

**PORTSMOUTH  
TRAFFIC & SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING  
8:00 AM – Thursday, May 16, 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	Ralph DiBernardo, 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
Steve Parkinson, Public Works Director	

Ron Cypher was excused from this meeting.

Also present were Lucy Tillman and David Holden of the Planning Department.

**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 April 18, 2002. Seconded by Ralph DiBernardo. Motion passed.

**IV. CORRESPONDENCE:**

(A) **Children at Play Signs – Guidance from the University of New Hampshire Technology Transfer Center** – John Burke referred to the article received from the UNH Technology Transfer Center Publication regarding the overuse of Children at Play signs. Informational item.

**V. OLD BUSINESS:**

(A) **Store 24 Curb Stops** – John Burke informed the Committee that the curb stops had been re-installed and the restriping had been done.

(B) **Lincoln Ave. – Truck Parking** – John Burke stated that the resident agreed to downsize the truck he parks overnight on Lincoln Ave. from a flat bed to a Ford F-450, which is a much smaller truck.

**VI. NEW BUSINESS:**

- (A) **Porter Street – Between Church and Pleasant Streets – Proposed Tow Zone** – John Burke stated that parking enforcement has had a difficult time keeping trucks from parking on this narrow section (14 to 16-foot wide) of Porter Street, which is a NO PARKING area under the Ordinance. When trucks park here, it effectively obstructs the street from through travel. John recommends updating the Ordinance from a “NO PARKING ZONE” to a “NO PARKING TOW ZONE”.

**MOTION** made by Ted Gray to make Porter Street between Church Street and Pleasant Street a NO PARKING TOW ZONE. Seconded by Deputy Police Chief Mike Magnant. Motion Passed.

- (B) **Porter Street – Proposed Residential Development – (Revised site plan attached)** – Chairman Alex Hanson stated that it was the Committee’s understanding that the applicant presented the Planning Board both Phase I and Phase II at their last meeting, which is not what the Traffic & Safety Committee approved. Alex stated that the Committee’s concern was having the streetscape tie in with what may or may not happen in Phase II. In other words, if both phases are presented, then improvements to the entire street must be sought on approval of the project.

Ralph DiBernardo stated that he needed to look at the impacts to the street based on the entire project – if that is what is proposed.

John Burke stated that the plans have been introduced, retracted and re-introduced following the Planning Board meeting. He believes that there is a significant amount of confusion as to what is being proposed at both the Planning Board and Traffic & Safety Committee. He stated that if Phase I and Phase II are presented on the same plan, then the applicant must show all of the street improvements to be constructed and get approval for those improvements. Eric Weinrieb, Engineer for the applicant, stated that they initially presented a 16-foot wide one-way roadway with no parking. They then presented an 18-foot wide roadway with parking in Phase I and eliminated in Phase II. The Traffic & Safety Committee requested that parking remain - which was presented to the Planning Board.

Dave Holden explained that what he thought happened at the Planning Board was that they were confused at what was being presented. Dave stated that part of the problem is that this is a very large project broken into two discreet phases – therefore, we need to consider what is happening to both sides of the right-of-way in Phase I so that if Phase II is delayed or not built we would have all the important structure components completed in Phase I. Further he felt that the Planning Board was concerned with the

proposed 18-foot roadway width given that the onstreet parking was to remain.

John Burke stated that the recommended range of acceptable street widths for one-way streets downtown with one lane of parking is 18-20 feet. Sheafe Street is at the minimum side of the range (18 feet) and Chapel Street between Daniel and State is at the maximum side (19 to 20 feet).

John stated that when you get over 20-feet in width you may encourage the potential for a head on collision for cars that think they can go both ways – based on street widths. Speeds are also directly related to the width of the streets. The 20-foot width (1) slows traffic (2) reduces illegal parking (3) allows for emergency access (per the Fire Chief), and (4) reduces the number of drivers headed the wrong way down a one way street – which occurs daily on streets like High Street (24+ feet) where people think the street is 2-way based on its width.

John stated that the Planning Board seemed to be concerned with the 18-foot width and he was fine with increasing this to the other end of the range 20-feet. Porter Street is currently 22 feet over this section. John stated that he believed a work session with the applicant was in order to move this project along.

Eric Weinrieb stated that the applicant is no longer going to the Planning Board with Phase II – only Phase I. He suggested passing the proposal for Phase I with a 20-foot street width. Deputy Police Chief Mike Magnant stated that there is enough confusion here that as a committee member he cannot at this point vote on this project.

Alex Hanson stated that he felt the work session would actually speed the process.

Don Coker, 90 Fleet Street recused himself as a member of the Planning Board and addressed the Committee as a citizen and abutter. He encouraged as part of the work session a couple of very important issues be addressed. He stated that he disagrees with David Holden's view of what the Planning Board discussed and was concerned about. He attended that meeting and spoke as a citizen. The abutters want to maintain the street at its existing width. The abutters feel there is no public benefit in giving up the sidewalk in Phase II. He urged that in the work session both sides of this project be considered simultaneously because the plans on file in the Planning Dept. have a note on them "Note #10" which states that "there will be work on both sides of the street in Phase I. The debate at the work session should also include how wide the street should be.

**MOTION** made by Steve Parkinson to hold a subcommittee work session with the applicant to include John Burke, Steve Parkinson and Vice Chair Ralph DiBernardo. Seconded by Herb Greenberg. Motion passed.

The Vice Chairman will chair the work session and report back.

- (C) **2859 Lafayette Road – Proposed Car Wash** – Attorney Bernie Pelech spoke on behalf of the applicant. He addressed concerns of the Onsite Committee that left-turns exiting the car wash would become a problem. The plans have been revised to show a no left-turn condition at the exit. Bernie stated that Steve Pernaw, Traffic Consultant and Wayne Morrill, Site Engineer at Jones & Beach were present to answer any questions.

Deputy Chief Mike Magnant discussed the on-site queuing and asked Steve Pernaw what would prevent cars from backing up onto Lafayette Road. Mr. Pernaw does not expect this will occur for the fundamental reason that three drive-through lanes are being constructed.

Alex Hanson stated he understood that the on-site manager will have cones in order to create two lanes if this is ever necessary. The owner confirmed they would have the cones.

Deputy Police Chief Mike Magnant asked if the on-site manager will be on site 7 days a week. Bernie Pelech answered that there will not be someone there 7 days per week, but there will be someone there during peak periods for stacking cones. Deputy Police Chief Magnant stated that he is not voting in favor of this project as he is concerned about vehicles backing out onto Lafayette Road.

**MOTION** made by Ralph DiBernardo to accept the plan as presented with a provision that the no left hand turn sign and a pork chop that prevents left turning traffic from exiting the site be approved by the City Engineer. Ted Gray seconded. Motion Passed. Deputy Chief Magnant opposed.

- (D) **Kearsarge Way/Market St. Traffic Signal – Citizen complaints over red light violations** – John Burke stated that a problem has been raised by residents of Atlantic Heights that a good percentage of vehicles travelling on Market St. Extension from the west are blowing through the red light at Kearsarge Way to slip onto I-95 South. He suggested posting a NO RIGHT ON RED sign on the signal mast arm at Market St. Ext./Kearsarge Way and to re-evaluate the conditions in the future.

Steve Parkinson stated that this problem came up in the past and that is why the City hung a third light on the mast arm. But the problem seems to be continuing.

- (E) **Woodbury Avenue Sidewalk Improvement – Public Works referral** – John Burke referred to the on-site review of the proposal to line up the sidewalks on Woodbury Ave. between the Exit 6 offramp from I95 and the U.S. 1 Bypass onramp. Because the sidewalks do not line up, pedestrians walk in the street. Further, the receded sidewalk creates a merge conflict between through bikes on Woodbury and cars turning right from Woodbury onto the U.S. 1 Bypass onramp. The plan is before NHDOT Bureau of Turnpikes for consideration.

**MOTION** made by Steve Parkinson to approve lining up the sidewalks, tightening up the intersection, and striping the shoulders. Seconded by Ted Gray. Motion passed.

- (F) **Truck Size & Weight on NH Interstate Highways – City Council referral** – Steve Howard of the New Hampshire Coalition for Safe Roads was present and referred to his issue of primary concern - large trucks. Steve is part of an umbrella organization called “Coalition Against Bigger Trucks.” They are a safety organization concerned about legislation in Congress, which would dramatically increase truck size weights on interstate highways in the country. Mr. Howard passed out a brochure to the Committee of what may be coming down the line in legislation - that is, allowing triple tandem trailer trucks that can be 110-foot long and weigh 135,000 pounds. Based on national studies, this size truck is 11% more likely to have fatal accidents, and the last trailer can swing on a windless day from 4-6 ft in either direction causing rollovers, trailer separations and fatal accidents.

The second issue they are working on is an effort by adversaries to increase the allowable weight of unrestricted trucks from 80,000 pounds to 100,000 pounds. He stated that the triple tandem trucks would cost the Federal government \$319 billion to refit bridges to handle the increased weights. 12% of our bridges are currently considered delinquent by the Federal government and therefore they would need \$470 billion just to maintain this system. The member list for the organization includes law enforcement, troopers Associations, Sheriffs Associations, the Portsmouth Chief of Police and State Representative Betty Shultis.

Alex Hanson asked Mr. Howard where the resolution goes if it is adopted. Mr. Howard responded that the resolution would be sent to Senator Smith.

**MOTION** by Ralph DiBernardo to accept this information and put it on the agenda for next month so that the Committee members have had an opportunity to review the material. Seconded by Ted Gray. Motion passed.

**VII. OTHER BUSINESS:**

- (A) Councilor Harold Whitehouse introduced David Schirmer of 241 South Street. Mr. Schirmer spoke concerning plans for reconstructing South Street. He and a number of neighbors are concerned with the proposed construction of bump outs to narrow the street. They feel that stop signs should be posted instead at South/Junkins and South/Newcastle. Alex Hanson stated that this matter is on the City Council agenda and that Steve Parkinson and Tom Richter from the Public Works Department will be at Monday night's meeting. With regard to the stop signs, they must meet certain warrants to be installed. The Traffic Engineer and Police Dept. will conduct the analysis to determine if the warrants are met. Chairman Hanson invited Mr. Shirmer to attend the public comment session Monday night.

**VIII. ADJOURNMENT:**

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:05 a.m.

Respectfully submitted: \_\_\_\_\_