

WORKSHOP MINUTES
AUGUST 18, 2021
7:00 P.M. AT BOROUGH HALL

The workshop meeting of the Borough of Interlaken was called to order at 7:00 p.m., by Mayor Nohilly. Sunshine Statement was read by Municipal Clerk/Administrator Reibrich. "The notice of the requirements of the Open Public Meetings Act has been satisfied by forwarding notice to the Coaster and Asbury Park Press. A copy of the notice is posted on the Borough bulletin board and is on file in the Borough Clerk's office."

Present: Mayor Nohilly, Council President Butler, Councilmembers Horowitz, Watson and Franks

Also Present: Municipal Clerk/Administrator Lori Reibrich, Police Chief Ronen Neuman, Lieutenant Matt Sharin, Borough Engineer Peter Avakian, Roger McLaughlin Esq for Borough Attorney Richard Shaklee, Esq

Absent: Councilwoman Horowitz

1. **PRESENTATION BY CHIEF OF POLICE:**

Mayor Nohilly turned the floor over to Chief Ronen Neuman and Lieutenant Matt Sharin for a presentation regarding some resident concerns of speeding in Interlaken.

Chief Neuman discussed the enforcement practices for all Police matters within the Police Department and how it relates to the protection and safety of Interlaken. He spoke about the dedicated officer 24/7 and the additional officers that patrol daily. He presented information regarding traffic enforcement.

Chief Neuman focused a lot of his presentation on the resident concerns regarding speeding. He explained traffic studies and how they are viewed by the Police Department, County and State. He discussed the 85th percentile used during traffic studies that helps to set the speed with other factors such as car accidents relating to speed or pedestrians struck. The Chief stated that the traffic studies of the past and the newest one completed last week does not show a speeding issue.

Chief Neuman reported the findings of the most recent study of the complete average being 25.72 mph with the 85th percentile that takes out random outliers being 30 mph.

Mayor Nohilly questioned if something can be said about the disconnect for some residents between the data that obviously shows there isn't a speeding issue to the feeling that residents see speeders.

Councilwoman Maloney said some of the perception is what is tolerance of the speed on a 25-mph road? She would prefer everyone do the exact speed limit. If the speed limit is 25 mph, then all drivers should be doing 25 or there are technically speeders in Interlaken.

Councilman Franks spoke to not utilizing additional speed bump or stop sign deterrents that have been suggested by other Council members in the past. He felt that a major push of enforcement with unmarked patrol cars and additional members of the Police Department in town would help to see if we do have a problem. He believes that Bridlemere Ave has an issue with motorists crossing the yellow lines.

Mayor Nohilly reiterated that the Borough data shows that there isn't an issue with speeding but that doesn't mean that residents won't see speeders from time to time. Every town in America has speeders.

Councilman Watson questioned why speeding is such a concern when the Police reports always indicate that the Police Officers are investigating suspicious person at a high frequency according to the data on the monthly report. He feels that this is of utmost importance and that the department should be commended for addressing an issue like that rather than focusing full attention on the few speeders.

Lieutenant Matt Sharin explained the perception of speeding when it relates to people who live on a street as well as a driver's perception of speed. From a driver's perspective, Grasmere Avenue is a wide, open road with no turns or speed bumps, a few visual cues to slow down such as cross walk signs, the flashing light and the flashing speed limit sign. This would be taken into consideration during a County or State speed study. They would review the that 85th percentile is 30 mph and that there are no accidents due to speed or pedestrian injuries. In the past 5 years there were only 11 motor vehicle accidents in Interlaken and none were related to speed. 6 of the 11 were people hitting parked cars backing out of driveways. In this instance, Grasmere Avenue could support a speed increase, though that wouldn't be the recommendation.

Chief Neuman and Lieutenant Sharin shared how narrowing of the road with decorative center pieces or possibly adding marked parking spaces or a bike lane has helped in other towns to cause visual cues for drivers to slow down due to narrow roadway. Though, the data shows that there isn't a speeding issue so taking these steps at this time would not be a recommendation.

Councilman Delia recited some of the data from the most the recent monthly report. He spoke about traffic complaints related to speeding and noise complaints. He explained that more people called into the dispatch relating to noise complaints with no calls regarding speeding. The data shows that other aspects of Police enforcement are important. He said that the report also shows the data on handling numerous other safety and welfare issues in the Borough. He spoke about how he feels very safe having his two children bike in Interlaken knowing that the Police Department takes their safety as a high priority. He thanked the Department for their service.

Lieutenant Sharin discussed the 546 radar details completed in the .33 square mile town for the year so far. He discussed traffic complaints vs noise complaints as well as suspicious person complaints from traffic stops.

Councilwoman Maloney and Chief Neuman discussed the placement of the speed signs and how they work as a deterrent. Chief Neuman explained that changing up the deterrents helps to keep the visual cues divers new so that they will continue to reduce speed. Councilwoman Maloney thanked the Chief and Lieutenant for their service to the Borough and says that she sees them on patrol all the time.

Mayor Nohilly thanked Chief Neuman and Lieutenant Sharin for their presentation and for dedicating so much time to this topic.

At this time, Mayor Nohilly asked for public comment relating to this topic.

Jim Page, 615 Grasmere Avenue, questioned if the Police cars have gps. Chief Neuman said yes, and he knows who is where at all times. He stated he feels that when the summer ends the Department will begin their focus on Interlaken again. The Chief explained that there is always a car in Interlaken unless there is a major accident or occurrence. Interlaken is never left without 24/7 protection as there are numerous other departments in the area that can provide mutual aid if necessary.

Mr. Page said he films speeders and knows that there are speeders. He feels that anyone going over 25 should be pulled over and issued a summons. Lieutenant Sharin explained the 5 mph reasonableness

standard applied by judges in the State of NJ. The standard is that judges can throw out 5 mph stops as being harassing or unnecessary as a way to stop a vehicle for improper need. There is discretion to pull over a person doing 5 mph for other safety offenses at the same time but if motorist was to go to court because of a 5 mph speed ticket, the judge would use the reasonableness standard and conclude that 5 mph over the speed limit does not warrant action by an officer. Mr. Page expressed his understanding of what was explained and indicated that anyone going 35 should be stopped and ticketed.

Chief Neuman discussed officer's discretion on the job.

Sue Baczykowski, 400 Grasmere Avenue, stated she lives at the blinking in town and can see that people are speeding as well as not coming to a full stop at the light. She feels it is more pervasive than the studies show as people can't back out of their driveways because of the traffic.

John Vrettos, 616 Grasmere Avenue, explained that he was unaware of the amount of traffic studies done by the Police and was thankful that problem is being addressed. He questioned how they are conducted because depending on the equipment, locations and time frames it may not give the big picture. Lt. Sharin explained that they use a state of art small black radar box that records data 24/7 from both directions. They have placed the box in 4 different locations and the studies are coming back relatively the same each time no matter where the box is located. Mr. Vrettos stated that there are times of the day that are heavier with traffic and it seems to be more condensed speeding. He provided Lt. Sharin with the time frame and location by his home. He indicated that Friday, Saturday and Sunday sees increased traffic and there is more targeted enforcement. Mr. Vrettos thanked the Police Department for their presentation stating it was very informative.

Nicholas Keselowsky, 714 Grasmere Avenue, thanked the Police and said he enjoyed the presentation. He felt he received a lot of information that was helpful and gave him a perspective of the issue. He understands the perception portion better now after hearing the presentation and learning about the traffic studies. He questioned if there were some other deterrents that could permanently slow down the speeders. Lt. Sharin discussed the visual cues and some low-cost ideas for deterrents such as items that may make the road appear narrower but again, without data to support an issue he isn't making strong recommendations for anything additional.

Mr. Page questioned the use of decoy cars and if a bike lane would be installed.

Mayor Nohilly spoke about the current deterrents in place such as the flashing speed sign, decoy cars and the large message board.

Councilman Watson stated that there are 12 streets and having a zero-tolerance expectation is not possible. The Police are addressing many other safety, first aid and welfare issues in town, and this is important. He stated he does not feel that speeding is a pervasive problem, and the data supports that. The Police are here 24/7 under the current contract and they are doing a great job. Councilman Watson thanked the Police Department. He said that Interlaken receives 1st Class Police Services from an accredited Police Department. The data shows there is speeding problem but if the perception leads the way decisions are made then maybe residents would want to increase the contract cost and have more officers in town in the next contract. Councilman Watson explained that the 24/7 service in the .33 square mile town now is stellar.

With no more comments, Mayor Nohilly closed the floor to public comment relating to the Police Presentation.

The Governing Body took a quick recess.

2. **SIDEWALK ASSESSMENT:**

Borough Engineer Peter Avakian provided a quick comment regarding the center line decorative areas to help reduce speeds on roads. He said it very expensive and while they look beautiful it can be a tremendous cost. He stated that the center line pavers would most likely not be approved by the County for their portion and Grasmere Avenue is concrete underneath so that could pose a problem.

The Council may want to consider highly reflective crosswalks with the next road project.

Mayor Nohilly discussed the last meeting discussion regarding the sidewalk enforcement and assessment. He felt that the consensus going forward would be to consider this project being funded with a special assessment ordinance. This way the slabs can be paid for over a 5-year period if the homeowner chooses and at a reduced cost.

Mayor Nohilly was interested in finding out how many street trees would need to be removed because that could be a large cost.

Borough Engineer Avakian noted that it was determined that 128 trees were affecting lifted sidewalks. He discussed the options for maintaining the tree canopy when it comes to sidewalk repairs. Some options are to shave roots or have path that wind around the trees as long as the sidewalk does not get installed on private property. Councilman Franks and Borough Engineer Avakian discussed the options of meandering around the trees if the integrity of the sidewalk is maintained, and no portion of the sidewalk is on private property. Councilman Franks stressed that saving the trees is very important. Mayor Nohilly agreed and was happy to learn that this is an option in some cases.

3. **NEW BUSINESS:** No new business was discussed at this time.

4. **ADJOURNMENT:** With no further comments, Councilwoman Maloney made a motion to adjourn at 9:22 pm, seconded by Councilman Watson and unanimously carried.

	Mayor Nohilly	Council President Butler	Councilwoman Horowitz	Councilman Watson	Councilwoman Maloney	Councilman Delia	Councilman Franks
Motion to Approve					X		
Motion to Second				X			
Approved		X		X	X	X	X
Opposed							
Abstain/ Recuse							
Absent/ Excused			X				

Lori Reibrich, RMC
Borough Administrator/Clerk