

October 25, 2018

Good morning,

On the evening of October 24, 2018, Mayor Pro-Tem John Higdon, Town Manager Hazen Blodgett, Town Engineer Susan Habina Woolard, I, and other members of the Matthews Police Department command staff, met with residents and concerned citizens of the Elizabeth Lane Elementary School area. During this meeting, the 26 residents in attendance spoke of their concerns with traffic and pedestrian safety.

Our dialogue was informative and productive. Many in attendance brought similar concerns and suggestions for improving safety of not only the children in the area traveling to and from school, but also for residents attempting to navigate a very busy road during school drop-off and pickup. The common concerns consisted of four (4) areas.

1. Speed of vehicles on Elizabeth Lane at all hours of the day.
2. Crosswalk safety at Cithara Drive.
3. Lighting along Elizabeth Lane as well as lighting at Cithara drive and Elizabeth Lane/ 51 crosswalks.
4. Difficulty navigating the road in front of Elizabeth Lane Elementary due to waiting vehicles for drop-off or pickup of students.

The dialogue and communication was excellent among all in attendance. Town leadership and your police department heard your frustration and your recommendations. We will be working diligently to develop viable long-term solutions to the expressed concerns. We know this is extremely important to the residents and parents of students at Elizabeth Lane Elementary and we will be putting ideas and solutions together immediately to address these concerns.

Following the meeting, Town staff spoke briefly about some of the recommendations presented by those in attendance. Some of those recommendations were sensical to commence immediately and required no additional discussion. These steps are not long-term solutions, but they will address some very important safety issues and begin educating the residents and other motorists in the area. Our ultimate goal is to gain voluntary compliance with traffic laws through education, prevention, and enforcement. The following steps will begin as soon as possible to address some of the issues:

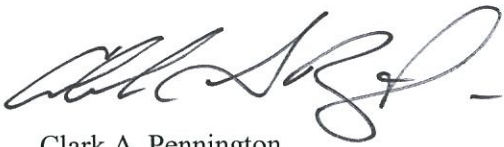
1. School zone signs will be moved to help mark the zone appropriately
2. Crosswalk signs will be placed before Cithara crosswalk notifying drivers of the pending intersection.
3. Matthews Police Department will be working directed patrols in the area to slow drivers as well as conducting enforcement efforts to reinforce the desires of the residents to reduce speeds.
4. Matthews Police Department will place a high priority on filling off-duty assignments for officers working traffic direction at the school in the morning and afternoon hours.

The employees of the Matthews Police Department strive to promote a safe community by preventing crimes and reducing the fear of crime, while treating all individuals fairly and with respect. Our members will demonstrate honesty, professionalism and integrity, while building the partnerships necessary to enhance the safety of our community.

In the coming days, your Town Staff will meet to discuss additional long-term solutions to address the traffic, speed, lighting, and crosswalk safety issues. These solutions, and any additional requirements necessary to accomplish them, will be communicated via the town website, MPD Facebook page, Nextdoor, and via the Elizabeth Lane Elementary School newsletter.

Our desire is to include all of you in the problem-solving process and work with each of you to make our town a better place to live, work, and visit.

Thank you again for those that came out to the meeting last night and I look forward to meeting more of you at a follow-up meeting in the near future.



Clark A. Pennington  
Chief of Police

Attachment: Community meeting notes

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