

BOARD MEETING:
2ND AND 4TH TUESDAY OF EACH MONTH

(410) 226-5122



101 Market Street
P.O. Box 339
Oxford, Maryland 21654

Commissioners of Oxford

March 9, 2020

Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee

Re: House Bill 1132 - Talbot County - Speed Monitoring Systems - Intersection of Maryland Route 333 (Oxford Road) and Bonfield Avenue

Honorable Delegates,

Please accept this letter of support for House Bill 1132 Authorizing the placement and use of a speed monitoring system at the intersection of Maryland Route 333 (Oxford Road) and Bonfield Avenue in Talbot County, within the incorporated Town of Oxford.

This intersection is located near the Oxford Volunteer Fire Company and the Oxford Community Center; both are community buildings, which are frequented by pedestrian traffic. In the summer the Oxford Community Center houses the Oxford Kid's Camp, with children traveling to and from the center by bicycle throughout the day.

We appreciate your consideration of this very narrow legislation permitting the Town of Oxford to address the very serious issue of drivers entering the town at excessive speeds. This has been an ongoing problem for many, many years, and although we have a small police presence, we do not have the means to have full time coverage and with only one officer patrolling the town during the day, there is not the ability for a vehicle to sit and monitor vehicles entering town. We feel the ability to issue tickets to vehicles traveling 12 miles over the speed limit will assist us in curbing this behavior, for the safety of residents and visitors of Oxford.

It is important to understand the unique circumstances found in Oxford. This is a 300-year-old town of 550 homes sitting at the end of Maryland Route 333. The only speed limit within the incorporated town is 25 mph. Oxford is a totally walkable/bikeable community whose streets are lined with trees, sidewalks and parked cars. For all practical purposes, this section of Maryland Route 333 is in a densely populated residential neighborhood, with porches a few feet from the drive path, children and adults walking and biking along the roads and tourist wandering the streets looking at the old homes.

The speed limit on Maryland Route 333 changes from 50 mph to 35 mph one third of a mile from the incorporated boundary of Oxford, and then changes from 35 mph to 25 mph at the incorporated boundary. The requested location for this speed camera is an additional tenth of a mile after the 25 mph sign. A driver will have nearly a half of a mile of to reduce their speed before passing the speed camera.

Commissioners of Oxford

The Commissioners of Oxford realize the volume of traffic coming into the town is not comparable to the locations where speed cameras have been installed in larger cities and do not anticipate receiving any revenues from the speed camera. The intention is to work with an authorized company to provide the cameras with no revenues back to the town and if necessary to subsidize the cost. The only purpose in this request is to provide the town with a mechanism for calming traffic, solely for the safety of residents and visitors of Oxford.

Lastly, our passion for this request is certainly tied to the events of last summer, when the Town of Oxford experienced what is most likely the most tragic event in our 300 year history, when one of our cherished citizens and the president of the Oxford Voluntary Fire Company Auxiliary was leaving her house at the Bonfield intersection to cross the street to the firehouse for an auxiliary meeting. Within seconds of stepping into the street, she was run down and killed instantly by a vehicle entering the town, doing three times the 25 mph speed limit.

The fire company members, businesses, and citizens along this section of Maryland RT 333, within the town limits of Oxford, have expressed concerns regarding speeding for years. The town runs radar in this area whenever possible, we have borrowed 'this is your speed' signs and placed them there when we can, we have worked with State Highway on other speed reducing mechanisms and we will continue to work with them, but we clearly see the ability to have a speed camera near the entrance to town as a way to change driver behavior, to not reward those who get away with speeding, and to create a safer environment for the residents and visitors of Oxford.

With the concerns of last summer, a public meeting was held at the community center to allow the citizens to discuss their concerns. The meeting included representatives from the Department of Transportation, Delegate Johnny Mautz and Senator Addie Eckardt, and was attended by nearly 20% of the town's citizens. Many recommendations were made with speed cameras being one of the items citizens would like to see implemented. Included are a few of the many emails that were received from citizens, who did not realize that it would take a change in a state law to incorporate speed cameras, but who none the less are in favor of the initiative.

The Commissioners and the citizens of Oxford are requesting your approval of HB1132, a bill that will have a positive impact for the small town of Oxford without inconveniencing any other community or citizenry. Please let me know if you need any further information regarding our request.

On behalf the Commissioners of Oxford,



Cheryl Lewis, Town Administrator

Enclosures

oxfordclerk@goeaston.net

From: Edwinmiller <edwinmiller891@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, July 24, 2019 12:27 PM
To: Cheryl Lewis
Subject: Speed Limits in The Town

I support any effort by the Town government to install any type of structure or devices to enforce the 25 mile per hour speed limit. Earlier today Ritze and I took our normal walk and at about 7:30a.m. several pick up trucks drove by at a speed well above 25mph. My thought is that we need to control the speed as vehicles come into the Town so that the clear message is sent that the 25mph is real. Perhaps several speed bumps just at the 25 mph sign to slow down the entering traffic. Another alternative is to install speed cameras resulting in meaningful tickets with heavy fines to send the message that the Town is concerned with protecting the safety of the citizens and visitors. Ed Miller.

Sent from my iPad=

oxfordclerk@goeaston.net

From: Diane Lapp <lappdiane@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, July 25, 2019 1:15 PM
To: Cheryl Lewis
Subject: speed camera

Dear Cheryl,

As a homeowner living on Morris St. I witness speeding by commercial and non commercial vehicles along the street on a daily basis. The street is crowded with bicyclists and pedestrians and is way too narrow for vehicles exceeding 25 m.p.h., however speeding has become commonplace. Speed Cameras seem to remind us all that we should be slowing down and would probably serve the community well if they were placed at both ends of Morris St.

Sincerely,

Howard Lapp

oxfordclerk@goeaston.net

From: Ritze miller <ritzemiller@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, July 24, 2019 12:02 PM
To: oxfordclerk@goeaston.net
Subject: Speed camera

While Ed and I walked this morning early in the morning (7:30 AM) we witnessed (we counted) 5 cars as well as work trucks obviously surpassing the posted speed limit by a lot!
When we received an e-mail from Julie we thought it was time and long overdue to get activated about the obvious neglect of our speed limit in town. Thank heaven (though too late to avoid a fatality which affected all of us) we have a chance to avoid another horrific and devastating tragedy in front of the Fire House .
It is time to take action. We support speed cameras and any other action that will save lives.
Ritze and Ed Miller