

Three weeks after fatal crash, group urges township to improve road safety

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KEYPORT BUREAU

MIDDLETOWN — It has been nearly three weeks since the car accident on Newman Springs Road that took the lives of a Brookdale Community College student and a recent graduate, and residents are urging township officials to take action to avoid similar tragedies.

"It always takes a life to make the powers-that-be listen," Barbara Thorpe of Swimming River Road told the Township Committee at its meeting Monday night. "Tonight, I ask, "How many lives?" "

Mayor Thomas G. Hall announced during the meeting that the committee plans to pass a resolution creating a task force to study traffic issues in Lincroft.

But others want to see additional action taken immediately.

Several residents and members of the Lincroft Village Green Association, a community group, came to the meeting to speak and offer suggestions for alleviating traffic congestion and truck traffic in the Lincroft section of the township. The roads that consumed most of the discussion were Newman Springs, Middletown-Lincroft and Swimming River roads.

On Nov. 1, Roberto Pereira, 18, of Long Branch and his passenger, Corinne Quintana, 22, of Eatontown, were killed when police said he lost control of his car on Newman Springs Road and collided with a dump truck headed in the opposite direction.

Carol Baker, co-president of the association, presented a letter to the committee at the meeting with suggestions for lessening the amount of traffic on the three roads. She said she would like to see the suggestions supported through a resolution.

One suggestion was to create a new exit on Route 18 to Laird Road, which connects to Phalanx Road, where there is an entrance to Brookdale. Traffic on Newman Springs Road to Brookdale's other entrance would then be reduced, she said.

Another recommendation was to allow trucks to use the Garden State Parkway to Exit 117, so they could have direct access to Routes 35 and 36, without using local roads in Middletown.

Hall said he thought the group had good suggestions but needed more than a resolution to put the ideas into action.

"Passing the resolution is easy," he said. "But accomplishing everything on there is more difficult."

John Gallagher of Woodland Terrace told the committee: "I would encourage you to lean very hard on the county because I think they are receptive now to doing something on (Route) 520."