

**PORTSMOUTH
TRAFFIC & SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING
8:00 AM – Thursday, March 21, 2002
City Hall - Council Chambers**

I. CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Alex Hanson called the meeting to order at approximately 8:05 a.m.

II: ROLL CALL:

Members Present:

City Councilor Alex Hanson, Chairman	Ronald Cypher, Member
John Burke, Public Works Dept.	Ted Gray, Member
Deputy Police Chief Mike Magnant	Herb Bunnell, Member
Acting Fire Chief Chris LeClaire	Hank Greenberg, Member

Alex Hanson introduced Hank Greenberg and welcomed him as a new member of the Committee.

Portsmouth High School Student Government Day was being held at City Hall and Alex Hanson introduced the students who held municipal positions: Assistant Mayor, Sarah Sanger; Police Chief, Ariel Soucie; and Fire Chief Amy Young.

III. ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES:

IT WAS VOTED on a Motion by Ted Gray to accept the minutes of the Traffic & Safety Committee (TSC) meeting of January 17, 2002. Seconded by Ron Cypher. Motion passed.

IV. CORRESPONDENCE:

(A) **FY03 New Hampshire Highway Safety Agency Grant** – John Burke stated that we have two grant applications, one from Police Dept. and one from Public Works. We are requesting to purchase another variable message board for use for incident management, we presently have two and want three. They have been extremely successful used during construction projects but also during event days for parking issues, a \$16,000 item. The other is pedestrian countdown signal indicators, used as soon as the pedestrian indicator goes on starts a 17 second countdown so people know the walk don't walk signals to use at the Congress/Islington Streets and if successful, to use at other signals in the downtown area at \$5,000, which there is a 50% share grant. There is a tone that beeps as time counts down.

Deputy Police Chief Mike Magnant stated that the Police Dept. is looking for further funding for its selective traffic enforcement program which involves DWI patrols, DWI checkpoints, speed enforcement, traffic safety checkpoints and proposing a video camera that monitors intersections that are controlled by traffic lights. The proposal is due next week and need approval from the Traffic & Safety Committee in order to forward it to Concord.

MOTION made by Ted Gray to approve both requests from John Burke and Mike Magnant on behalf of the Police Dept. Seconded by Ron Cypher.

Alex Hanson asked what the total grant available would be and John Burke stated Public Works would be \$10,500, the total is \$21,000 and one-half of that would be \$10,500 and for the Police Dept. \$91,500 and half would be \$40,000, the other half is City. Motion passed.

- (B) **Ordinance requirements Relating to City-owned land** – Memo Referring to the alleyway behind the Athenaeum and did not have to go through the zoning change as it is City owned property and was posted. Place on file.

MOTION made by Herb Bunnell to place on file. Seconded by Deputy Police Chief Mike Magnant. Motion passed.

- (C) **Review of Left-Turn Restriction** – John Burke stated this was a request from City Councilor Brad Lown on Bow Street making a left turn onto Chapel Street, this has been out there for a long time and there is not a lot of site distance and he recommended that it be left there.

MOTION made by John Burke recommending that the left turn restriction be left as is. Seconded by Mike Magnant.

Alex Hanson asked that John Burke relay this to Councilor Lown. Ted Gray opposed.

V. **OLD BUSINESS:**

- (A) **Peverly Hill Road – Proposed Residential Subdivision** – Attorney Bernie Pelech spoke on behalf of the applicant explaining that this proposal started over a year ago as a 4-lot subdivision. They have received preliminary subdivision approval from the Planning Board and approval from TAC, and have been before this Committee before. Concern was that the site distance be looked at as it was considered inadequate by some members of the Committee. We do meet the site distance requirements as set forth in the ? regulations. The second problem that compounds this matter is that it is a City paper street that we'd access Peverly Hill Road through. It is also a City paper street that the City Council within the last six months refused and voted not to discontinue. The applicant had requested that a

portion of the street be discontinued as a paper street and the Council voted unanimously to keep it a City street. Even though it is a City street, it is basically a driveway with two residences. This is all we are planning to construct on this cul-de-sac paper street, two residences. We do not have permission to construct any more than two residences, there is considerable wetlands on the back of the property and can only build two residence and would stipulate that we will build only two residences on this property.

Roy Benjamin Traffic Engineer from the Maquire Group was also present to answer any site distance questions the Committee may have.

Ted Gray stated he still had site distance concerns even though its posted at 25 MPH with an 10 wheeler going at 40 MPH at the intersection.

John Burke stated he is inclined to approve the application. He spoke with DOT who stated they approve driveway permits regularly and would approve this application.

MOTION made by John Burke to approve this application as presented with the following two conditions: 1) A blind driveway sign be posted on northbound Peverly Hill Road at a location approved by the City Engineer, and 2) that any additional proposed development beyond or in addition to the two house subdivision or any proposed plan to connect the driveway to an existing City street would require that the Hill on Peverly Hill Road be lowered to achieve desirable intersection site distances set forth by Astro. Seconded by Herb Bunnell.

Deputy Police Chief Mike Magnant stated he wants the record to reflect that speed on Peverly Hill Road has been an on-going problem and that the average speed is 35 MPH and anticipates that when people move in they will complain at some point about the speed and volume of traffic on Peverly Hill Road and would like to have this on record that this is a problem. Motion passed.

(B) Elwyn Road – Review of Regulatory Signage – John Burke stated this was a referral back from the Police Department concerning school buses stops. John met with Laidlaw and stated that four additional signs will be placed on each side of the street at specific locations.

(C) Winchester Street - Proposed 4-way Stop Condition – John Burke reported this does not meet warrants on traffic volumes and Police Chief Mike Magnant reported there was one accident on Winchester St. in 1999. John Burke suggested putting more “slow children” signs. Alex Hanson stated that crosswalks slow people down and to add a warning “crosswalk” sign. John Burke stated that the neighborhood group could put out a mailing to the neighborhood as the violators are basically the neighbors.

MOTION made by John Burke to deny the 3-way stop, install a crosswalk at Marriette and Winchester Streets with appropriate signage. Seconded by Herb Bunnell.

- (D) **Clinton Street** – Proposed Multi-way Stop Location – John Burke reported this did not meet warrants based on traffic volume. Deputy Chief Mike Magnant reported there were two accidents at Clinton and Bartlett and one at Clinton and Start St. going back to January 1999.

MOTION made by Ted Gray to accept re port. Seconded by Ron Cypher.

- (E) **Proposed Portsmouth High School Expansion – Signal Warrants Analysis** – John Burke reported that this didn't meet warrant for a signal but want to have someone out there in the afternoon when school gets out. No action required on this item.

VI. NEW BUSINESS:

- (A) **Kearsarge/Market St. Extension - Proposed Kearsarge Hotel** – Attorney Charles Griffin spoke on behalf of the applicant, Raymond Ramsey. Dermott Kelly of EKJ Associates, Traffic Engineer and John Chagnon from Ambit Engineering, site engineer. Mr. Ramsey is seeking approval to construct a 100 room hotel with related site improvements on Kearsarge Way and here this morning to discuss the traffic implications of this project. Attorney Griffin began by giving the Committee the background. Initially this began with a lawsuit against the City seeking to have his property rezoned from single residence B to general business. In November 1998 Rockingham County Superior Court granted Mr. Ramsey's petition and ruled that his property was to be rezoned to general business for the sole purpose of permitting him to construct a 100 unit hotel on the site and no other use of property is permitted, although his own general business. The proposal under court decision also indicates there is to be no restaurant, no function room, this is literally to be a hotel with parking, an indoor pool and a breakfast bar for guests. After the 1998 court decision a series of meetings began between Mr. Ramsey, myself and various City officials for the purpose to see if both sides work together to locate this hotel on the property in such a way that would obviously meet Mr. Ramsey's needs but also balance his needs against the concerns of the neighbors and the City. Recognizing this, both parties agreed that they would sit down and try to work together as this project moves forward. An initial decision made was that it would be in everyone's best interest to locate this hotel as far away as possible from the adjoining residents of Kearsarge Way. In order for this to happen the first thing Mr. Ramsey needed to do was locate and build part of the hotel over a portion of what at that time was old Kearsarge Way and the City agreed to allow Mr. Ramsey to build a portion of his hotel over the old abandoned Kearsarge Way if he in turn would give the City a conservation easement on the rear portion of his property permanently preserving that area as a buffer to the surrounding neighbors and also ensuring that it would never be built and Mr. Ramsey agreed to do that and in the year 2000 City Council approved abandoning the old portion of Kearsarge Way in exchange for the conservation easement. Mr. Ramsey gave the City the conservation easement and the City in turn gave Mr. Ramsey a deed to this abandoned portion of Kearsarge Way. After this first step took place Mr. Ramsey and myself sat down with the Planning Dept. worked together on the plan as to where the hotel would be located and what was agreed upon once again was to locate it close to Market St. extension and as far away from the residents as possible and that is what you see on the plan before you this morning. Once again, in order to fully accomplish this objective it is

necessary to obtain a series of variances about 6 set back variances which was obtained from the BOA in July allowing construction to come closer to property lines than the Ordinance allowed. In addition last month Mr. Ramsey was granted a conditional use permit to have runoff discharge into this area as well and again this was a proposal worked out between Mr. Ramsey and the City. In addition we have met on two occasions with Atlantic Heights neighborhood Association to make them aware of what we were proposing and the steps to be taken to minimize the impact on the residences and discussed landscaping plans with them. And have come this morning to present the traffic figures and also to illicit your suggestions with the idea of the City and Mr. Ramsey continuing to work together on this project. The letter from TAC requests that the Committee look at the traffic and also the possibility of a Coast bus pullover. Initially the Proposal was that there be a Coast bus pullover in this area. There was an on-site about 3 weeks ago with John Burke and representative from Coast. They indicated that if there was to be a pullover that it be on the other side of Kearsarge Way and not in that area for two reasons. First of all, they indicated that at the traffic light they felt they would experience problems blocking traffic pulling in and out of the pullover, and the other concern raised was tanker trucks going to the tank farm off Kearsarge Way and pulling out into traffic would have to go around which would not be good and at the on-site a worker from the truck farm stopped by and indicated once again their preference that if there was a pullover that it not be in this area. The issue of locating it on the opposite side of Kearsarge Way is it is City Conservation land.

Alex Hanson suggested clearing this up by making a Motion that it not be recommended that the stop not be there.

MOTION made by John Burke that it is not recommended that the stop be in this area. Herb Bunnell seconded.

Attorney Griffin addressed the next issue of the Traffic Analysis. Attorney Griffin stated that they recognize they will be generating additional traffic from the hotel and traffic will flow different from Kearsarge Way onto Market St. and vice-versa, and that there are problems on Market St. at peak times during the day, that these problems have existed for sometime and do exist irrespective of this project. Nonetheless since we will be making some contribution by way of traffic it is fair to say we will be making some contribution to the problem. It is also recognized, however, under established law that a project cannot be denied because strictly because of heavy traffic on abutting streets. It is also recognized that there are recommendations as to how to solve these problems. The first recommendation that has been made is coordination of traffic signals along Market St. at the intersection of Kearsarge Way and I-95, southbound section of Market St. ext. and I-95 and the northbound intersection of Market St. ext and I-95. The second recommendation is to create a second left-hand turn lane on Market St. which will lead to the I-95 north ramp. A third issue surfaced during the site walk Tuesday was as tanker trucks attempt to make turn onto Kearsarge Way because of the width of the deep turn tend to cross the

yellow line to get to the other lane on Kearsarge Way and saw this problem at the site walk on Tuesday and the recommendation would be to cut back the radius so that the trucks have more area in which to negotiate that turn and do so without crossing over the yellow line. Attorney Griffin in conclusion they agree with the City that there certainly are problems in the area of the intersection of Market St. ext. and Kearsarge Way, that it is principally a cueing problem and agree with the City as to what the solutions of these problems are and are prepared to make some monetary contribution to the resolution of these problems and believe that their contribution should be proportionate with amount of traffic that this Proposal would generate as related to the existing traffic in the area and Mr. Ramsey's contribution should be that portion of litigation cost which bears a reasonable relationship to the total traffic in the area.

Attorney Griffin turned matters over to Dermott Kelly Traffic Engineer who will go through the traffic studies in more detail. Alex Hanson suggested using this like a work session where the members can ask questions during the presentation.

Alex interrupted at this point as the students were to leave the Council Chambers, thanked them for joining us this morning and apologized for the interruption of the meeting.

Mr. Kelly brought figures (7 and 8) with him from the traffic study Fig. 8 representing the 2001 morning peak hour traffic volumes and Fig. 7 representing 2001 evening peak hour traffic volumes. These represent the traffic counts that were done with site generated traffic. Morning peak hour would be 58 vehicle trips generated based on the ITB trip generation manual used for traffic studies. At the critical location at the left turn onto I-95 North in the peak morning hour was 117. The evening peak hour would have 37 entering, 25 existing for a total of 62 vehicles. Alex Hanson questioned having a 100-room hotel whiteout a restaurant facility and only 37 people are going out during this period. Ted Gray questioned having more in coming traffic in the peak morning hour than outgoing. Mr. Kelly stated that based on the ITB Manual there would be more entering than existing. Mr. Kelly stated that they are aware of the problems with the signals as they are not connected and coordinated and ought to be and as suggested in the traffic study they should be contributing to cost of these improvements.

John Burke asked how many left turners are leaving Kearsarge Way in the morning and afternoon peak. Mr. Kelly stated leaving Kearsarge Way in morning are 109 and evening is 75 including 17 additional and 17 additional in afternoon. Mr. Kelly explained programming the system of the green time and signalization.

Deputy Police Chief Mike Magnant asked how much lost time would you have with an 18-wheeler in front of you? Mr. Kelly stated probably double.

Ron Cypher stated that while at the on-site there were a couple of tractor trailers attempting to make left hand turns and cueing was quite a distance back and vehicles could not get into right hand lane because trucks were blocking. Mr. Kelly stated that his guess would be if trucks are straddling the yellow lane line, suggested when flattening radius look at this and give it proper width and perhaps widen other side for proper approach and proper departure widths. Cars seem to fit side by side, but the trucks are wider. Ted Gray asked how many trucks would he anticipate going into service the hotel during the day? Mr. Kelly stated without a restaurant, there would be no need for a truck to go there other than a guest truck, a rubbish truck or mail vehicles.

Stephanie Goodrich 214 Concord Way spoke

(B) 25 Granite Street - Proposed Wentworth School Addition -

MOTION made by
. Motion Passed.

(C) 3548 Lafayette Road – Proposed Restaurant and Bar @ Wren’s Nest Motel -

MOTION

(D) Ash/Orchard – proposed STOP sign -

MOTION

(E) Woodbury Ave/Dunkin Donuts – proposed NO LEFT TURN sign –

MOTION Motion passed.

VI. OTHER BUSINESS:

VIII. ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at approximately a.m.

Respectfully submitted: _____