, March 8, 6-8 pm.

Another point is the council's discussion of getting Steve Silverman, representing the county, involved.

Howard: The most recent OTBA ER meeting discussed getting Silverman involved.

Someone brought up Peter Franchot. Seth noted that Emily van Loon has been involved in Old Takoma discussions and could be a channel to Franchot.

Sam Kittner: Where would the money come from to administer a road program? (Dan: The road would need to be milled and repaved. Bruce: Peter could be effective in finding funding. Bruce will ask Peter, when in Annapolis tomorrow and Friday, about finding money.)

Mary Rooker: There's no immediate plan for TPSS Co-op outdoor space utilization.

Steve Dubb: The Co-op would like to sell organic beer & wine; TJ's could be a location for that. The Co-op could be a conduit for Junction development.

Bruce: There will be a community listening forum Monday March 29 regarding city advocacy of Annapolis lobbying to change state law to allow beer & wine sales in the city.

Diana Kohn: Can we prolong the pedestrian walk timing by B.Y. Morrison Park and add signage to indicate that pedestrians can cross the full way?

Bruce: The county will control the traffic signals regardless of road ownership. They signals are part of a coordinated system.

Andy Kelemen: On Jim DiLuigi's sheet: Change "pedestrian crossings" to include sidewalks. Secondly, points should be sorted into near-term, mid-term, and long-term.

Colleen Clay: Sense from most ward 2 people is that economic development concerns are secondary to traffic issues. Recommended to council that there not be a development plan for the lot until the traffic issues are resolved, in case the lot

A lot of people would support Co-op expansion, and almost everybody hates the light at Sycamore. Should there be turn restrictions?

Another solution is lighted (blinking) crosswalks. Understanding is that they cost around \$30,000 per crosswalk.

Howard: Roger Schlegel, Bob Patten, and Josh Wright, who are not here have certain ideas. Bruce has an idea about using blinking signals, and Jim has the whole list of ideas, distributed.

Jim: Start with a bigger picture. There are a number of issues involved: commercial (whether primary or secondary, noting that each area has commercial elements). The list is from 2008; you can't focus on one and ignore the others, but you can start with the sections individually: 1) parking, 2) bus traffic, 3) vehicular traffic, 4) the pedestrian ways (sidewalks and crossings), and 5) the commercial. Vehicular traffic is one of the key issues because it affects pedestrian safety, traffic congestion, the fire trucks, people getting to shopping. A starting point could be eliminating the light at Sycamore.

(Seth: Perhaps a sensor could be installed so that Sycamore would be included in the light cycle only if there was a vehicle there. Someone: A flashing light is another idea. Andy: Has anyone looked at Dan Burden's stuff lately? Lorraine: A lot of people have problems with Burden's ideas. Sam: Getting rid of the light would cause problems, for residents and for co-op customers. Jim: One of Burden's ideas was traffic circles, which don't work if there's a light nearby. John Hume: ADA requires that pedestrian crossing at traffic circles must be signalized.)

Jim: Ideas solve problems, but the problems aren't written down.

Colleen: One of the big problems is the back-up of traffic on Ethan Allen. The observation is that traffic backs up because of the Junction. Cut-through has been a persistent problem – on Jackson, Manor Circle, etc. – that has been addressed in pieces.

The other thing that's a big problem is pedestrian crossing.

Andy: The doubled lights on Ethan Allen are a problem.

Seth: Suggested putting concerns and ideas on paper and then asking the city to arrange a professional evaluation.

Howard: We would discuss traffic in one more meeting.

Seth: How about pulling points out from the notes to be hashed out and finalized, for transmittal to the city, in the next meeting.

Jim/Colleen: Could we make No Left Turn from Carroll onto Ethan Allen at rush hour? There'd be two lanes turning right.

Andy: There is a way, in county code, to get the county to look at a specific area in the city. The county has to take a close look at the area and come up with solutions within a certain area. Some of this was addressed in the Takoma Transportation Study conducted by DC and Takoma Park in 2003. (See <http://ddot.dc.gov/ddot/cwp/view,A,1249,Q,561963.asp>)

Colleen: One idea, developed by/with Roger Schlegel, is to run a road loop through what is now the city lot and the two auto shops.

Seth/Diana/Lorraine: This sacrifices public land and parking for roads.

Jim: It's an interesting idea and maybe it would generate more ideas.