



TOWN OF PORTOLA VALLEY

Bicycle, Pedestrian and Traffic Safety Committee Meeting

Wednesday 6th January 2021

8:15 AM Online with ZOOM – usually at the Schoolhouse

765 Portola Road, Portola Valley, CA 94028

Bicycle, Pedestrian and Traffic Safety Committee Meeting Minutes

1 Call to Order/Roll Call

Chairman Ed Holland called the meeting to order at 8:17 am. The meeting was online.

Patt Baenen, Gary Hanes, Angela Hey, Ed Holland (Chair) and Kevin Welch attended. Also in attendance were Howard Young (Town Public Works Director), Laura Russell (Town Planner), Jeremy Dennis (Town Manager), Gary Nielsen (Town Police Commissioner), Sarah Wernikoff (Town Council Member) and Craig Hughes (Town Council member). Andy Hui represented the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office.

Residents Robert Bregante, Rita Comes, Kristi Corley, Mary Hufty, Gerry Kohs, Betsy Morgenthaler, Sandra Patterson, Nan Shostak, Craig Taylor, Caroline Vertongen, Samantha Wang (207 Westridge) also attended. Bryn Garrett (project architect for 207 Westridge) also attended.

2 Oral Communications – Resident and Open Committee Comments

Caroline Vertongen had written to Ed Holland regarding the flashing beacon discussion at the December 2nd BPTS meeting. She quoted several documents including ASCC minutes, town guidelines and municipal codes that discuss lighting. She said that she felt the town council had ignored residents' wishes against flashing signs. She noted that the lights embedded in the road at the crosswalk across Portola Road, near Woodside Priory, have often failed. She also reported that lighted crosswalk signs in Ladera and Menlo Park have malfunctioned. She was concerned that the town had gone ahead to apply for and been awarded a grant for lighted crosswalks when some people were against lighted signs.

Ed has responded to Caroline by email and will send a copy of his reply to committee members.

3 Approve Minutes from the December 2nd 2020 meeting

The minutes were approved unanimously, subject to an update as Kristi Corley wanted a correction to show she is in favor of improving traffic safety using either flashing beacons or flags, not only flashing beacons.

Based on notes in the minutes, Kevin asked Howard if he had followed up with Willowbrook residents. Howard said he had reached out to them.

In response to a question on the status of the grant for flashing beacons, Howard said that an agreement with the County will need to be signed before the grant is received.

4 Planning Office Updates

Laura Russell gave status updates, as it relates to BPTS Committee reviews, for both Portola Terrace and the Neely Winery.

4.1 Portola Terrace (“Stanford Wedge”) look ahead

On January 20th and 25th there will be public notices for the Stanford Wedge, starting the public review process. Laura expects this to take many months. She explained the role of the BPTS Committee as a reviewing committee. The town will publish a draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) that includes Traffic Analysis. The BPTS role is to review and provide comments on the Traffic Analysis. She anticipated it would be available in late winter, early spring. Typically, the review period is 45 days.

Mary Hufty asked whether the town has the Subdivision Committee, as requested in town ordinances. Laura said it has been formed and its role is to compile reports from other committees and sources for the Planning Commission. Mary said that the process differed from that during the Blue Oaks subdivision process.

4.2 Neely Winery traffic report and planning

Neely Winery is proposing a tasting room and limited visits to the winery, which alters the enterprise’s Conditional Use Permit. Biology, noise and transportation are being reviewed and reports are still being compiled to comply with CEQA guidelines. A Traffic Analysis report will be brought to the BPTS committee for review. Laura anticipated that this would happen in the next month or two.

Ed noted that residents had already attended the BPTS committee meetings with concerns about the Neely project. This was before the committee had been informed about the project’s traffic analysis by the town planner. In response to a question from Kristi Corley, Laura said the EIR documents will be available to the public for the project. The town website has pages for the Stanford Wedge project, but not for the Neely Winery project yet.

Rita Comes noted that the traffic studies are being done during the COVID pandemic, not during normal times. Rita said that all of the projects in town should be online. Rita said that the pages for the Stanford Wedge are not current and requested that the page be updated in a timely fashion.

Betsy Morgenthaler is concerned that the written plan for the number of visitors to the Neely winery may not match the number who come in practice. Based on her experience in the wine industry, she said visitors may visit spontaneously, which will change the projected number of visitors. Betsy asked that people’s likely behavior be taken into consideration. She also wanted to ensure that traffic counts are realistic, given that there is less traffic during the coronavirus pandemic. She wants clarification on when the counts were made.

Whereas the Neely traffic counts were done during the COVID-19 pandemic, Laura stated that the ones for the Stanford Wedge were completed before the COVID-19 pandemic. The analysis for the Neely winery is still ongoing. Kevin asked who was responsible for the studies. Laura responded that Lamphier-Gregory and Hexagon Transportation Consultants are doing the work. Gary Nielsen has data from the radar trailer that counts traffic. It shows that traffic is about 20% to 30% down and bicycle traffic is up during COVID. Angela asked if Gary’s unofficial trailer data is used by the town for planning. Ed said the BPTS could take the data into account as part of the planning process.

5 Sheriff's report

Andy Hui gave the Sheriff's report. As there had not been a Sheriff's report for a few months, Andy will send the committee updated reports for 2020. Patt Baenen wanted to know where most of the accidents were in Portola Valley.

In 2020, there were 176 moving citations. During the year, there were also 12 collisions, 5 with bikes and 4 solo collisions.

Unsafe speed and unsafe lane changes were some of the reasons for citations.

Andy agreed with Gary Nielsen that traffic counts remain lower than usual due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Gary Hanes asked whether there are differences in standards for citing cyclists who fail to stop at stop signs in Woodside compared with Portola Valley. Andy said there was no difference.

Angela asked whether officers that patrol Portola Valley are aware that they can issue citations for parking violations near Windy Hill. She had seen cars parked in the shoulder, and a Sheriff's vehicle drove by without issuing any citations. Andy said that officers had already been informed and they could have been driving through Portola Valley for a reason other than issuing citations.

6 Public Works Update

Red curb painting will be done in the spring for Willowbrook residents that request it.

Town staff have been undertaking normal winter activities such as field renovations and storm drain preparations. Howard has also monitored parking for Windy Hill. He saw Willowbrook used, as is normal, and the Windy Hill parking lot was full.

7 Ongoing Committee Business

7.1 Review 207 Westridge Drive Driveway

The committee was asked to review the 207 Westridge Circular Driveway Exception (#PLN_WZ1-2020) <https://townofportolavalley.box.com/s/rmi6v1mfi7j3tf2we2npwtyu85580153>

Town ordinances normally allow just one driveway per property, but 207 Westridge has a circular driveway with two access points on Westridge. The committee members unanimously accepted Ed's proposal to support the circular driveway with two access points on Westridge for 207 Westridge.

7.2 Review of Parking at Windy Hill

Ed said he would update the spreadsheet that tracks the number of cars parked. Kevin had counted some vehicles.

Betsy Morgenthaler reported that she saw an adult with young children on bicycles having to overtake cars parked in the shoulder near her driveway at 500 Portola Road. A car slowed behind them as they proceeded in the roadway to pass the parked cars. She noted the courtesy of the driver that shepherded them past the cars, but feared some drivers might not be so careful. Angela said she'd give Betsy some cards printed by the town to put on parked cars that encourage parking at the Town Center.

Patt asked why there aren't chevrons on Portola Road at the corner to inform cyclists they can cycle on the roadway. Angela said cyclists could cycle there anyway, regardless of whether there were chevrons. She preferred to see no parking brown signs.

7.3 Outreach to Forum and PV Residents

Angela plans to create a write up for PVForum for January - Teen Driving Awareness Month. It will also remind drivers to dip their headlights when they see oncoming traffic, including cyclists who get dazzled.

7.4 Harassment/Abuse/Liability concerns reporting – A request for policy and procedure to the Town, on behalf of Committee members

Ed wanted update policies re: harassment from the Town. The issue will be discussed at the next BPTS meeting.

8 Matters Arising

Kristi Corley notes that knowing the location of cycle accidents is useful. Patt noted that cycle accidents are not always at the busiest intersections. Angela will send committee members a link to information.

Ed will ask for more detailed reports on accidents from the Sheriff's office to be sent to the committee.

9 Next meeting scheduled: February 3rd, 2020.

10 Adjournment

Ed adjourned the meeting at 9.25 am.