

**Town of Perryville
Public Hearing Minutes
December 7, 2021**

ATTENDANCE: Mayor: Mathew Roath, Commissioner: Robert Taylor, Timothy Snelling, Christina Aldridge, Town Administrator: George Patchell, Assistant Town Administrator: Cathy McCardell, Finance Director: Debra Laubach, Police Chief: Robert Nitz, Police Lieutenant: Michael Reno, Police Sergeant: Gerard Morgan, Police Detective: Anthony Lenzi, Police Detective: John Peer, Police Officer: Themis Speis, Police Officer: Tom Pierson, Outreach Director: Danielle Hemling, Town Clerk: Jackie Sample, Town Attorney: Fred Sussman.

Remote Participation: Commissioner Linkey

Mayor Roath called the December 7, 2021, Public Hearing to order at 7 p.m.

Pledge to the Flag

The Public Hearing in its entirety can be listened to on the Town's web site at www.perryvillemd.org.

Motion was made by Commissioner Taylor and seconded by Mayor Roath to approve the remote participation request for Commissioner Linkey. **All in Favor: Motion Carried.**

Mayor Roath asked for the record to reflect that Commissioner Linkey will be attending via speaker phone. He confirmed that Commissioner Linkey could hear him and that the board could hear Commissioner Linkey. All votes taken during the meeting in which the Mayor or Commissioner participates remotely shall be by roll call vote.

Commissioner Linkey wanted to apologize for not being in attendance she had to quarantine at home.

Mayor Roath announced that the Public Hearing was in reference to Ordinance 2021-12 regarding authorization of speed monitoring systems in school zones in the Town and would designate certain school zones with maximum speed limits in the Town of Perryville.

Chief Nitz read the introductory paragraph which explains the Ordinance, which is for the purpose of authorizing the use of speed monitoring systems in the Town of Perryville in certain locations under certain conditions; designating certain school zones in the Town where speed monitoring systems may be used; and generally related to the use of speed monitoring systems in the Town of Perryville.

Mayor Roath asked Chief Nitz to share the options that SHA had given us on our intentions to provide safety or calming traffic on Aiken Avenue.

Chief Nitz responded that we are limited on traffic calming options. One was a total redesign of Aiken Avenue which is impractical and a financial burden to the Town. We could do

additional signage which is limited on its effectiveness because people tend to not pay attention to that. The other option was the speed cameras which are in use in multiple jurisdictions all over the state.

Mayor Roath asked if there were any comments from the board members. There were none at the time.

Mayor Roath asked if there were any comments from the State Highway or MD Transportation Authority if anyone is here to represent them, in which there was not.

Commissioner Linkey wanted to explain that this is not a program that will cost the Town or the taxpayers any money, it will be supported by whatever fines that we have and will be split between RedSpeed and ourselves and will not cost the taxpayers any money.

Mayor Roath asked Chief Nitz to expand upon that.

Chief Nitz stated that the price of the program is completely violator supported, there is no initial cost for the Town, there may be some ancillary cost for additional signage. He believes that Mr. Patchell has contacted SHA about getting additional signage for Aiken Avenue to support that, so the cost to the Town should be next to nothing. It is violator based and the fine is set by the State and cannot be any lower or higher and if it gets through the final approval stage, then RedSpeed gets their portion, and the Town gets their portion.

Mayor Roath responded that it sounds like it is not an automatic fine, that there is a process.

Chief Nitz stated that first there is a computer review, then an in-person review by a RedSpeed representative, and the third and final step is that it must be reviewed by a certified Police Officer, which can be done in-house at our Police Department.

Mayor Roath asked for comments from the floor and asked that they state their name and address.

From the Floor

Kurt Roberts, 730 Aiken Avenue, wanted to come to support this, and stated it is a starting point to calm down what is going on along Aiken Avenue. He knows that it may not address the commercial traffic that is going on, but it is a starting point at least.

Robert Grace, 78 Bayscape Drive, asked if this was a money thing to fine people \$40, because you can set up radar and get the same thing out of them and we have the Police Force to do that.

Mayor Roath responded that this is for you to testify we are not necessarily answering questions per say, but if he has an opinion, please share it.

Mr. Grace responded that is his opinion, you have a Police Force for years you set up radar from street to street. Everyone speeds every once in a while, and this is \$40 out of your pocket, which is why he does not like this, and does not like cameras.

Jackie Weih, 730 Aiken Avenue, commented that she understands the concern and has been watching the comments that people have been making about the speed camera systems. She lives on Aiken Avenue and has a 10-year-old daughter, we had to fence our yard to prevent the noise and have trees out front to cut down on road noise. It is not a problem that the police can fix, they tried to fix it and have given tickets out endlessly and she feels that it is a waste of their resources to have them constantly patrolling the same area over and over again with no effect. She cannot have a conversation in her yard without yelling because of the noise of people speeding by. With this program when people start becoming aware that there are cameras there and they are going to get a ticket they may stop, and she is open for whatever will make it stop at this point. It is unsafe and a waste of time for people that have put all this effort into this when there are other law enforcement things that they can be doing. She feels that the Town has put in all the effort and time needed to make a reasonable decision with how to move forward with this problem that this Town has dealt with for years. She has lived on this road for 11 years and it has not stopped, and if this is what it takes, she is fully on board and she thanked everyone for doing their job and putting in the effort.

A resident inquired if they can just ask questions.

Mayor Roath responded that we have already had these meetings when it came to taking questions and those types of things and the information has been provided for months and this is a hearing for you to share your opinion and we will take that into consideration. He asked if anyone else would like to share their opinions, there were no other comments from the floor.

Mayor Roath inquired if the Commissioners had any closing comments.

Commissioner Taylor understands the concerns that people feel that this is just a way for the Town to make money. He is not interested in the money for this, he is interested in trying to find a solution for the speeding at this particular stretch of the road in Town before we have a particular problem. He commented that probably the biggest problem is the commercial truck traffic from the warehouse that is coming on Aiken Avenue because their GPS system is telling them that is the way to go. This is a method that we will have to encourage them to take the road around the library, which is the area that we want them to go on in the first place. As far as the money, this is something that we will talk about in the Town Meeting where we will also debate on the Resolution and vote on it, we have not decided where this money will be spent, there have been some ideas presented. One was that we regularly have requests for water and sewer abatements and if someone has a major leak and we will grant those meeting the requirements if it is a one-time problem, and these can be large bills, at which point the Town would be out the money. An example of what it could be used for was to establish a fund specifically for the Town to provide water and sewer abatements for people that have a leak and have a massive water bill that they cannot pay and then the Town would have the revenue for it because we have this fund in place. We are not doing this because it is going to be a profitable system, we are

doing this because we are looking at options in trying to fix the problem that has been an issue for several years now.

Commissioner Linkey stated that she hopes that this program slows people down and that we do not earn anything because people are going the speed limit. She knows that the Police Chief has been working directly with the truck companies so that they can address the GPS issues and get them off Aiken Avenue and diverting them to Coudon Boulevard, which is actually quicker for them, and they do not need to be going through Town. She commented that we do have a dedicated Police Force of twelve members who do cover our Town 24/7, and this is one more way that we can use our resources wisely to help protect everyone in our Town.

Commissioner Taylor agrees with Commissioner Linkey, he hopes that after three months of this program that we are not getting anything from it, that would be his goal, that people become aware of them being there and do not speed anymore.

Commissioner Snelling agrees that he does not want to see this become a cash cow either, it is a safety issue and the residents along there have made it clear to us that they want something done about the speeding and he believes we should be proactive about it.

Commissioner Aldridge agrees with what the other Commissioners are saying, at the end of the day our children and their safety are our main priority. Her hope is the same that the presence alone of the system will stop the speeding. She cannot justify putting our officers at Aiken Avenue around the clock and expect it to yield any results when there are other higher priority jobs that they could be doing in our community. She feels that most of the speeding is coming from the trucks. She hopes that it is not profitable and if we do get some funding from it, we have every intention of putting any funds that we may get back into our community.

Mayor Roath commented that while he was campaigning for Mayor he had spoken to many residents, not just Aiken Avenue about what was going to be done about speeding. This area is a school zone as well as a walking community downtown. We have an Elementary School, a Middle School, a Catholic School, an elder home, and a preschool daycare when it comes down to safety. He does not feel that the trucks are necessarily the main issue, although they are an issue. He believes that the fact that we have two large employers on the other side of Aiken Avenue and the train station that people are rushing to get to are more of an issue, these people are running late and are not concerned with the safety of our residents. As far as the money, anyone that crosses the line or breaks the law usually get a fine. The fine is not significant or one that we want to continue to stockpile, we want it to be a deterrent and a directional opportunity as well, diverting traffic to Coudon Boulevard not Aiken Avenue. There is a lot more involved in this proposal other than providing additional revenue. This is a matter of answering the questions and concerns of our residents and providing more safety for our children and our elderly and relieving our police force from doing the tedious work of shooting radar on Aiken Avenue.

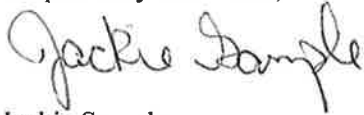
Ms. McCardell stated that there was a comment on-line from Richard McKay, 301 Strawberry Lane, a former Cole Street resident. He inquired if there has been discussion on redesigning the Town to divert traffic that would be using Aiken Avenue to get onto Route 40.

He understands this is a massive undertaking but believes that it is the route cause of the problems in that area. As for temporary measures for Aiken Avenue he would prefer speed bumps.

Mayor Roath thanked him for that comment and believes that the diverting traffic topic was addressed earlier in conversations regarding Aiken Avenue.

Motion was made by Commissioner Taylor and seconded by Commissioner Snelling to adjourn the December 7, 2021, Public Hearing at 7:27 p.m. and go into the Town Meeting. **Roll Call Vote:** Commissioner Linkey: Aye, Commissioner Aldridge: Aye, Commissioner Snelling: Aye, Commissioner Taylor: Aye, Mayor Roath: Aye, **All in Favor: Motion Carried.**

Respectively submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jackie Sample".

Jackie Sample
Perryville Town Clerk

