

Tara-Leeway Heights Civic Association (TLHCA)

Minutes of Board Meeting, January 10, 2024

PRESENT: The Tara-Leeway Heights Civic Association (TLHCA) Board of Directors met by Zoom at 7:00 PM Wednesday, January 10, 2024. Members present were John Ford (President), Laura Stout (Vice-President), John Richardson (Secretary), Irene Szopo (Treasurer), Sima Nasr, Bill Braswell, Alyssa Cowden, Mary Ann Frias, and Eric Massant. County Board Member Takis Karantonis was present for most of the meeting and discussed in detail county planning for the dangerous intersection at 18th St. and Patrick Henry Dr. TLHCA residents also on the call (as reconstructed from the Zoom screen) included Sherry Liebes, Al Herman, John Ross, Adam Harrison, Greg Perrett, Theodore Stump, Robert Clay, and Steph Reed.

- 1) MINUTES: Minutes of Meeting of November 8, 2023: The Minutes of the TLHCA meeting of November 8, 2023 were approved as distributed.
- 2) INTERSECTION DISCUSSION: Discussion of the dangerous intersection at N. 18th St. and Patrick Henry Dr. was extensive and generally positive. County Board Member Takis Karantonis was present for the entire discussion (as he had been at the Nov. 8, 2023 meeting) and provided thoughtful and detailed information about county planning for safety measures under consideration. The following were Takis's principal points:
 - a. TLHCA should reschedule the planned meeting at the intersection with Dan Nabors, described as the County's principal staff member dealing with important traffic issues. The meeting planned for Jan. 9 was cancelled due to heavy rains; TLHCA decided that to substitute a ZOOM meeting would not have the impact of seeing just how dangerous the sight lines are at the inspection.
 - b. There have been several staff meetings about speeding on Patrick Henry Dr.; more than 57% of respondents have said that a 4-way stop sign is a "must have" deterrent.
 - c. The December 2023 federal traffic guidelines manual has included a significant change: acknowledging the importance of "local judgment" on minor arterials even when statistical results do not flag a problem.
 - d. The Virginia General Assembly has discussed the impact of dangerous roads on school populations, particularly when there is a visibility problem.

- e. The County has decided to install mobile speed enforcement cameras at the intersection and will monitor results.
- f. County staff is “generally prone” to favor a 4-way stop sign.
- g. Dan Nabors has the authority to call for changes.
- h. There are two new County Board members who need to be brought up to speed on the “high importance” of traffic safety issues.
- i. County staff are skeptical about the effectiveness of blinkers at the intersection, concerned that they would not be visible far enough away. Staff engineers have confirmed that the sharp bend on Patrick Henry would not make the blinkers visible soon enough.
- j. TLHCA should “pin down the end game” with Nabors.
- k. The County will eventually get to where TLHCA is urging them to go (with a 4-way stop sign).
- l. Crossing guards are not a realistic option since there are simply too few of them available.
- m. Speed bumps have been considered by the County and rejected because of problems for ambulances and other emergency vehicles.
- n. 53% of all emails to the County Board are about traffic issues.
- o. Both mobile speed enforcement cameras and a 4-way stop sign will “eventually” be installed because County staff have “no basic objection” to them.

After discussion the Board decided not to appeal directly to the County Board on this issue, waiting to see if the steps Takis described will have the predicted results.

- 3) Intersection Petition: John Ford reported that Jon Ware’s petition calling for a 4-way stop sign at Patrick Henry and 18th St. has recorded 348 votes, plus 27 more at Westover Day September 23, 2023.
- 4) Westover Day: The TLHCA co-sponsored celebration on Cardinal School grounds September 23, 2023 was deemed a success, with an estimated 700 people showing up. Laura Stout reported good cooperation with other area groups. Besides encouraging more volunteers for a repeat performance, the suggestion was made that local businesses should be approached to participate.
- 5) 6) Next Meeting: The next TLHCA Board Meeting will be held via Zoom on Wednesday, March 6, 2024.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted, John Richardson, Secretary