

Members, Oak Hill Community Association: (Oak Hill Update, May 9, 2015)

The May 5 meeting of the Oak Hill Community Association included a very informative, rewarding Q&A with Middletown Officials. To help ensure complete, accurate information, most questions were collected and provided to the Mayor and Police in advance of the meeting. The Middletown Officials did not wish to be recorded. These notes document the discussions. Topics included:

- Recent burglaries (3)
- Gold purchasing stores
- Soliciting door-to-door
- Traffic/speeding
- On-street parking
- Need for Additional street lights
- Creek erosion; street repaving
- Construction & Traffic
- Impact of 5 major construction projects
- Impact of Middletown Town Center

MIDDLETOWN OFFICIALS: Middletown Mayor Stephanie Murray; Middletown Police Lt Detective Stephen Dollinger; Director of Public Works/Township Engineer Ted Maloney; Township Administrator Anthony P. Mercantante;

Mayor Murray kicked off this portion of the meeting and introduced the 3 other Middletown officials. The Mayor distributed copies of brochure, **Welcome to Middletown Township**. This attractive brochure is now downloadable from a link in the website of Oak Hill Community Association (see URL at the bottom of this email)

Middletown Police Lt Dollinger led with a police overview, and then answered questions related to police. Middletown has the lowest crime rate in 25 years. Most burglaries occur daytime when people are working or running errands.

(Lt Dollinger spoke prior to the following subsequent exception to the typical daytime burglary: On May 7, 1:30AM, a burglar cut a 1st floor window screen on the back of a home on Winchester Lane, Holmdel, about 1 mile from Oak Hill. The burglar climbed through the window. The burglar was observed by an occupant, and left the house through the window.. Holmdel police used [Facebook](#) to ask residents to lock their first-floor windows, keep their alarm systems activated, and report any suspicious activity to the authorities.)

As needed, Middletown and Holmdel conduct extensive joint detective work. Bayshore detective reviews are held monthly. Tatum and other streets are recently being patrolled by marked police cars, as well as patrolled by unmarked cars and plainclothes detectives. Police are quite successful in eventually solving burglaries. Detectives collect evidence such as

fingerprints and DNA, which is kept on-line in national databases for matching, in some cases years later.

***** primary speaker is Lt. Detective Dollinger

BURGLARY QUESTION:

Question from a resident on Tatum Drive. Tatum Drive burglaries have occurred Jan, 2006 (several in the area); June, 2014; March, 2015; and nearby on Ballantine Feb, 2015 and Cormorant April, 2015:- Would like the police to notify residents when modus operandi is known. Residents are then likely to remain vigilant, and will more readily recognize and pass-on clues- A possibility: use the emergency call (robo-call) system to reach all households in specific neighborhoods.

Answer: (Lt. Dollinger) Although no leads, yet, in the 3 recent robberies, police will not publicize details because it would jeopardize later conviction. When suspects reveal details known only to police, there are confessions and convictions.

Q (attendee) After a burglar alarm, Police response time seems long.

A: Police respond quickly - typically within 5 minutes of a burglary alarm. Even when the owner quickly calls in a false alarm, the police still dispatch a single police car.

Q (attendee): **Shady** people are seen around one of the **gold purchasing stores**.

A There are 4 gold shops in Middletown. All require annual permits, reviews of procedures, and visits by plainclothes inspectors. One gold purchasing shop was recently suspended because it did not follow required procedures, such as ID checks.

Q: SOLICITING DOOR TO DOOR What is Middletown policy/requirements/regulation on soliciting? Should residents notify the police when door-to-door solicitation occurs (unless it's legal)?

A: A soliciting permit is not required by charitable organizations. However, the charitable organization is still required to check-in and declare the streets where they plan to visit door-to-door. Permits ARE required for commercial solicitors. Residents can complain to police, who will issue summons. However, residents are encouraged to use discrimination; the driveway company or curb lettering company may be performing a useful service- which residents would not want to interfere with. Solicitation is currently permitted until 9PM. The Middletown committee is presently evaluating a change to 6PM, or perhaps dark.

Q TRAFFIC/SPEEDING: How do we get an electronic digital speed readout sign on Four Winds?

A: As a result of Oak Hill's request, the Police Chief has authorized the requested sign on Four Winds; the sign will be installed by the end of the this week.

Q PARKING: What are residential on-street parking regulations for cars and car trailers?

A: Licensed, registered vehicles (i.e. cars/trailers/small trucks) are allowed to park overnight. However, trucks of greater than 10,000 pounds (size of a UPS truck) are prohibited from overnight parking.

Q: ADDITIONAL STREET LIGHTS FOR DARK STREETS: We live on Dove CT and I noted that both Crane and Dove are quite dark. How do I initiate the addition of street lights?

A: Bring the request for street lights to the Police Traffic Bureau. They will evaluate from a safety view, and then provide recommendations to JCP&L. Check with nearby residents who may object to additional lighting.

Q (attendee) What is being done to prevent a **Sandy** event from happening in the Middletown schools?

A: Police are doing multiple things to prevent a **Sandy** event. They are working with the Middletown school board. Last year the Superintendent of Schools met with the FBI and police. Police are trained in active shooting events. Detailed school plans are to shelter in place. Practice drills are held with staff and students. Parents are taught by police at annual PTA meetings. Schools are moving toward restricted entrances: Visitors are "buzzed in" and then reviewed by a security person before entering a second set of doors

***** Primary speaker changed to Ted Maloney

CREEK EROSION & ROAD PAVING:

Q1. Why is it so difficult for the township to help out with the extensive erosion on my property at 113 Pelican road, ..I Have called Mr. Ted Maloney several times and left messages with no return phone calls???? I have been battling with this problem for at least 25 yrs../????? I was promised several times .[that]. FEMA would be there to help out. And when spring arrives.. Everyone has a different story....A person moved in across the street on Borden and within a yrs times had an entire corner replaced>>>>> Also, owners have cut down trees and left them on the embankments , and then they roll into the brook and cause dams>>>That causes erosion.... big problem..>>

Q2. I would like to bring up the serious erosion problem of Poricy Brook affecting the homeowners in the area where the brook streams under Pelican Rd. Homes on Crawford Rd

and Borden Rd have had severe damage to their property's that is not getting the attention it deserves. The gentle stream becomes a **roaring torrent** when the build up of water gets forced out of the culvert pipe, going under Pelican Rd. The extreme pressure build up, is destroying the surrounding stream banks. Home owners are losing chunks of land, spending large amounts of money, and are receiving excuses from the township, but no solving of the problem. Try to create a more efficient way to keep the Brook flowing , without building up this huge back up pressure which is shooting out of the culvert pipe causing land slides, all along the course. There are signs of a road dip and sink holes on Pelican Rd at this spot. You may want to pass this on to whomever will be open to hearing and addressing the situation.

Q3. REPAVING When [are] the roads in Oak Hill.. scheduled to be re-paved? We have lived here 15 years and the street have gotten progressively worst. With Oak Hill being a very active neighborhood the condition of our streets represents a hazard.

A: (TED MALONEY - director of Public Works, and Township Engineer) Ted Introduced himself as a 5th generation Middletown resident. Middletown is BIG. There are 3000 drainage basins, etc. Ted has a master list of all complaints/issues. Projects are prioritized (severity of problem, age of road, traffic, etc), and tackled within available funding. On May 4, the Middletown Committee authorized over \$100K for Oak Hill public works projects (a portion of the several hundred thousand dollars authorized for all Middletown projects).

A previous project was the corner of Borden and Pelican: the outfall concrete head wall was falling into Poricy Creek. The project replaced the concrete headwall, and installed rock-filled gabions to retard erosion of stream banks in the immediate vicinity.

Current Oak Hill projects:

- 113 Pelican - outfall is approved
- Bamm Hollow Road - \$163K approved for redesign from Middletown Lincroft Rd to Red Hill Rd
- DeRidder
- Ballantine inlet stabilization

The property owner is responsible for repair of his own property, including streams flowing through the property. The Township is responsible for public property- such as roads and the stream flowing underneath. If a neighbor cut trees, and the cut trees block/disturb a stream, the complaining property owner should report this to the NJ State DEP (Department of Environmental Protection).

Hurricane Irene caused big problems with storm water and trees which fell and blocked streams.\$3.5million was requested from FEMA to clear the streams.

Ted Maloney provided his card with private telephone number (732-615-2110). Those with additional problems can arrange private meetings.

***** Primary speaker
changed to Tony Mercantante

Q CONSTRUCTION/TRAFFIC: I was at the library this afternoon and saw the plans for all the construction & changes at Exit 109...Obviously with construction this extensive there is going to be major congestion and delays...I believe that many of the commuters will leave the GSP at Exit 114 and go down Dwight Road & onto Nutswamp Road and Middletown/Lincroft Road which will obviously impact us. Is Middletown thinking ahead on this influx of traffic?

A (Tony Mercantante) believes there will not be additional exit 114 traffic. During exit 109 construction, during peak hours, there will continue to always be the SAME number of open lanes as now exist. Therefore, there should be no diversion of traffic to exit 114.

Q. As we all know we already have a mess on Red Hill Road where it ends at Dwight Road...then traffic turns right to the light and then right again to Holmdel or left to the GSP. Why can't there be an exit on the right side of Red Hill Road BEFORE the stop sign at Dwight tying into VanSchoick to eliminate the traffic going to Holmdel from having to go onto Dwight Road to then go onto VanSchoick??

A (Tony Mercantante): The intersection (Red Hill R/Dwight/VanSchoick) was sized and designed for two major factors:

1. Allow for an ADDITIONAL 1 million square feet of improvements (not yet built) at the AT&T complex on Laurel Ave. This additional construction space can be built/used by any future business.
2. Avoid and discourage additional traffic on Red Hill Road.

Q: MAJOR CHANGES UNDERWAY: We have 5 major construction projects and changes underway for Middletown which will arguably affect nearby Oak Hill living. They are Avaya, Bamm Hollow, Sloan, New Town Center and Newman Springs Road GSP exit 109. These will affect roads, traffic, schools, and shopping. What plans are we asking to make these disruptive impacts pleasant? What are we doing to attract clean retail businesses along Route 35 and 36?

A: The original settlement of "Town Center" litigation, several years ago, resulted in a significant reduction in allowable construction. The newest plan is 35% smaller than the size of the original proposal- and the new Middletown "Town Center" appearance will be similar to The Grove in Shrewsbury. 350 townhouses will be constructed (20% low income), and 400K sq

feet commercial. The original "Town Center" had proposed 550 houses and 1 million sq feet commercial. In addition, the "farming" on the present land to be cleared is primarily timber - cutting/selling, (not what people might consider typical farming).

Q: Can you give some examples or when will the township plans be made public? Could the new construction be zoned for "Senior Housing"?

A. Senior housing classification has two disadvantages:

1. Senior Housing in other towns has been litigated. A developer not able to sell senior housing is able to litigate and change the classification to non-senior housing.
2. Middletown has sufficient senior housing, and is NOT able to use more senior housing to satisfy state COAH requirements of 20% low cost housing.

These May 5 meeting notes were written by Steve Miller, Secretary, Oak Hill Community Association. oakhillnj@comcast.net

Need Further Info?

Website: www.oakhillnj.com

Facebook: www.facebook.com/OakHillNJ

Private Oak Hill neighborhood blog:
oakhillnj.nextdoor.com

