

WEST WINDSOR: Spring will see launch of deadly curve's realignment

By Allison Musante, Staff Writer

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WEST WINDSOR — Work to realign the Alexander Road “S-curve” is expected to begin next spring, more than five years after a 14-year-old girl lost her life in a car crash on the dangerous stretch of road.

Pete Weale, of Fisher Place, reminded council members about the project’s overdue completion date at the Township Council meeting on Dec. 21, in relation to the council’s actions that evening to postpone several other traffic and pedestrian safety improvement projects.

“When this accident happened, the mayor said he would take immediate action,” he said. “I don’t think five and a half years later is immediate action.”

Mayor Shing-Fu Hsueh said the process of realigning the S-curve has been lengthy for acquiring the necessary permits from the county, the state Department of Environmental Protection and the Delaware and Raritan Canal Commission.

Construction was set to begin in 2008, but the township was forced to redesign its realignment plan to meet the requirements of the canal commission, that was concerned that the design put too much water into the canal from increased groundwater discharge and stormwater runoff. The design was approved late last year.

Township officials have also been tied up finishing the Meadow Road reconstruction project, which began in June 2008 and concluded this summer. The project realigned the 90-degree curve so that Meadow and Bear Brook roads would go directly to the bridge and to Route 1 and Carnegie Center in a straight line.

“We could not have had these adjacent roads closed at the same time,” Mayor Hsueh said. “But now that Meadow Road is done, we just have to wait out the winter and then our contractors are ready to go. But this was not something that could be done overnight.”

The total cost of the project was estimated at \$500,000. The township received \$190,000 from the Department of Transportation towards the cost. The township’s budget will supplement the rest of the cost, Mayor Hsueh said.

In September 2005, Rebecca Anitto, a sophomore at Princeton’s Stuart Country Day School, died in an accident at the curve between the Glenview development and the Delaware and Raritan Canal. After skidding out of control on the rain-soaked stretch of road, the car she was a passenger in collided with another car traveling in the opposite lane.

In April 2007, Rebecca’s parents filed a lawsuit against the township for their daughter’s death, claiming the township knew the curve was hazardous but took no action to make it safer. In June 2009, the township settled out of court with her parents and paid \$10,000.

At the time of the accident, the S-curve was the township’s third most hazardous piece of road, according to a study done several months prior to the accident.

At the council’s Dec. 21 meeting, it approved several one-year extensions for state Department of Transportation grants to postpone the following projects: reconstruction of Village Road West from St. David’s Church to North Post Road, Wallace Road from Alexander Road to Route 571, the South Post Road bikeway from Village Road to the rowing center, Penn Lyle Road from Clarksville Road to Canoe Brook Drive, and Dutch Neck Road bicycle and pedestrian safety improvements.

Township Administrator Bob Hary explained that the projects were delayed because they are not fully state funded, and approval for supplementary funds from the township’s budget was not approved until late in the year.

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