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## **Recent accident highlights perils of West Windsor crossing**

**By: Molly Petrilla , Staff Writer**

### **Avalon Watch-Village Shoppes area records more pedestrian injuries**

WEST WINDSOR — As the rain came down in sheets Nov. 13, Alan Edenzon pulled his black Mazda Protege out of the Village Shoppes shopping center onto Clarksville Road.

It was 5:13 p.m. — just two hours before members of the West Windsor Bicycle and Pedestrian Alliance would make recommendations before the Township Council for increasing pedestrian safety on the stretch of road that connects the shopping center to Avalon Watch.

Xiao Xiuyuan, 73, and her husband, Junyue Li, 74, had just picked up their 4-year-old granddaughter from the Happy School daycare center, and were rushing across Clarksville Road to return to their Taylor Court home.

The front of Mr. Edenzon's car struck Ms. Xiuyuan, who fell to the right and pushed away her granddaughter's stroller, according to police reports. The stroller fell over, but Amanda was not injured.

Police said the car also struck Mr. Li, who fell to the left of the car, bumped his head on the pavement and was also hit by Mr. Edenzon's side-view mirror.

Because the pedestrians were technically jay-walking, no charges were filed against Mr. Edenzon.

The injuries were not critical — Ms. Xiuyuan's lower right leg was broken, Mr. Li had a cut on the back of his head and scratches on his face — but according to WWBPA President Ken Carlson, the implications of the accident are.

Just four days before the accident, alliance members tried to draw attention to the area, which has become a de facto crossing since the nearest crosswalk is half a mile away.

Mr. Carlson said many Avalon Watch residents are forced to cross the busy street because the NJ Transit bus makes a stop right outside the Village Shoppes or because they prefer to walk to the shopping center — which includes a day care center — rather than drive.

"The people who were hit are not the only ones who walk across that street with strollers," he added.

A small group of residents — including Councilwomen Heidi Kleinman and Linda Geevers — observed the Clarksville Road crossing at 6 p.m. and then held a meeting to brainstorm possible improvements.

On Nov. 13, Mr. Carlson appeared before the council to offer the group's suggestions for changes at the crossing, including better street lighting and a crosswalk with pedestrian-activated lights. He also mentioned that the alliance had pegged the busy street as the site of the town's next pedestrian fatality.

Though he didn't know it at the time, just two hours prior to Mr. Carlson's appearance before the council, Mr. Li and Ms. Xiuyuan had narrowly avoided serious harm at that very spot.

"I think (the accident) just makes the case that much more clear," Mr. Carlson said Monday. "I don't think it needed to happen to get these changes made, but I think it maybe will help the sense of urgency."

Township Police Chief Joe Pica echoed these thoughts, pointing out that while the accident was partly caused by the dark skies and heavy rain, it was also a result of the dangerous crossing.

"Obviously, this (accident) could have had devastating results," he added. "Just a couple more inches either way and this could have been a catastrophe."

According to Township Engineer Jim Parvesse, county officials have said they are "committed to doing some improvements there."

He said they plan to install a median, better lighting and additional signage soon.

"The township's been talking about these types of improvements for several years," Township Administrator Chris Marion added. "This is something that we're pleased to see the county moving on."

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