

# YORK COUNTY TRANSPORTATION SAFETY COMMISSION

MINUTES  
September 11, 2017  
12:00 Noon  
Andrea's Italian Restaurant  
Yorktown, Virginia

<u>Name</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>	<u>Present</u>
Thomas M. Slaughter, Chairman	Citizen – District 5	X
David C. Westcott, Vice Chairman	Citizen – District 3	X
Eddie M. Abisaab	Citizen – District 4	X
William Andersen	Citizen – District 1	X
Ronald O. Fowler	Citizen – District 2	X
Lisa Z. Church	Citizen – District 5	X
Spindler Krause, Jr.	Citizen – District 3	
Marcella A. Murphy	Citizen – District 4	
Michael F. Smith	Citizen – District 1	
Timothy C. Cross, Staff Liaison/Secretary	York County Planning Division	X
Sheriff J. D. "Danny" Diggs	York County Sheriff's Office	X
W. Chad Green	York County Board of Supervisors	
Carl L. James	York County School Division	
Stephen P. Kopczyński	York County Dept. of Fire and Life Safety	X
James T. Lash	York County School Division	
Evan Swartzbaugh	York County Youth Commission	
Angela Biney	Virginia Dept. of Transportation (VDOT)	
Jason Flood	National Park Service	X
Dwight A. Jenkins	Virginia Highway Safety Office	X

## MEETING CONVENED

Chairman Slaughter called the meeting to order at 12:09 PM, and the minutes of the June 12, 2017 meeting were approved unanimously.

## OPENING REMARKS

Chairman Slaughter asked the members about their driving experiences since the last meeting and what kinds of transportation safety issues they have witnessed. Mr. Jenkins related a recent encounter he had with a distracted driver, and Mr. Andersen added his observations about people texting while driving. Mr. Abisaab added that texting while driving appears to lead to additional infractions, such as failure to use turn signals. Mr. Fowler commented that he had seen a driver trying to read a book placed on his steering wheel while he was driving.

## OLD BUSINESS

### Community Forum

Chairman Slaughter stated that the community forum on transportation safety is scheduled for October 26 at 6:30 PM and will be held in the East Room at York Hall. He added that if there is a large turnout, the forum might have to be moved to the larger Board Meeting Room on the second floor. He stated that he will kick off the forum by introducing the Commission members and giving some introductory remarks about the Commission and the important role of VDOT. Mr. Fowler recommended that someone from VDOT be present at the forum, and Mr. Jenkins added that it might be useful for Chairman Slaughter to include information about the schedule for the I-64 widening project in his remarks.

### Legislative Program

Chairman Slaughter reported that the Commission's legislative recommendations were forwarded to the Board of Supervisors, which discussed its Legislative Program at its September 5 work session. He stated that the draft program includes widening I-64 as one of its legislative priorities and also expresses the Board's support for legislation to strengthen the ability of law enforcement officers to discern whether violations of the provisions relating to use of handheld personal communication devices in moving vehicles are occurring.

### Seaford Elementary School

Chairman Slaughter noted that no one was present from the School Division to report on the previously discussed safety issues involving parents driving their children to Seaford Elementary School. Sheriff Diggs commented that he believed there have been some changes to the arrival time for students being driven to school and some redesign of the on-site parking and circulation intended to improve traffic flow. He added that the situation seems to be somewhat improved this year.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### Online Survey

Chairman Slaughter asked the members what they think about the idea of conducting an online survey on transportation safety issues and if they have any suggested changes to the draft questions that were previously emailed to them. The consensus was that the survey is a good idea, and no changes were suggested. Mr. Westcott asked about outreach to the various homeowners and neighborhood associations in the County. Mr. Cross responded that an email blast would be sent out to the association contacts to publicize both the survey and the community forum and that the County web site, Facebook page, and Channel 46 would also be utilized to publicize the survey and forum.

### Other

Chairman Slaughter stated that he had asked Mr. Cross to compile crash location data for crashes in the County involving either pedestrians or bicyclists. He reported that according to Mr. Cross' research, there were pedestrian crashes in the following locations in the period from 2013 through June 2017:

- Coventry Boulevard at Peachtree Lane,
- Route 17 (six in different locations),
- Bypass Road (two in different locations),
- Cook Road (two in different locations),
- Hampton Highway (three in different locations, including 2 fatal crashes),
- Interstate 64,
- Merrimac Trail,
- Pocahontas Trail,
- Tabb Walmart, and
- Victory Boulevard.

He also reported that there were bicycle crashes on the following roads:

- Cary's Chapel Road,
- Cook Road,
- Coventry Boulevard at Honeysuckle Lane,
- Dare Road at Old Dare Road,
- East Yorktown Road,
- Merrimac Trail,

- Mooretown Road,
- Old Williamsburg Road,
- Read Street,
- Route 17 at Arby's,
- Seaford Road at Back Creek Road, and
- Waterfowl Drive at Tern Court.

Mr. Jenkins commented that the pedestrian safety task force that has been formed to look into the problem of pedestrian crashes in Virginia is encouraging detailed follow-up investigations in jurisdictions where a pedestrian crash occurs in order to identify the factors contributing to the crash.

## REPORTS

### Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT)

There was no report from VDOT. Mr. Jenkins mentioned that HSIP (Highway Safety Improvement Program) applications are due November 1.

### Virginia Highway Safety Office (VAHSO)

Mr. Jenkins reported that so far this year there have been 54 more traffic fatalities in Virginia than in the same period last year and four fewer pedestrian fatalities. He stated that this year's Distracted Driving Summit will take place in Norfolk on September 28-29 and that the "Checkpoint Strikeforce" campaign is underway and will continue through the new year.

### Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Committee

There was no report.

### Legislative Policy and Publicity Committee

Mr. Westcott reported that he has met with a member of York County's General Assembly delegation to discuss possible legislation to limit wakesurfing, which involves riding one's personal watercraft behind a larger boat and riding the boat's wake without actually being pulled by the boat. He noted that this activity has resulted in injuries.

### Motor Vehicle Safety Committee

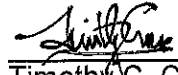
Mr. Fowler reported that he and Mr. Andersen had looked into a road safety concern expressed by one of the Commission members, Mr. Smith, regarding vegetation blocking sight distance at the intersection of Government Road and Creedmor Court. He asked Mr. Andersen to discuss his findings. Mr. Andersen stated that Government Road has been used as a cut-through by drivers seeking to avoid the signal at the intersection of Merrimac Trail and Penniman Road but that this activity seems to have decreased since the signal timing was improved, and he added that truck traffic does not appear to be much of a problem. Based on his experience as a driver, he stated that he feels traffic flows well in this area. He stated that while there is heavy vegetation on the property at 1430 Government Road, he does not feel it significantly impedes sight distance for drivers exiting Creedmor Court onto Government Road. Mr. Fowler added that he agrees with Mr. Andersen's observations, stating that he believes sight distance at the intersection, while not ideal, seems to be adequate.

### Other

Chief Kopczynski stated that every day last week, which was the first week of school, the Department of Fire and Life Safety posted school safety-related messages on its Facebook page.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 1:14 p.m.



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Timothy C. Cross  
Staff Liaison/Secretary

# YORK COUNTY TRANSPORTATION SAFETY COMMISSION

MINUTES  
October 26, 2017  
6:30 p.m.  
York Hall East Room  
Yorktown, Virginia

<u>Name</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>	<u>Present</u>
Thomas M. Slaughter, Chairman	Citizen – District 5	X
David C. Westcott, Vice Chairman	Citizen – District 3	X
Eddie M. Abisaab	Citizen – District 4	X
William Andersen	Citizen – District 1	X
Ronald O. Fowler	Citizen – District 2	X
Lisa Z. Church	Citizen – District 5	X
Spindler Krause, Jr.	Citizen – District 3	
Marcella A. Murphy	Citizen – District 4	
Michael F. Smith	Citizen – District 1	
Timothy C. Cross, Staff Liaison/Secretary	York County Planning Division	X
Sheriff J. D. "Danny" Diggs	York County Sheriff's Office	X
W. Chad Green	York County Board of Supervisors	X
Carl L. James	York County School Division	
Stephen P. Kopczynski	York County Dept. of Fire and Life Safety	X
James T. Lash	York County School Division	
Evan Swartzbaugh	York County Youth Commission	
Kenneth Shannon	Virginia Dept. of Transportation (VDOT)	X
Jason Flood	National Park Service	X
Dwight A. Jenkins	Virginia Highway Safety Office	

## MEETING CONVENED

**Chairman Slaughter** called the special meeting to order at 6:30 PM. He welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending this community forum on transportation safety. The purpose of the forum, he explained, is to hear from York County's citizens about their opinions and concerns regarding transportation safety in the County and also to provide some information to the citizens. He added that a short online survey on transportation safety has been posted on the York County web site, and he encouraged everyone to take the survey if they have not done so already.

## PRESENTATION

**Chairman Slaughter** gave a short slide presentation (a copy of which is attached to the minutes of record) explaining the makeup and purpose of the Transportation Safety Commission. He stated that the Commission serves as an advisory body to the Board of Supervisors and assists the Board in the development of transportation safety programs and activities and makes recommendations on improvements for highway and transportation safety. He introduced the members of the Commission, which consists of nine (9) citizen appointees and several ex officio member representing various agencies, and he showed a series of slides depicting crash trends in the County over the past fifteen (15) years. Chairman Slaughter noted that since 2000, the numbers of crashes, injuries, fatalities, and alcohol-related crashes have all followed a generally downward trend.

## PUBLIC COMMENTS

**Chairman Slaughter** opened the floor for comments from the public. He asked those present to bear in mind that most of the roads in the County are owned and maintained by the Virginia Department of

Transportation (VDOT) and some are owned by the National Park Service, so the County's role in addressing road safety problems is somewhat limited.

**Steve Peters**, 110 Peyton Randolph Drive, stated that he lives in Nelson' Grant and has seen a lot of negative comments on Facebook about flashing yellow left-turn arrow signals. He stated that he does not see a problem with them but that drivers tend to accelerate to the signal rather than yielding to other drivers as they are supposed to. Mr. Peters added that he is also a bicyclist and that the County has very few bike lanes, which he said are not well maintained. He stated that bike lanes on Old York-Hampton Highway are covered with grass and debris, forcing cyclists into the travel lanes. He stated that he would like to see more bike lanes in the County and for them to be maintained. In addition, Mr. Peters expressed concern about the lack of pedestrian facilities on Route 17, stating that while walking along Route 17 near Grafton Drive on Super Bowl Sunday in 2015, his stepdaughter, Alyssa Rhoades, was hit and killed by a drunk driver. Noting that there is no bus service in lower York County, he stated that there should be sidewalks and crosswalks in commercial areas to accommodate people who do not have access to a car.

**Helmut Walter**, 119 Larchwood Road, echoed Mr. Peters' concern about flashing yellow arrows. He said they work well on low-volume roads but that the signal at the intersection of Route 17 and Route 173 is dangerous because of the high volume of traffic at that intersection.

**David Westcott** responded to Mr. Peters, stating that he had gone to school with Ms. Rhoades and was saddened by her death. He thanked Mr. Peters for attending the meeting, adding that the Commission values his input.

**Kenneth Shannon** also responded to Mr. Peters' comment about bike lane maintenance, stating that he would try to work on this issue in the months ahead. He added that VDOT handles about 300 maintenance work orders each month. Regarding the flashing yellow arrows, he mentioned that VDOT has produced a public service video about the benefits of flashing yellow arrows and the importance of yielding to oncoming traffic until it is safe to make a left turn.

**Mr. Peters** asked if there is any data showing that crashes have declined at intersections in the County where the flashing yellow arrows have been installed.

**Mr. Shannon** responded that there is none yet because the installations in the County are relatively recent.

**Sheriff Diggs** commented that the flashing yellow arrows appear to improve traffic flow in most instances and that he assumed VDOT would remove them anywhere that they create a problem.

**Mr. Shannon** said that is correct, noting that the flashing yellow arrow signal at the intersection of Route 17 and Coventry Boulevard was changed so as not to operate during daylight hours. He stated that VDOT would review the signal at the intersection of Routes 17 and 173 to determine if a change is warranted.

**Tony Prata**, 307 Claxton Creek Road, stated that he had no specific concerns and that he wanted to express his appreciation for the Transportation Safety Commission, both as a York County resident and as an employee of the York County Department of Fire and Life Safety.

**Bonnie Baffer**, 406 Artillery Road, stated that she too is a bicyclist as well as a former member of the Transportation Safety Commission. She stated that other than Old York-Hampton Highway, the roads in York County are generally not safe for bicyclists, and she expressed her support for the addition of more bike lanes and safe pedestrian trails. In particular, she stated that she would like to see bike lanes on Cook Road between historic Yorktown and Surrender Road. In addition, Ms. Baffer expressed her support for the Commission.

**Timothy Cross** responded that the County had a project at one time to construct shoulder bike lanes along both side of Cook Road between Ballard Street and Surrender Road, but it was canceled for

various reasons. He added, however, that the County and VDOT do have a project to widen the existing shoulders on this segment of Cook Road, which will make it safer for cyclists to ride.

**Bonnie Fitz**, York County Parks and Recreation Superintendent, expressed her support for the Commission's efforts and spoke in support of more bike lanes and safe pedestrian trails, especially around County parks.

**Helmut Walter** expressed concern about the "five forks" intersection in the Yorktown village, where Ballard Street, the Colonial Parkway, Zweybrucken Road, and the entrance to the National Park Service Visitor Center all intersect. He said driving through this intersection is a nightmare because drivers are confused and do not know where they are supposed to go. He recommended that the existing intersection be reconstructed as a roundabout, which he stated would not require additional pavement. In addition, Mr. Walter stated that speeding and tailgating are common problems on Route 17.

**Mr. Peters** stated that he agrees with Mr. Walter's recommendation for a roundabout in Yorktown.

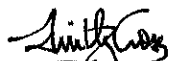
**Chad Green** asked Mr. Flood to discuss the roundabout idea with the Superintendent of Colonial National Historical Park.

There being no one else wishing to speak, **Chairman Slaughter** closed the public comment period and thanked everyone for their comments. He then continued the slide presentation, highlighting some of the survey responses that have been received so far. He noted that the roads most commonly cited as being dangerous – for drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrians alike – are Route 17, Victory Boulevard, Hampton Highway, and Big Bethel Road. With regard to boating safety, Chairman Slaughter stated that concerns have been expressed about boating under the influence, jet skis, wakeboarding, and poorly marked oyster grounds and crab pots. Lastly, he stated that on a scale of one to ten, with one being poor and ten being excellent, the survey respondents gave VDOT an average score of 6.4 in terms of its efforts to keep the roads in the County safe.

#### ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 7:03 p.m. **Chairman Slaughter** thanked everyone for their attendance and participation, and he encouraged them to travel home safely.

Respectfully submitted,



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Timothy C. Cross  
Staff Liaison/Secretary