

# RICK CHURCHILL

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COMMISSIONER  
WARD #14  
TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MERION

November 12, 2018

Dear Mr. Brown,

I am writing in response to your and your neighbors' petition to restrict parking on Hempstead Road during the evening and early morning hours. At this time I cannot support this petition and I am asking our Parking Services Director, Thomas Pintande not to go forward with this request.

My primary concern is this; does restrictive parking on the 1400 block Hempstead Road solve overcrowded parking in Penn Wynne or will it merely disperse it to other overcrowded streets? I believe the latter is true. I further believe that parking in Penn Wynne will remain an unresolved problem for now and in the future.

I've looked into this problem of our over crowded parking and I believe it is caused by two major factors. The first is the change in our car culture. Penn Wynne was developed as a community for single-family homes with single car garages. Had developers and township officials thought car ownership would double, our streets would have been wide enough to have parking on both sides of the street. But our roads can only accommodate parking on one side.

Today, nearly everyone uses public parking spaces for their second car. Add a number of out-of-state parkers and the occasional extended month-long parkers, and there are very few open spaces on streets west of City Avenue.

The second aggravating factor is that many homeowners have converted their rear yard parking spaces to additional storage or living spaces. So it isn't unusual that homeowners now use two public parking spaces on streets that were never meant to accommodate these numbers. I have talked with Thomas Pintande and Police Superintendent, Michael McGrath and they both agree on my assessment as to what has caused most of our the overcrowded parking problem. The solution to this problem is for homeowners to reduce their number of cars and/or for them to convert their living or storage spaces back to parking garages. Realistically, that's not going to happen.

Unfortunately we have a problem without a practical solution. So limiting parking on Hampstead will only create additional demand for parking spaces on other overcrowded streets like Rock Glen, Trent and Henley Roads.

Since our conversation, I have observed parking on Heampstead and other nearby street in the evening and after midnight. I have found on average one open parking space on Hampstead and two open spaces on nearby streets. So tight parking is the norm not exception of Penn Wynne streets east of Haverford Road.

I also looked at another of your concerns, that of neighbors parking in front of other homeowner's garages in the alleyway behind Hampstead. I saw an average of three parked cars in the alleyway at night. I don't know whose property these cars were parked on. I think this problem may mostly occur on our weekend mornings and afternoons.

Nevertheless, you asked me if our police could monitor, ticket and/or tow cars that block their neighbor's garages in the alleyway behind Hampstead. I asked our Superintendent and the short answer is no. The alley is private property and the township does not get involved in private property issues. He added that a police officer could possibly act as a mediator between neighbors but he/she would have no enforcement authority.

I know you are disappointed that I can't support your petition for Hampstead relief and that the township has very limited standing in private property issues. On that last point, I usually don't get involved in private property problem. However, if your neighbor continues to park in front of your garage and if he/she does respond to your concerns, I will talk with your neighbor. On the former problem I respect the thoughtfulness of your petition and the time spent on obtaining you're neighbor's signatures. If you wish to discuss these matters further, I'll be happy to do so.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rick Churchill".

Rick Churchill

Commissioner 14<sup>th</sup> Ward