



Town of Vienna

Charles A. Robinson Jr.
Town Hall
127 Center Street South
Vienna VA, 22180

Meeting Minutes Town Council Work Session

Monday, June 11, 2018

7:40 PM

Charles A. Robinson Town Hall, 127 Center
Street, South

Work Session

1. Regular Business

Present:

Mayor Laurie A. DiRocco
Council Member Tara L. Bloch
Council Member Linda J. Colbert
Council Member Pasha M. Majdi
Council Member Douglas E. Noble
Council Member Carey J. Sienicki
Council Member Howard J. Springsteen

Staff present:

Mercury T. Payton, Town Manager
Steve Briglia, Town Attorney
Jim Morris, Chief of Police
Christine Horner, Civil Engineer II/Water Quality Engineer in Public Works
Michael Gallagher, Public Works, Director
Marion Serfass, Director of Finance
Lynne Coan, Public Information – Communications & Marketing Manager
Carol S. Waters, Legislative, Deputy Town Clerk

[18-923](#)

Transportation Safety Commission (TSC) - Updating Citizen's Guide to Traffic Calming Guide

Attachments: [DRAFT ToV Guide to Traffic Calming 6.04.18](#)
[PAC Presentation_Draft Traffic Calming Outline_6.4.18](#)

The work session meeting was opened by Town Manager Mercury T. Payton at 7:42 p.m. Christine Horner, Department of Public Works liaison to the Transportation Safety Commission (TSC), introduced Julie Hays, who is a member of the TSC and Chairwoman of the Pedestrian Advisory Committee (PAC). The PAC has been working with the Bicycle Advisory Committee (BAC) and the Department of Public Works (DPW) under the direction of the TSC to update "The Citizens' Guide to Traffic Calming." TSC Chairman Ed Somers had asked the PAC to take the lead on doing a review of the guide, which had not been updated for several years. At this point, a draft outline of an updated guide had been reviewed by the TSC and was being brought to Town Council for their input.

Ms. Hays reported that they are considering a name change and have recently been calling it "The Town of Vienna Citizens' Guide to Improving Residential Street Safety," since traffic calming is just one aspect of the guide. Council Member Sienicki asked why it would just be residential, and suggested "The Town of Vienna

Business and Citizens' Guide...” or “Community Guide...” The Mayor said she liked “community” and liked the name change. Council Member Majdi further suggested giving it an informal nickname, like “Safe Streets Guide.” Council Member Noble noted that some issues are not necessarily safety. For example, cut-through traffic is more of a traffic management issue, not a safety issue. He said that his personal preference was “Neighborhood Traffic Management and Safety” or some combination of those words. Council Member Majdi said that expanding the name to include commercial was a really good idea, and would bring in a new set of stakeholders and other concerns. Council Member Bloch suggested perhaps working with the Town Business Liaison Committee if commercial businesses would be drawn into it. Council Member Majdi added that cutting through parking lots is an issue for commercial property managers or owners. Council Member Sienicki noted that that is on someone else's property and not something that the Town can necessarily manage; the focus should be on the streetscapes and the road sides where the Town has some authority.

Ms. Hays said they want to add definitions for traffic calming and traffic control in the new guide. Council Member Sienicki pointed out that the websites referenced in the draft guide don't always have the same definitions as those on the provided links, so that may need to be reconciled.

Mayor DiRocco pointed out a discrepancy in the appendices. Council Member Majdi commented that if the guide is going to talk about all the options, it also should have to manage expectations. For instance, he said it should be noted that federal grants might take as long as four to six years. Ms. Hays agreed that it was a good suggestion. Ms. Hays questioned the notation of speed humps as an option. Mary McCullough, another PAC member, clarified that there was some question about using speed humps on routes typically used by emergency vehicles. Ms. Hays also mentioned that the Pedestrian Master Plan defines the new sidewalk rating system and talks about the engineering criteria and factors that go into that rating. She said PAC wanted to include the Pedestrian Master Plan in the updated guide. They also want to include an example of how the sidewalk rating system is used.

Council Member Noble asked about using a decision tree in the updated guide and considering potential impacts to surrounding streets. As he noted, study areas need to include impact to other streets. Council Member Noble also suggested there should be a narrative explanation of how neighboring entities are engaged in the process. The group discussed the effectiveness of various methods of sharing information with people in the area when street changes are under consideration. Council Member Bloch asked about the Police Blotter and its distribution. She suggested that one of the back pages could list “upcoming meetings” in the Town and what areas are affected. It would be one more way to share information with residents. Chief Morris offered to add meeting information onto the Police Blotter.

Council Member Colbert asked about the petition process. For instance, if the TSC suggests a speed hump, do the residents then go back and get a petition. Ms. Hays said that they have not figured that part out yet. There was more discussion about how residents find out about things and how to communicate back to the neighborhood.

Council Member Bloch suggested using boxes to check on the petition, from the Town Website, and polling residents about which traffic measures would be agreeable to them. Ms. Hays reported that the PAC would find out what processes other Towns and Counties are using. Council Member Bloch expressed concern

about asking the Department of Public Works employees to do a lot of work for a petition that may not even garner enough support for follow up. Council Member Noble suggested that in the updated guide, the role of DPW in the process of taking a petition, evaluating it, and making recommendations should be specified. He said that the most helpful thing that a community member can do is to help define the problem. Council Member Majdi and Council Member Sienicki voiced concern about requiring people to check multiple boxes. So, one solution would be for people who were wholly against an advance to simply opt out and not have to check multiple boxes.

Mayor DiRocco said she thought that there should be a petition, it should be on the front side, and it should ask for names, signature, address, and maybe contact information, and it should be made as simple as possible. Furthermore, she recommended that the petition should ask whether the resident would be OK with some kind of traffic calming measure or device in front of their own house, because that usually seems to be a big issue. Council Member Sienicki suggested pin-pointing times of day and specific location information of the complaint as part of the petition, too.

Council Member Noble talked about Arlington County Virginia's well-researched report on the use of crosswalks, which utilizes a decision tree. He suggested that its information would be a good place to start in developing crosswalk guidelines for Vienna.

Council Member Sienicki suggested to maybe separate the guide's Section 2, "Petition to improve street safety," to make it a "what is a petition" section followed by a process diagram of some kind where it begins with identifying the problem, then creating the petition and collecting signatures, submitting it to the Town Manager, and then, staff review and recommendation. Then, another track would continue with "If the petition is accepted and should move forward," and explain what happens next.

Ms. Hays reported that the TSC has had feedback from residents indicating a perception that sidewalk, pedestrian, and bicycle safety aspects are not being appropriately factored in with the engineering and traffic studies. For instance, whether kids have to walk to school and busses are not available should be a factor to consider. The Mayor mentioned the additional factors of proximity to downtown, walkability to commercial zones, walkability to parks, the community center, and metro. They also discussed striping for bike routes being used as a traffic calming tool.

Council Member Sienicki suggested that certain things should be put in the front of the guide or highlighted in some way so people do not have to read all the way through. One example would be request forms for a sidewalk repair.

Ms. Hays mentioned that the draft guide had not addressed cases which would not go through the petition process. For example, if funding became available and could be applied to a project that had been on hold for a while, or if there was a dramatic safety issue but residents did not support putting in a sidewalk or other measure. Council Member Majdi commented that with so many sidewalks needed and requested, he could not see a scenario in which the Town would spend money on unpopular sidewalks. Mayor DiRocco pointed out that a sidewalk was installed on Courthouse Road that was only wanted by half of the residents.

Council Member Noble brought up the issue of scenarios with full reconstruction of a street segment where there might be opportunities to work with the Virginia Department of Transportation to design-in certain features from the outset. Council Member Majdi added that he sees it as a major problem when there are redevelopment projects and the Town waits until after the redevelopment to receive petitions. He suggested that it needs to be part of the process to look at traffic calming or solutions concurrently with those redevelopments. Council Member Sienicki commented that sometimes the engineering is taking care of things and it might muddle the issue if you have a petition coming at the same time that there is some sort of change in development or a change to the street because of development. She said that it becomes a really hard fit for where the citizens' requests come in when the engineering is not really complete and ready to be reviewed. Council Member Noble suggested that the developer could think about engaging the citizens to build certain things into the project at the beginning, as part of the development. Ms. Hays said, for the purposes of the guide, maybe it is worth a quick discussion and maybe a few examples of how decisions could be made, including use of Council and the Department of Public Works' discretion.

Council Member Sienicki pointed out a confusing detail in the table of contents with the outline form that may need correction. Ms. Hays noted it. Council Member Noble offered a formatting suggestion for another section, involving progressive shading to make something more approachable for citizens.

Council Member Majdi opined that traffic is the biggest complaint for the citizens in Vienna. He said he thinks it is an overwhelming problem, and the best practices out there are not necessarily sufficient for this Town. Council Member Majdi recommended support of "out-of-the-box solutions;" i.e. things that have not been tried before and that are specifically tailored for our town. He said that he would like to see the Town embrace pilot projects for new ideas that we can come up with one way or another, and that we are not necessarily committed to; that are not necessarily from a list that you can pick from, and we should have a process for that.

Council Member Noble commented that being so close to the District of Columbia and the Federal Highway Office of Safety and Research and Development provided some opportunities. He also said that Virginia Tech Transportation Institute is doing demonstration projects on infrastructure. Council Member Noble opined that the biggest project that is going to take some of the traffic off the streets parallel to Maple Avenue is the traffic signal project that Michael Gallagher of Public Works is starting. The Mayor agreed. When asked to explain that project, Mr. Gallagher said that all the traffic signals would be interconnected at a central control location, and the technology would allow for adjustments. (Most of Mr. Gallagher's statements were inaudible.)

Ms. Hays mentioned that the Strategic Plan is currently being developed and it will include transportation components. (Multiple persons speaking at the same time made this portion of the meeting inaudible.)

Council Member Majdi reiterated that he was asking TSC and staff to please consider new ideas that have never been done before. Council Member Noble suggested putting a link on TSC's page for those interested in delving deeper into ideas from the safety and research website.

Mayor DiRocco commented that the updated guide should provide the most information possible so that citizens know what to expect, what the process is, and

how things are going to work. She remarked that the ideas presented were all great, but they did not necessarily have to be in this updated guide document. It was suggested that links could be added into the guide for additional information and innovative ideas if the guide was on-line. Council Member Sienicki suggested that the extra information should be included as footnotes. One example would be the comprehensive plan, and it would need to include page numbers for specific references since the comprehensive plan is so large. Council Member Noble asked why they were considering the guide as a printed document, and said it could be web-based. Mayor DiRocco answered that some people might want it as a printed document. Someone stated that it should be both printed and on-line. Julie Hays remarked that to have links was a wonderful suggestion.

Ms. Hays brought up the PAC and BAC roles and charters. From the PAC & BAC's perspective, she said, they would love to be more proactive and to help with different Town activities, under the direction of Council and the TSC. However, the way that their charter is written, they are a recommendations body only, and cannot do anything beyond that. The Mayor mentioned that there had been a past situation in which things were going on with the BAC that were not preapproved with staff or Council. However, she added, at this time there is a pedestrian master plan that specifically outlines what Council has said. Mayor DiRocco said if Council agrees, they could check with the Town Attorney about making some language changes within the PAC and BAC organizational guidelines to allow them to follow programs that have already been laid out in the Pedestrian Master Plan. (The Town Attorney made some statements which were completely inaudible.)

Ms. Hays thanked the Council and invited them to send her any additional feedback that they might have on the outline. Mayor DiRocco thanked her and said that they had done an excellent job with the outline. Ms. Hays remarked that they have some work to do and there would be a summer break in August for TSC and PAC, so it might be a little while before they are back in front of Council with a draft guideline. Mr. Payton advised that the PAC is scheduled for another work session with Council on October 22, 2018. He then called a five minute recess.

[18-917](#)

2018 Strategic Plan: Goals

Attachments: [team presentations combined](#)

Marketing and Communications Manager Lynne Coan recapped that teams of Town Staff had prepared and then presented policy briefs to Council at the work session of May 29 on the seven strategic focus areas identified by Council. This evening, consultant Craig Gerhart would lead them in a conversation on developing Council's goals for the Strategic Plan. Mr. Gerhart reviewed what had been done so far and the process that had been laid out. He indicated that they would evaluate each of the focus/theme areas and identify goals and priorities to incorporate into the 2018 Strategic Plan. Mr. Gerhart advised that this was really important because it was where Council would give direction to staff on what they were looking for with respect to development of those strategies and objectives. He also noted that some measurable progress should be seen by the end of a four year period.

Mr. Gerhart proposed that smart goals are goals that are specific enough to translate into actionable items, they are measurable, they are not vague, they are attainable and realistic, they are focused on results, and they are typically time-bound. He discussed Prince William County's economic development goal as an example.

"Vienna as an efficiently mobile community" was the first focus area examined. Council Member Majdi suggested a strategy of developing a non-car network for transportation that connects to the W&OD Trail and the group reviewed what things are allowed on the trail. Mayor DiRocco suggested a goal "to allow citizens to move in multiple different ways throughout the community," or basically to improve mobility, traffic and pedestrian safety. Council Member Colbert proposed a goal to keep traffic moving on Route 123. Council Member Springsteen noted that that could be attainable. Council Member Noble suggested as a goal "to improve accessibility for residents and visitors to our community's businesses and activities and improve the ability to travel to, from, and through Town." The Mayor said to include pedestrian safety. Council Member Majdi said to focus on what is important to Town residents, like traffic through the neighborhoods. The group hashed over various ideas and points. Council Member Sienicki suggested separating the statement and saying "improve pedestrian safety," take out "traffic flow," make it three different things, and on the other say, "improve the ability for residents and visitors to our community businesses and activities..." Council Member Springsteen said they should go back to the goal of keeping traffic flowing on Maple Avenue, because otherwise traffic will go through the residential neighborhoods. Council Member Majdi said that the goals need to talk about on trade-offs and we should push the traffic towards 123, not the neighborhoods. Council Member Colbert noted that you can still have traffic volume on Route 123 as long as it is moving. Council Member Noble stated that regional traffic should be on the biggest, widest street. Mr. Gerhart remarked that the focus should be to improve traffic safety and mobility in the neighborhoods, and then one of the strategies or ways to do that is by making the flow on 123 such that it does not bleed into the neighborhoods. This wording was further critiqued. Council Member Sienicki stated that basically we want to improve pedestrian and traffic safety, then bullet points could be "to limit traffic congestion in neighborhoods," and "by enhancing traffic flow on 123, or Maple Avenue." Council Member Noble spoke on street classification systems and identified arterials, such as Nutley and Maple. The Mayor added that accessibility should also apply to bicycles, walkers, and so on. Word choices were discussed. Curb-cuts were discussed and Council Member Colbert commented that five curb cuts and places to turn into Giant were not necessary. Reducing curb-cuts was identified as a strategy, which could be included in the bullet points. Other suggested strategies were more sidewalks, road improvements, a traffic-responsive signal system, and ride sharing.

Mr. Gerhart suggested that the goals developed tonight be brought back to Council for semi-formal consideration so they have another opportunity to make modifications before the goals go to staff. Council Member Sienicki suggested adding as a strategy "to educate people about public transportation options" or something like that, because she thought people were not really capitalizing on them. She noted that if you build ridership base, you improve or get people to metro and to Tysons. Council Member Bloch agreed that it might lead to better accessibility.

"Vienna as a safe community" was discussed with Chief Morris. It was noted that scams that are prevalent in the area do tend to target the elderly. As a goal, "to reduce crimes against persons and property" was suggested, with more detail added in the strategies. Council Member Noble brought up the general idea of resiliency, in terms of systems, but noted that it might be an issue for the Public Works Department or other areas. Council Member Noble also brought up cyber security, and the Mayor agreed that it is a huge issue. Council Member Noble requested that at a future work session, the Police Chief provide about a twenty minute brief to

Council on cyber security. Mayor DiRocco noted that the Police Chief and the Town Manager work with the staff directors on an emergency management program every quarter. She advised that it was important and they should continue to do that. Council Member Sienicki asked about a language change in one part, to also add bicycle with pedestrian. Council Member Noble asked if instead it should say vehicle and pedestrian safety, or just say transportation safety.

Strategies for the goal of safety were listed as follows: strong emergency management program, cyber security, and reducing pedestrian and bicycle accidents and incidences. Council Member Bloch said that she would like to see "more community engagement," under the safety goal, specifically more school engagement. She would generally like to see more interaction between police officers and youth, school kids at the schools, at school events or clubs, in the neighborhoods, or at the bike rodeo, so more kids have regular conversations with police officers. The Mayor suggested a strategy of making sure the drinking water is safe by investing in the water system. Whether water safety would fall under environmental sustainability or safety was talked over, and it was decided that it could be either. Mr. Gerhart said that for any one of these goal areas, there is typically a lead entity within the organization that is responsible, and people in Public Works would be more directly involved with the water system, but they would reference this strategy under both focus areas. Mayor DiRocco and Council Member Colbert agreed that all of the goals would involve more than one department. Mr. Gerhart summarized the safety goal statement as follows: "Reduce crime through increasing community engagement and education, and invest in public safety technology and facilities with an emphasis on cyber security and emergency management."

"Vienna as an environmentally sustainable community" was addressed. Mr. Gerhart reported that the staff's strategies included improving green spaces, effective stormwater management, staying ahead of state mandated targets if possible, and stream restoration. Council changed it to increasing green spaces, and added native plants displaced by invasive species, clean and safe drinking water, implement LED lights for both street lights and Town facilities to reduce energy consumption, retrofit Town facilities through an engineering services company to include LEDs, implement a system for turning off the lights at the ball fields, get more energy efficient vehicles, and to be good stewards of the environment. Mr. Gerhart summarized with a goal statement of "maintain and improve Vienna's environment through reducing energy usage, maximizing green spaces, stream restoration, effective stormwater management, and invest in a safe, quality drinking water supply." Council Member Springsteen noted that the Town buys the water from Fairfax County, but still invests in the system. When requested, the Finance Director gave details about the funds paid by the Town of Vienna to Fairfax County. The Town Manager noted that the Town regularly does water sampling to ensure cleanliness. Council Member Noble asked if stream restoration was not a part of stormwater management strategy. If so, it does not need to be in the goal. The Mayor suggested taking out stream restoration. Council Member Sienicki suggested adding "to improve the building systems so the mechanical systems, etc. are energy efficient." Whether "increasing" was part of "improving" was discussed. They decided on "increase green spaces and add pocket parks." Council Member Sienicki suggested "increase tree canopy." The Mayor reiterated "to add more native plants and reduce invasive species."

"Vienna as an economically viable community" did not sound quite right to Council Member Majdi. He suggested that the word "viable" sets the bar very low, and he

was thinking more about growth. After some discussion, the group changed the focus area to "Vienna as an economically prosperous community," by or through increasing the commercial footprint. The inclusion of micro-manufacturing and business-incubators were a strategy suggested by the staff write-ups. Council Member Majdi suggested that it should be a goal of the Town to promote independent businesses, and others agreed. Mayor DiRocco asked about gathering spaces, commenting that residents ask for more gathering spaces and places to sit outside, and that increases revenues, which adds economic prosperity. However, there is not a way to directly measure the monetary impact of that. Mr. Gerhart suggested that increasing gathering spaces might be a better strategy for the focus area of "Vienna as an authentic community." Council generally agreed. Council Member Bloch remarked that economic prosperity would mean having less vacant commercial space. Council Member Sienicki suggested to put that into positive terms, so the group agreed on "to increase occupancy rate of commercial space." It was further discussed that having activities can expand patronage to restaurants and shops, which increases meals tax revenue. "To support existing businesses and attract new businesses" was suggested as a strategy. Part of the goal statement was determined to be "to maintain the attractiveness of Vienna as a place to live and locate businesses, diversify the Town's revenue stream, maintain a diverse housing stock, to have adequate parking, and to attract high-end technology."

At 10:30 p.m. the group discussed ending the work session before completing all of the goal statements. After talking about when they would have time to meet again, they decided to keep going.

"Vienna as an influential and well governed community" was the next focus area. The recommendations from staff were: more presence at state legislative sessions, celebrate staff successes, continue to inventory and evaluate services received from Fairfax County, drill down the high performance organization philosophy, and establish cross functional teams to achieve process improvements. Council Member Noble suggested adding regional influence, in order to maintain the Town of Vienna as an independent community in Fairfax County. The Mayor said that she was thinking more of having a presence by being active at PCAC and NVRC. Council Member Noble suggested that would mean being there and submitting a position on issues in a meaningful way on a recurring basis. Council Member Springsteen reminded the group that the Town is not a voting member in some of these organizations. Council Member Noble said that even without votes, if the Town stands up in front of NVRC (Northern Virginia Regional Commission) and offers public testimony about how things affect our town, then we have influence. He said that it establishes the distinct value of the Town of Vienna to residents and businesses, different from the surrounding jurisdictions.

Mr. Gerhart moved on to "Vienna as an authentic community with a small-town experience and high quality of life for residents." The group agreed that there was a connection between "Vienna as an authentic small-town" and "Vienna as an engaged community," and maybe there could be one goal for those two areas. Council Member Noble asked if they were going to define authentic small-town around the activities that occur or about the place that our town is or looks like. Council Member Colbert answered that the activities were a huge part of it. She remarked that in her mind, things like the Homecoming Parade and the Halloween Parade are what really make Vienna an authentic small town. Mayor DiRocco noted the community events and Vienna's connection to its schools. Council Member Noble responded that the biggest challenge in current conversations about Maple Avenue development is, "what does small town character feel like?" He

mentioned the 1970's strip-suburban commercial type development on Maple Avenue. Council Member Bloch commented that most of the development currently on Maple Avenue is not quaint or reminiscent of a small town. Council Members talked about the activities, businesses, historical sites, and community events as being the dominant small-town aspects of Vienna. Council Member Majdi commented that in a small-town, someone should be able to walk anywhere in town without fear of getting run-over, and if it is a small town in Fairfax County, it has to look different from other places in the County; it has to be distinctive. Council Member Sienicki said that the way she sees it, Vienna in the past had developed in response to transportation, whether it was railroads or vehicles. And so, the approach to take now is to make Vienna a place that is more about the place itself than it is about mode of transportation. She also thinks that we have already started doing that, with the Town Green. Council Member Colbert suggested that adding public art would be a good strategy for the focus area of authentic community with a small-town feel.

For "Vienna as an engaged community" the Mayor said she thinks the big projects should have a procedure of public engagement; procedures of how we lay out everything on the website, and promote early engagement. Council Members expressed agreement, and Council Member Majdi suggested going above and beyond legal requirements, and to reach out and be proactive. Council Member Springsteen agreed, and also commented that it was important to always respond to citizens' concerns about proposed projects because they have legitimate questions and concerns that should be addressed.

Mr. Gerhart told Council that next time, they would be given six or seven solid goal statements that indicate what they want to do and why. He said that the strategies come when Council approves the goal statements and staff goes to work to add the strategies and objectives.

Mayor DiRocco thanked everyone.

2. Meeting Adjournment

The Town Council work session of June 11, 2018 ended at 10:57 p.m.

Mayor Laurie A. DiRocco

Signed / Dated: _____

Attest: _____
Deputy Town Clerk

THE TOWN OF VIENNA IS COMMITTED TO FULL COMPLIANCE WITH THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT STANDARDS. TRANSLATION SERVICES, ASSISTANCE OR ACCOMMODATION REQUESTS FROM PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES ARE TO BE REQUESTED NOT LESS THAN 3 WORKING DAYS BEFORE THE DAY OF THE EVENT. PLEASE CALL (703) 255-6304, OR 711 VIRGINIA RELAY SERVICE FOR THE HEARING IMPAIRED.