

THE LINCROFT VILLAGE GREEN ASSOCIATION OUTLINES ROUTE 520 PROPOSAL

by Susan Murphy

Presenting an informative and well-received presentation, The Lincroft Village Green Association introduced their recommendations for improvements to Route 520. The meeting, which was held on August 13 at Brookdale Community College's Performing Arts Center, was attended by approximately 100 residents of Lincroft, Middletown, and nearby Tinton Falls. The widening of Route 520, as well as the reduction of the speed limit in many areas of Lincroft, limited entrances and exits from parking lots to CR 520, a possible new ramp for southbound Exit 105 traffic to directly access Route 18 North, better bicycle access routes in Lincroft, the replacement of existing crosswalks and the building of additional crosswalks that would be highly visible, the adjustment of the Phalanx Road-CR 520 traffic light to provide a longer green light for Route 520, and a better synchronizing of lights were all topics discussed at this meeting.

The Lincroft Village Green Association has been studying the problems associated with the quality of life in Lincroft, including pedestrian safety, speeding, and parking lot access and congestion. They distributed a survey sheet to residents regarding CR 520, which contained 21 questions that residents could circle if they: agree, disagree, are undecided, or list other ideas. These questions related to traffic, speed limits, building landscaped center islands, replacing existing crosswalks, constructing continuous sidewalks in certain areas, and the addition of either one or two jughandles or two left turn lanes going into the Brookdale Community College entrance. The surveys were collected at the close of the program, and forwarded along with other data compiled from other surveys to Theodore Giannechini, Monmouth County Engineer.

Abe Littenberg, a member of The Lincroft Village Green Association started the evening with an overview of Route 520 from Sea Bright to Route 18 through the use of a slide presentation. The slides showed Route 520 as it travels through Sea Bright, Rumson, Fair Haven, Little Silver, Red Bank, Lincroft, Holmdel, and even Freehold. He commented how in certain areas CR520 is deer friendly, bike friendly, jogger friendly, and even farm friendly. It was a thorough and clear view of exactly how many lanes the road has in different areas, how many turn-off lanes (either left or right) into schools and business parking lots, and especially how beautiful the road is in specific sections.

Carol Baker and Winnie Scateri, also members of LVGA discussed the need for decreasing the speed limit in many areas. They continued the use of the slide presentation by showing what a landscaped center island would look like, and explaining how this island would also serve as a safe area for pedestrians to wait until they could cross a street. Carol expressed her concern regarding pedestrian safety with a list including: a) building concrete crosswalks that are highly visible, b) installing *Yield To Pedestrian* signs, c) constructing new

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crosswalks where appropriate and d) providing additional pedestrian-activated lights. Some sections would have rumble strips for pedestrian crossings. It was suggested that a crosswalk with pedestrian-activated lights, and a traffic light on a timer for a.m. and p.m. dismissal only be installed at the entrance of Christian Brothers Academy. Also suggested was a safe bike access to CR520 through Middletown-Lincroft Road.

The Lincroft Village Green Association recommends developing alternate routes before any changes are planned for the Brookdale Community College entrance, and to encourage the use of shuttle buses.

During the question and answer section which followed the presentation, one suggestion was offered to have a flashing sign installed before Christian Brothers Academy stating: *School Zone Next 2 Miles - Speed Limit 25 mph*. Another was to stagger school starting times.

During the period allotted to comments from the audience, Tinton Falls Mayor Ann McNamara spoke of her concern that the east and west segments of Riverdale Avenue should not be joined. She said, "that would be a mistake" as would the idea of Parkway exit 107. Ms. McNamara does recommend orange pedestrian markers for greater visibility. Tinton Falls resident Dale Diamond of Riverdale Avenue East said it would be "absurd to put in an overpass to connect two quiet, sleepy roads and destroy a natural habitat."

Among others who expressed support for Lincroft quality of life issues was a representative of the League of Women Voters. A Belmar resident spoke of improvements made in that town and encouraged the residents of Lincroft to continue their struggle to acquire an atmosphere to their liking.

Lincroft resident Kathy Kuser emailed a group of her neighbors with a reminder of the importance of attending this meeting. Her message pointed out how "*essential*" it is to act "*as a neighborhood*" in responding to proposals to "improve or enhance our neighborhood or Lincroft center."

A written survey was distributed to those who attended the meeting. The results were to be compiled and submitted to County Engineer Theodore Giannechini. The survey addressed issues of reduction of speed limits, landscaped center islands, sidewalks, replacing crosswalks and adding extra lanes to Rte. 520. Jughandles, parking lots, ramps, traffic lights and bicycle access are also covered in the survey.

The general consensus of the residents attending this meeting seemed to be that if Route 520 were widened it would greatly impact the quality of life for themselves and their children. The change of Route 520 would cause immediate and severe traffic problems; and of great importance was the thought that the area would not be pedestrian-friendly.

The Lincroft Village Green Association has a website: *lincroftvillagegreen.org* on which you can read the original Orth-Rodgers report for Route 520 and the recommendations and comments by Mr. Charles Carmalt, Consulting Engineer for LVGA. Any further questions or concerns may be directed to Maryellen Tyndale-Hintz, Co-President, at *lincroftvillage@aol.com*.