

Meeting Called to Order

Mayor Erik Anderson called the meeting to order at 6:00pm and read the Presiding Officer's Statement.

Sunshine Statement

The Notice Requirements provided for in the Open Public Meetings Act have been satisfied. Notice of this meeting was properly given by transmission to the Asbury Park Press and the Two River Times and by posting on the bulletin board in the Municipal Building on November 6, 2023, by the Deputy Municipal Clerk.

Roll Call

Present: Councilman James Daly
Councilwoman Deidre DerAsadourian
Councilman Brendan Gilmartin
Councilman Daniel Levy
Councilman Don Eddy

Also, Present: Erik Anderson, Mayor
Salvator Alfieri, Jr., Esq.
Christopher Cherbini, Borough Administrator
Kayla Wharton, Deputy Municipal Clerk

Absent: Councilman Jason Sena

Salute to Flag

Led by Mayor Erik Anderson

Potential Sidewalk Improvements along Sycamore Avenue & Route 35-

Mayor Anderson wanted to thank all the members of the community that are in attendance this evening as the council is looking for feedback regarding sidewalks along Route 35 & along Sycamore Avenue. Mayor Anderson said they have had some residents express interest in potential sidewalks and some residents that do not want sidewalks. Mayor Anderson wanted to stress nothing has been decided, this is to look for feedback to see what kind of interest we have before the Borough digs into this topic deeper.

Councilwoman DerAsadourian has been taking the lead on this topic and Mayor Anderson had Councilwoman DerAsadourian explained that no plans are firm they do not expect a vote on this topic this evening. The stakeholders that would be affected by this project were given notice regarding the meeting tonight so they may have a chance to express how they feel about this topic.

Mr. David Cranmer Borough Engineer attended this meeting and explained the plans he will be reviewing this evening are very preliminary plans. Mr. Cranmer explained that he is looking for feedback this evening on what the community would like / not like and the thoughts of the preliminary design. Mr. Cranmer explained both sets of plans, for Route 35 that would be from the Four Corners to the Thornbrooke entrance and one along Sycamore Avenue starting at the Four Corners heading towards Shrewsbury Avenue.

Mr. Cranmer explained how the sidewalk trust fund account started in Shrewsbury and how when the Thornbrooke development was built they elected not to build sidewalks along Route 35 and put money into a sidewalk trust account. Mr. Cranmer said he looked at Sycamore Avenue and Broad Street to see if sidewalks could be built. Mr. Cranmer

explained how on certain sides of the road is easier to build a sidewalk in this area and the reasons why it is not capable in other areas. Mr. Cranmer said he is not trying to sell the plans he is presenting for them to be constructed however he is looking for advice and comments from the residents that are impacted by this potential project. Mr. Cranmer said the governing body this evening is looking for comments do people want to see sidewalks or not.

Councilman Sena asked Mr. Cranmer why did the developer for Thornbrooke not build the sidewalk at the time that the development was built? Mr. Cranmer said the planning board felt that it was not necessary at that time, however he was not around during the approval process however he assumes questions came up from residents just like this evening.

A resident from Thornbrooke asked why the residents in the neighborhood of Thornbrooke were not notified for this meeting? Mr. Cranmer said that they normally notice the residents that are impacted by the project.

Stewart Minis 35 Thomas Avenue- Asked if funding for this project would come from Safe Routes to School? Mr. Cranmer explained that if this turned into a project that would be built one of the steps is to find funding for the project to offset the cost to the taxpayers. Mr. Minis asked who would utilize the sidewalk walking to school from that area of town? Mr. Cranmer said he is not sure of the numbers, but he does know students walk from school to Manson Park for after-school sport activities. Mr. Cranmer explained that safe routes to school would be one source of potential funding they would review. However, he also explained that the state has numerous resources for state funding.

Patty Nugent 58 Thornbrooke Drive – Ms. Nugent said Thornbrooke has been around for over 20 years, and we haven't had a sidewalk for this long why now? Maybe the town would like to make our dirt walkway a little better? Mr. Cranmer asked when we built the walking path at Manson Park apx. 15 years ago, the HOA told the Borough No, Mr. Cranmer asked if Ms. Nugent felt that no has changed for the HOA in Thornbrooke and she felt that it has absolutely changed as she feels it is very scary to walk along Broad Street. She feels no matter what you do with the sidewalk along Broad Street it is very scary and feels like it should not be done. The traffic in the area is going to become worse with the development happening on Ft. Monmouth for the Borough to add a sidewalk on a busy street. She feels it is not safe and not necessary. Ms. Nugent asked if a survey has been done on how many walkers we have in the town? Mr. Cranmer said a survey has not been done. Ms. Nugent feels that scheduling this meeting for the week of Thanksgiving is not a great day to get input from the town. Ms. DerAsadourian said that Ms. Nugent made a valid point that children get driven to school and Ms. DerAsadourian said not everyone can jump into a car to drive children to school and we need to have a safe walking path for children to attend school.

Jay Eaton 916 Broad Street- Thanked the council for having this meeting. For a resident that lives on Broad Street he has some comments regarding the sidewalk along Broad Street. The properties that are mainly impacted by this project the two (2) residents have access to Manson Park via the back of the properties. Mr. Eaton has a concern regarding impervious coverage and potential flooding which could be caused by this project. Mr. Eaton expressed that during the Land Use Board meeting for the Martelli application a lot of concerns came up regarding green acres space and that was for property that would also be impacted on this project. From a safety perspective pedestrian traffic in that area is very scary and it is hard to see down the street. He is also concerned about the guardrail and the risk of pedestrians being trapped in that area. Mr. Eaton said, and emergency vehicles will have a harder time pulling people over as they will not want to exit emergency vehicles in the middle of the road. Mr. Eaton believes his driveway apron will also be impacted which is at a slope and the driveway would need to be redesigned so his own property is not disturbed. The roots of the trees in this area will also be damaged. Mr. Eaton said this area would also have to have lights and do we want to attract

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lighting in the park late at night? As he feels it could be a safety concern. Mr. Eaton said if the road gets brighter with lights people might also drive fast and make them feel like they are on a highway.

Resident unable to hear name or address- Feels this will affect the taxes and liability on the town. Mr. Cranmer said he does not feel that this would be a liability issue.

Resident name unable to hear 106 Obre Place- He is newer to town and he has three (3) children and when he heard that a sidewalk might go in on Sycamore Avenue and when he shared the news to classes in the school they seemed pretty excited about the sidewalk project on Sycamore Avenue and feels that it is a good idea and warranted cause he knows that his children would use it to access that park i.e. the Christmas tree lighting unfortunately due to no sidewalk on Sycamore Avenue his children will have to be driven to the Christmas Tree lighting.

David Landy 66 Thornbrooke Drive- Mr. Landy wanted to make sure that Ms. DerAsadourian received his letter, Mrs. DerAsadourian acknowledged the letter that she received and said he was one of the many letters she received. Mr. Landy asks if these would be two (2) separate projects? Mr. Cranmer said yes absolutely. Mr. Landy said he does not have a strong opinion on sidewalks on Sycamore Avenue and feels they might be beneficial in that area of town. He is opposed to sidewalks along Route 35 the West side for all the reasons that everyone brought up this evening. Mr. Landy feels that no one from Thornbrooke will use the sidewalks. If someone wants to use the park, they go the back way to the park. Mr. Landy crosses 35 and knows how dangerous it is. He has yet to see anyone walk to the library.

Michael Panter 457 Sycamore Avenue- He lives a few houses down from Manson Park. Mr. Panter brought up the sidewalk trust fund from when Thornbrooke was built, and they did not want access from Sycamore Avenue. Mr. Panter explained that they did not want sidewalks in the historic district of Shrewsbury. Mr. Panter explained the history of the area of the project. Mr. Panter feels this would damage the historic district of Shrewsbury by adding sidewalks as it will not maintain the character. Mr. Panter wanted to thank the council for their time and believes that often these projects get very expensive with many different moving parts and sometimes the best course of action is to take no action at all. At 457 this resident's home he has 230 apx. Feet of frontage at his property today he would lose some of that if this project was to happen. Mr. Panter also expressed how he has many large old trees on his property and feels that the 15-20 would be hurt by this project. Mr. Panter also feels that retaining walls in the historic district would lose character. Mr. Panter cares deeply about this historic district in Shrewsbury.

Georgia Blair 41 Obre Place – As far as the historic look goes on Sycamore Avenue, she feels the walkway should be on the North side of the street as there is a path and some residents have maintained the area and she use to run everyday so she knows a path did exist. She feels if sidewalks have to go in on Sycamore Avenue they should be placed on the North side. As far as Route 35 goes Ms. Blair feels everybody has noted how dangerous that area of town is and feels that a road diet be completed and perhaps send the trucks down Shrewsbury Avenue.

Greg DerAsadourian 33 Sickles Place – Thanked all the council members and thanked all the residents for coming out tonight and voicing their concerns. Mr. DerAsadourian said students currently from SBS have to walk on the sidewalk on Route 35 to get to Manson Park for sport activities and he believes sidewalks on Sycamore Avenue would be a safer route. He feels the sidewalks on the East side of Route 35 are unsafe due to it being so narrow. Once you get past the two houses on Route 35 you have more room, and it becomes safer.

Judy Kramer 10 Willow Court- She has been in Shrewsbury for almost 30 years and when she first came into town her street did not have sidewalks. When her street did get sidewalks installed it was on one side of the street only and no

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body was inconvenienced so she feels that a sidewalk should only be on one side of the street. On Park Avenue that added a lot of charm with trees, all those trees have been removed, Mayor Anderson said new trees are being planted. Ms. Kramer said we will eventually have the charm back on Park Avenue. If we take a second sidewalk on Broad Street where two (2) beautiful homes currently are located and removal of trees. If this project goes in with guardrails and walls with removal of trees with the only place on Route 35 where it looks like people live it will never come back like Park Avenue is going to it will be ruined forever. This is her town, and she loves it.

John Chimento 489 Sycamore Avenue- Where would a cross walk be located to access the neighborhood like Samara/Birch Drive if the sidewalk was located on the opposite side of the street? Mr. Cranmer said the crosswalk would be located at the Samara Drive intersection and it would likely have a pedestrian crossing sign flasher like other crosswalks in town have. Mr. Chimento said so likely in front of my house? Mr. Cranmer said yes, it would be in front of Mr. Chimento's property if that is where the crosswalk would be located. Mr. Chimento said he does not live at the property and however he is here for his tenants that rent from him on the property. Mr. Chimento expressed that he is ok with the sidewalk project if they supply data that backs up the need for sidewalks and demographics on who this will help and how much will this cost? Is this the best use for our tax payers?

Stewart Minis 35 Thomas Avenue- If this project was to move forward and winter comes, and the state sends the trucks up the highway and pushes snow and ice onto the sidewalks it makes it unsafe and if the homeowners are responsible for keeping the sidewalks clear? How is this safe and fair to the residents? He believes these are things that need to be taken into consideration.

Jenna Ciongoli 923 Broad Street- She is all for making things safe and making this town walkable. She lives on Broad Street however she believes this must be done in a way to not impact the historic district and to make it safe as Broad Street is not the safest area to walk. Ms. Ciongoli believes it should be done as a comprehensive plan to make Broad Street all around a safer road.

Lorraine Woloszyn 945 Broad Street- She lives on Broad Street where the sidewalk currently is, and that sidewalk is narrow already. She believes the sidewalks on Broad Street are already unsafe as they are today and the NJDOT has a certain width that the sidewalks have to be. She believes a road diet should be completed and explained that a road diet is. It is where the state takes the highway and makes it smaller with a bicycle lane, pedestrian lane and a buffer and she believes that is how you make it safe. She believes this should be done from the Library to the Grove. If you put sidewalks in a dangerous area and encourage people to walk in this area, you are putting people in harms way. The small businesses do not get much foot traffic because people do not feel safe walking in this area. Ms. Woloszyn read pieces of information that she found on road diets. Ms. DerAsadourian said they have asked the state NJDOT about a road diet and they got a hard no from the state regarding the road diet. Mr. Cherbini said that is because they can't move the trucks from a State Road to a County Road. Ms. Woloszyn explained how another accident happened tonight and that this is not safe. Ms. Woloszyn feels that cause some many residents want a road diet completed the Borough should take another stab at trying to get the state to do one.

Robin Blair 69 Thornbrooke Drive (Not present read by Judy Kramer) – Ms. Blair is in favor of fixing the sidewalk on Broad Street. She feels it is safer on the West side as it does not flood as much and more space. The current sidewalk she would like to see historic walkway and would like to see it with impervious blocked brick. She feels a sidewalk on the other side of Broad Street is not needed and not safe and she is against it. She feels this would make it look like a commercial zone in this section of Broad Street and not a residential home. She asked how many people asked for a sidewalk on Broad Street? Have the police/fire & EMS discussed this and what do they think of this hazard plan?

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Leslie Eaton 916 Broad Street – Ms. Eaton said Thank You for considering all the information from the residents tonight. She is concerned about safety and why won't the NJDOT do a road diet? Was enough information not submitted? A sidewalk was always on the East Side of Broad Street. Ms. Eaton provided information on the history of Broad Street and information on the historic district. Ms. Eaton also provided information on why she feels a sidewalk should not be installed on Broad Street. Ms. Eaton also explained how her property is involved in the addition of sidewalks on Broad Street. Ms. Eaton explained that even the USPS & other delivery services have trouble entering and exiting her driveway as it is today, and this will make it worse. Ms. Eaton also showed pictures of pedestrians in the area of her house and how it is so unsafe. Ms. Eaton explained how she is always outdoors walking/running and is so pro sidewalks but explained in the right circumstances and this is not where they should be installed. She does not have any comments on Sycamore Avenue but is concerned about the water in Sycamore Avenue and the detention basin. Ms. Eaton said how many more accidents will it take for the state to realize how unsafe the "Four Corners" is as she feels accidents happen once a week now. Ms. Eaton asked the professionals look into her suggestions.

Mayor Anderson Thanked everyone for coming this evening to provide comments on possible sidewalks along Broad Street & Sycamore Avenue. Mayor Anderson said that we are going to roll into the regular council meeting and this evening was to get input from the community and he Thanks everyone for expressing interest and concerns.

Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 7:25PM on a motion made by Councilman Sena, seconded by Councilman Levy with ayes by all Councilmembers present.

Attest:


Kayla Wharton, Deputy Municipal Clerk

Approve:


Erik Anderson, Mayor

