

### **Attendees**

Richard Klepner, Chair	OHS
Peter Haag, Co-Chair	DelDOT
Jonathan Kirch	AHA/ASA
Amy Kevis	Connections CSP, Inc
Thomas Chip Kneavel	DelDOT
Linda Osiecki	DelDOT
Tracy L Condon	DSP
Louisa Phillips	Retired
Michael Wagner	DOE

### **DelDOT Support Staff**

Farzana Atique	McCormick Taylor
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#### **1. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 am by Chair, Mr. Richard Klepner.

#### **2. MEETING MINUTES REVIEW (08/07/2018)**

Mr. Klepner asked members if there were any comments on the August 2018 meeting minutes. Mr. Klepner remarked that in the previous meeting it was suggested to see whether the pedestrian fatalities had any link to homelessness. Mr. Klepner said that he found no strong link between homelessness and pedestrian fatalities. Mr. Michael Wagner made a motion to accept the meeting minutes as is and Lt. Condon seconded the motion. All voted in favor of accepting the meeting minutes as is. The motion passed.

#### **III. ELECTION OF NEW CHAIR/CO-CHAIR**

Mr. Klepner remarked that he has been the chair and Mr. Peter Haag the co-chair of the sub-committee for a few years now. He thinks it is better to have a new chair to have a fresh perspective. He recommended Mr. Thomas C. Kneavel to take the position of the new chair. Mr. Klepner remarked that Mr. Kneavel, being in the Safe Route to School (SRTS), program should serve as a good choice. Ms. Osiecki asked if Mr. Haag will remain as the co-chair. Mr. Haag remarked that he would also like to step down from the co-chair position but could continue for the time being until the new chair settles in his position. Mr. Kneavel remarked that if there is any interest in the chair or co-chair position he would like to open it up to the group.

Mr. Kirch remarked it is ideal for Mr. Kneavel to be the chair. Mr. Wagner made a motion to elect Mr. Kneavel as the chair of the sub-committee. Ms. Linda Osiecki seconded the motion. All voted in favor, Mr. Kneavel is elected the new chair.

Mr. Kneavel brought up a suggestion to rotate the chair and co-chair positions every two year. Mr. Klepner remarked that most likely the Ped Council makes that decision.

#### **IV. OLD BUSINESS**

##### **1. Enforcement Update**

Lt. Condon presented the 2017 pedestrian fatalities report. She remarked that it is a time consuming effort as she is required to review the narrative of the report in depth to obtain the information. In 2017 there were 33 pedestrian fatalities. 10 of the fatalities had no reported drug or alcohol. Among the remaining 23, 10 had an alcohol level above 0.14. Lt. Condon remarked that blood alcohol levels above 0.14 typically involve signs of being intoxicated/impairment. She thinks that 10 out of 33 persons with 0.14 levels is a high percentage. She presented detailed information about the 10 fatalities to the members and provided a chart to the members. The chart provided had information about the ethnicity/gender/age of the persons, month, time of day of the crash, where crash occurred, clothing, homeless (yes, no or unknown), known alcohol abuser/addict?

Lt. Condon noted that all 10 persons had dark clothing on. None wore reflective gear. Lt. Condon noted that only one person noted as homeless, who lived in Rehoboth area. All others had an address noted and some addresses were of their parents. Lt. Condon also noted that five of them had a drinking problem and five noted as unknown. However, Lt. Condon is not sure if those noted unknown five persons are not alcoholics. She emphasized that this is one piece of information, she hopes the police officers note in their report as it will establish a link between fatalities and alcoholism. Lt. Condon also noted that all pedestrian fatalities except for one were above the age of 50. Also the locations where the crashes occurred were not lighted.

Mr. Wagner noted that he had distributed reflected gear to pedestrians and thinks it is a good means to reduce pedestrian fatalities as it is noted that crashes occurred in dark areas. Lt. Condon hopes that something can be done to have more people carry reflective gear. However, Mr. Kirch expressed skepticism as to how alcoholic persons can be motivated to reflective gears.

Ms. Amy Kevis noted that even though there is an address noted for the persons, in reality they may all be homeless and use the address for SSI or SSA benefits. Ms. Kevis inquired whether it will be possible to find when benefits are obtained and that may relate to the time the persons purchase alcohol and subsequently lost their lives in pedestrian crashes. She noted that, usually they get their check on the 1<sup>st</sup> or the end of the month. Ms. Osiecki said that she can contact persons to look into it.

Lt. Condon went on to emphasize that dealing with alcoholic person is difficult. She went through a list of some of the findings the troopers noted dealing with the alcoholic persons on patrol.

Following are some of the findings:

- Arresting is an option but arresting takes a long time and the trooper understands that arrest is not a suitable option for the persons.
- Some troops do not practice arrest. There are differences throughout the state troop by troop.
- Sometime the persons are sent to EMS.
- One trooper said that repeated offenders are usually arrested instead of convincing them into seeking medical help.
- Sometimes trooper will threaten that if the offenders do not seek medical help they will be arrested.
- Without the persons agreement, the process doesn't work as they will walk out of the facilities soon after admittance.
- Shelters-they do not have any beds available and sometimes no one answers the call.

- New behavioral center in Georgetown is opening but not sure of their capabilities.
- Up north, they are taken to the hospital.
- Mobile Crisis does not help alcoholic persons. The troopers believe it is for mental health.
- One trooper had success with recovery innovation up north. It is only a 23 hr facility. After they sober up they are sent out.
- Ellendale Recovery-expectance based on staff working.
- Dover Behavioral- not sure if they can help.
- If the pedestrians say they are a suicidal threat then it is a 24 hr committal. But not all drunk pedestrian make suicidal threat.
- The best option is if the persons can be sent home and put under the care of someone who is over 18 years and who is sober. But as Lt. Condon noted, this case is very rare, as no one can be contacted to take care of the person. Summarizing, Lt. Condon said that she hopes she is able to paint a picture of the difficulty troopers face while addressing persons with alcoholism. She expressed hope that she will work in the future with Ms. Amy Kevis and others to try to come up with solutions to address these situations.

After Lt. Condon's discussion, Ms. Amy Kevis went on to discuss substance abuse issues. Ms. Amy Kevis gave a description of her background work, which includes work as a police officer for 20 years and work at the division of substance abuse and mental health as a law enforcement liaison. Ms. Amy noted that for many years it has been thought that substance abuse is a character flaw. But in reality addiction is a disease. It changes the chemistry of the brain. Substance abuse and mental health are linked together. She added that we don't know if mental health causes substance abuse or substance abuse leads to mental health.

Ms. Kevis also worked for Mobile Crisis. The problem with Mobile Crisis is they only work with suicidal persons. Their prime work is to detain persons who expressed suicidal threats. But not all persons with substance abuse will express suicidal thoughts, in that case Mobile Crisis cannot offer any help. Ms. Kevis also noted that the substance abuse persons do also have the right to not take medicine.

Mr. Kirch asked about the limitation of scope for detaining substance abusers by Mobile Crisis. Ms. Kevis explained that there has been a change to the law which narrowed the scope of detainment to homicidal or suicidal persons only. Previously, family members could fill up the forms and then the persons could be dropped off at a facility for psychiatric evaluation. But since the law has changed, now only a certified mental health screener can fill out the first two pages of the form. To become a mental health screener one needs a 40 hr training session. The rest of the form needs to be filled out by psychiatrist.

Ms. Kevis works with law enforcement to minimize arresting alcoholic and substance abuse persons. It is difficult for these people to be in a criminal justice system where navigating between courts fees and subpoenas is a hard task. Ms. Kevis emphasized that rehabilitation should be the appropriate future path for these persons.

Ms. Kevis joined Connection as the director of Criminal Justice and Community partnership this year. Connection is modeled after Massachusetts's Angel Initiative Program. The Angel program works in connection with the police department, which is open 24 hr. A person can come to the police department and seek help for substance abuse and the person will be transported to a facility. Ms Kevis informed that recently a Withdrawal Management Center opened in Harrington.

Ms. Kevis is working with police officers to offer the officers an option other than arresting substance abusers. Angel Initiative has been established in Delaware. Delaware has eight police agencies working with the Angel Initiative. It is still an ongoing process and Ms. Kevis has plans to incorporate more Kent and Sussex agencies into the program.

Ms. Kevis explained that no one begins using drugs wanting to be an addict. It can start from someone having a sport injury or surgery pain and who has been prescribed pain medicine. Ms. Kevis went on to explain the withdrawal and detox process for substances. The persons who are on opioids are put on methadone to help the reduction of the influence of opioids. The process need to be done under medical supervision. Withdrawal management for alcohol and Benzodiazepines are also done under medical supervision, as they can become fatal without proper measures.

Ms. Kevis noted that this management system is still voluntary. So the officers cannot force the persons into the system, but this system works as a better option than arresting the persons. Ms. Osiecki inquired whether methadone heals a person totally and if a person can come off the medication. Ms. Kevis informed that the dosage is gradually decreased but not sure if someone can totally come out of it. Ms. Kevis also expressed hope that there can be better rehabilitation of the treated persons, so they don't fall back to substance abuse.

Lt. Condon remarked that she will organize the information shared by Ms. Kevis and share them with officials so that more police agencies can be part of Angel Initiative Program and can utilize the withdrawal management center/detox at Harrington.

Mr. Klepner then went on to discuss the recent initiatives taken by the Office of Highway Safety (OHS) for pedestrian safety. There is a new initiative named "Walk Bright, Walk Right." It is meant to encourage pedestrians to wear reflective gear during nighttime to become visible to drivers. Mr. Klepner said that for the past five years OHS has tried to encourage people to use crosswalk, but the initiative has not become successful. Many areas do not have crosswalks and where there is a crosswalk, people tend to cross the road outside of a crosswalk if it is a shorter walking distance. Mr. Klepner remarked that information on reflective gear is being distributed on the buses. Mr. Klepner also remarked that glow materials will be distributed among kids during Halloween.

Mr. Kneavel informed that at DelDOT they have small reflective strips that can be attached to clothes for visibility purposes. Lt. Condon asked whether reflective strips can be supplied to the people who are being treated at Connections. The Committee agreed that this is something they should look into further.

## **2. Education Update**

Mr. Kneavel updated the Committee regarding the recent education initiatives. He remarked that Downes Elementary School in Newark had a successful walk to school and bike to school program. Mr. Kneavel mentioned that pop-up structures were created with the help of University of Delaware's Engineers Without Borders group to display a refuge island for the pedestrian at Downes School. Mr. Kneavel also informed that a study is being conducted with University of

Delaware's GIS department to determine the connectivity conditions of the schools in Delaware. The study will help to create a ranking of schools based on connectivity and the top school will be targeted to promote walking to school. Mr. Kneavel mentioned that making parents feel comfortable to send children to school by walking is a challenge.

### 3. **Pedestrian Safety Awareness Month Update**

Mr. Kneavel informed that Maria Andaya has the information regarding Pedestrian Safety Awareness Month activities. Mr. Klepner informed that there is an event at Brandywine Zoo over the weekend where OHS is taking part and pedestrian safety information will be distributed. Mr. Kneavel mentioned that as part of the Pedestrian Safety Month, DelDOT will be displaying pedestrian safety information on variable message signs.

Lt. Condon asked the members how to proceed to have the reflective gear available to the Connection facility. Members agreed that this should be discussed more in the future.

### V. **ADJOURN.**

Meeting was adjourned at 11:50 am.

Meeting Minutes reported by:  
Farzana Atique, PhD, PE

