

**PORTSMOUTH
TRAFFIC & SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING
8:00 a.m. – Thursday, November 9, 2006
City Hall - Council Chambers**

I. CALL TO ORDER:

Ken Smith, Chair called the meeting to order at approximately 8:05.m.

II. ROLL CALL: Members Present:

Councilor Ken Smith, Chairman	Ted Gray, Member
Steve Parkinson, P.E. Public Works Director	Jonathan Bailey, Member
Police Capt. David Ferland	John Connors, Member
Deputy Fire Chief Steve Griswold	Eric Spear, Member
Deborah Finnigan, P.E., Traffic Engineer	Christina Westfall, Member

The Chair called a moment of silence in memory of Herb Bunnell. Herb served on this Committee for 25 years. Out of respect for Herb, the Chair will not fill this position until after the first of the year.

III. ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES:

IT WAS VOTED on a Motion made by Ted Gray to accept the minutes of the October 12th meeting. Seconded by John Connors. Motion passed.

IV. NEW BUSINESS:

- (A) **Pleasant/Court Streets Intersection** – Crosswalk – Request for better sight distance (map attached) – Steve Parkinson referred to the on-site that there are issues coming out of Court St. from Marcy St. end as well as coming out from the Fire Station side of Court St. The parking on the left hand side requires you to come out quite a distance. Police Capt. Ferland stated there have been no accidents in 2006 at this intersection. It was recommended to place this on file.

MOTION made by Police Capt. Ferland to place on file. Seconded by Steve Parkinson. Motion passed.

Ted Gray asked if there was any consideration for a “no left turn” coming out from the fire station side?

The Chair asked the Police Department to keep an eye on this. Capt. Ferland stated they average approx. 2 accidents per year, none in 2006, he will go back a couple of years and research the accidents and see if the contributing factor was the left hand turn.

- (B) **Springbrook Condominiums** – Request for Road Signs – Resident letter dated October 17, 2006 attached) – Debbie Finnigan referred to the letter requesting additional signage at Rte.1/Shaw’s Plaza. The signal is a state signal and is trying to contact the state to determine how this can be taken care of. Also will need permission to put up a hospital sign east of Borthwick Ave. traveling in the westbound direction. The 20 MPH sign on Rte.1 near the high school probably

is per the Ordinance. The 20 MPH is not near the high school driveway, it is passed the church on the right at Greenleaf.

MOTION made by Steve Parkinson to table for a report back. Seconded by Ted Gray. Motion passed.

Eric Spear stated there is a similar sign south on Greenleaf and Lafayette and the positioning is confusing.

- (C) **Willard Ave. at Rte.1** – Crosswalk - Request for Signage – (map attached) – Debbie Finnigan referred to the photographs of the crosswalks, the resident would like it repainted and recommended signage as it is where children cross which is the concern. Recommend a “Crosswalk Ahead” sign. The Chair referred to the onsite discussion for painting on street “crosswalk ahead”.

MOTION made by Steve Parkinson to place a “Crosswalk Ahead” sign and “crosswalk ahead” painting on the street”. Seconded by John Connors. Motion passed.

- (D) **Commerce Way** – Proposed Office (Layout Plan attached) – Dennis Moulton with Ames MSC Architects and Engineers representing Michael Kane and the project of constructing a new 3 story office building, approx. 7000 sq.ft. at corner of Commerce Way and Portsmouth Boulevard. Mr. Moulton explained there are two entrances into the site, one off Commerce Way, the second off Portsmouth Boulevard. The area of interest to this Committee is the 2nd entrance along Portsmouth Boulevard. The reason the two entrances are not aligned is the desire to provide a continuous pathway behind the building for loading and for trash pickup and removal. Requesting this Committee allow this, we will have stop signs, stop lines at the entrance. They have provided 364 spaces for parking, which is about 5 for every 1,000 sq. ft. of office space.

John Connors was concerned with future development farther down and traffic coming in will be using that entrance.

Michael Kane, 210 Commerce Way, explained it is not feasible to be connected, it would be separate.

MOTION made by Ted Gray to accept the proposed plans as presented. Seconded by Eric Spear. Motion passed.

- (E) **South St./Lafayette Rd. Intersection** – Delayed Green Light – Police Department referral – (memo dated 10/24/06 attached) – Capt. Ferland explained that if the first car in lane wanting to turn left onto Lafayette Road from South St. that if the driver doesn’t pull out into the intersection a bit, no one behind him will be able to go around him causing a long line up behind the car that is waiting to turn left. The Police Department is suggesting a delayed green so that traffic on South St. turning left onto Lafayette Road will have the opportunity to turn left.

MOTION made by Police Capt. Ferland to refer this to Public Works Department to look at some sort of delayed green possibility on South Street so that the first couple of cars wanting to turn left will have that ability before cars coming east on South St. have the ability to cross the intersection and report back. Seconded by Ted Gray. Motion passed.

Debbie Finnigan stated that when you want a delayed green for safety reasons you need to put up a left arrow in order for people going to make that left they know they can do it safely. It has been proposed to be put into the CIP.

Steve Parkinson suggested referring this to Public Works for a report back on what would be involved in 1. either putting in a delayed green type system, or 2. whether or not there is an ability to split the phase so that you have an exclusive westbound signal traffic that would then stop for the eastbound traffic. He would prefer to split the phases as it is a safer operation, they will evaluation the equipment that is there and see what it takes to accomplish what we are trying to do.

- (F) **Market St./Kearsarge/Way Intersection** – Failure to Stop at Traffic Signal (letter dated October 29, 2006 attached) – Police Capt. Ferland reported that the Police are aware of this issue have been out there many times with traffic enforcement, message board to warn people there is a traffic signal ahead. It is very much on our radar screen. There have been accidents at this intersection, it is a high volume traffic intersection.

Steve Parkinson stated Public Works is also very aware of this intersection. Now looking at replacing all the heads in there, the existing LED's are old and tend to get dimmer as they get older. The new lamps will be much bright and may help the situation.

Paul Reardon, 207 Raleigh Way, asked if cameras as a pilot program are out of the question to help solve this problem or is it not cost effective for the City. He has had 13 near miss incidents in the last year or so.

Police Capt. Ferland stated that cameras have no enforcement in the District Court Level. The law says that the Police Officer has to witness the event and make direct contact with the violator as it is the violator that gets the summons on the issue of going through a traffic light. Capt. Ferland will have more attention given there as 13 incidents there are not acceptable.

MOTION made by Steve Parkinson to refer this to the Police Department for enforcement and to the Public Works Department to look at the LED lamps and report back. Seconded by John Connors. Motion passed.

- (G) **Middle St. at Lincoln Ave. and Cabot Street** – Request for Flashing Yellow Light – (City Manager's Memo dated October 19th and resident letter dated August 23, 2006 attached) – Debbie Finnigan referred to the letter by an eight year old boy requesting flashing yellow lights in both directions between Lincoln and Cabot on Middle St. it is not safe to walk to school or my friends house.

Debbie Finnigan reported that the committee looked at this and determined that a crosswalk at the location would be unsafe, there are other crosswalks nearby with better sight distance. She does not recommend flashing yellow lights.

The Chair stated it was also suggested that painting on the street that "crosswalk ahead" at the corner where Willard comes to the intersection.

Steve Parkinson asked if it would be appropriate to request that on all existing crosswalks along Middle St. that appropriate pedestrian signage be installed at each location?

MOTION made by Steve Parkinson to install appropriate pedestrian signage at all existing crosswalks along Middle St. Seconded by John Connors. Motion passed.

- (H) **Chatham Street Parking - Immaculate Conception Church** – Parking Committee Referral – Request for Sunday Parking on Southerly Side of Street (Memo dated October 25, 2006 attached) – Ken Smith stated three churches have combined into one and there are more people than normal and when leaving church are finding tickets on their cars.

John Connors stated he is there on traffic detail for both masses. There is no parking between signs because there are a couple of garages and when people park there, there is not enough room for people to get in and out of their garages. On Summer by State, people pull up close and people cannot get out of their driveways. People being ticketed are parked in areas along the church blocking so people cannot get in or out of their driveways. They call the Police who come down and ticket.

MOTION made by John Connors to place on file. Seconded by Capt. Ferland. Motion passed.

Steve Parkinson stated part of the issue on Chatham St. is there is a conflict in the Parking Ordinance Chatham St. southerly side, Summer St. to Winter St. falls within the limited parking of 1 hour and also shows in the No Parking Section of the Ordinance prohibiting parking on Chatham St. both sides except for the first 66 ft. on southerly side adjacent to the church from Summer to Winter Streets.

This issue needs to be cleared up and it has been recommended by the Parking Manager to allow parking on the southerly side to clean the Ordinance, but if we don't do this then we need to recommend back to the Parking Committee to clean up the Ordinance.

MOTION made by Steve Parkinson to send this to the Parking Committee to keep Chatham Street within the No Parking section of the Ordinance and remove it from the limited One Hour parking. Seconded by Christina Westfall. Motion passed.

V. OLD BUSINESS:

- (A) **Islington Street** – Request for 25 MPH – Report back – Capt. Ferland reported they surveyed approx. 20,000 cars on the lower section of Islington St. on a Sunday and a Monday near Rock St. The average speed was 21.85 MPH, the top speed was a single event of 43 MPH, the ten mile pace which is the extreme high and extreme low the more accepted speed is between 19 MPH & 28 MPH, it is posted at 30 MPH in that area. In looking at the accidents, they did not find excessive speed as the issue as much as driver inattention and pedestrian error. There seems to be a lot of pedestrian error in that area, usually intoxicated pedestrians crossing.

MOTION made by Steve Parkinson that based on the survey he does not feel it is justified to lower the speed limit to 25 MPH. Seconded by Capt. Ferland. Motion passed.

- (B) **Aldrich Road** – Traffic/Speed Issues – Report back – Capt. Ferland reported that they did stealth stat and visuals observations between Boss and Middle, a 20 MPH area. The stealth Stat monitored 3,716 cars showing an 85 percentile of 29 MPH, the average speed was 22 MPH giving a speed between 20-29 MPH in a posted 20 MPH area. The top speed recorded was 47 MPH, low speed consistent 10 MPH. The visuals on October 16th and October 20th monitored about 75 cars, the average speed was 26 MPH. We have one recorded accident in the past 5 years where a car backed into a truck. The time was recorded of the vehicle doing 47 MPH and are actively trying to get that driver to slow down.

Julie Poteet, 286 Aldrich Rd. referred to a Petition signed by all the neighbors, who are appreciative of the increase in patrol, but also asked to get rid of trucks, fix curbs on Middle/Aldrich St., and come up with a permanent solution to slow down speed, replace signage.

Amy Lahey, 260 Aldrich Rd. referred to the school buses, DHL, Fedex Trucks all fly. The trucks are a major concern. The 2:30 bus (empty) from Middle School flies. Asked if there was a better time to run the Stealth Stats? She asked about installing curbing to narrow their wide street.

Capt. Ferland informed them the Stealth Stat runs 24 hours from 5:00 a.m. to 5:00 the next morning, we try to run it for a two day period. This was augmented with visual observation from the Police Officer from 9:30 a.m. and two evenings, rush hour and 7:00 p.m. The Stealth Stat does not take into account cars pulling out of their driveways, it is computer generated that rule cars backing out of driveways of parking lots and starting into traffic and those slowing down to pull into a driveway, does not include these in the survey. The 10 mile median is 20-29 MPH, the number we work off, because it discounts the low low speeds and discounts that spike car at 47 MPH.

Susan Neilson lives at Middle St. end of Aldrich – Concerned with are we going to get curbs? Curbing will slow people down. She thanked the Committee and Police for their efforts.

Carl Diemer 337 Aldrich Rd. – Stated speed and traffic has been a long time issue. The configuration of the road allows a cut through from Islington to Middle. Police enforcement has worked on a temporary basis, not long term. Physical changes are needed to eliminate the problem. Requests stop signs place at Sewall and Aldrich as well as Boss and Aldrich together with updated signage. The Petition was submitted to the Committee.

The Chair referred to the signage. Steve Parkinson will have Public Works go out there to see there are appropriate stop signs. Stop signs cannot be used to control speed, it is not acceptable by standards we are governed by. If used to control speed will not be enforceable and the City will be liable. The intersection of Middle and Aldrich there is a possibility of redesigning that intersection to choke it down. It will be included as a project in the CIP, but doesn't happen overnight because it takes funding to get it in place.

The Chair stated the project will go into the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) and that goes to City Council for funding. The Plan is done as a 5-year plan, can take

time to get through. Curbing will not be an overnight thing but eventually will get done.

We have truck routes keeping trucks on major roads off the side streets. Steve Parkinson stated Aldrich is not a designated truck route. The local deliveries will always continue. Steve Parkinson suggested looking at the existing truck routes in the City, make sure that Aldrich is not designated as a truck route, see if there are ways trucks can get around this particular area without using Aldrich Road and recommend to Council eliminating through trucking on this street.

MOTION made by Steve Parkinson to look at the existing truck routes in the City, make sure Aldrich is not designed a truck route and see if there are ways trucks can get around this particular area without using Aldrich Road and to recommend to City Council that trucks are eliminated from Aldrich Road and to look at the CIP curbing project. Seconded by Capt. Ferland. Motion passed.

Capt. Ferland will give this more attention.

Carl Diemer asked the enforceability has to have certain requirements for stop signs? Steve Parkinson responded there are certain requirements we have to follow to install a stop sign. One specific rules and regulations is you cannot use stop signs to control speed. Stop signs are installed on a main arterial with intersecting street that have equal volumes, so that they can regulate the flow of traffic onto the street. Sewall does not have the same volume of traffic as Aldrich, nor does Boss. Any consideration for bump outs that would narrow the street to reduce speed would be appreciated.

Debbie Finnigan referred to another issue with putting in stop signs where they are not warranted is that people tend to say that stop sign wasn't needed so they hit the gas between that stop sign and the next one, now instead of having a speed of 29 MPH you are now getting 40 MPH between signs which is worse because they are starting really quickly and ending quickly.

- (C) **Peirce Island Boat Ramp** - Parking of Boat Trailers – Report back – Ted Gray reported they are proposing diagonal parking in the middle of the parking lot, lanes would be south to north. Another concern might be allowing 18 wheelers to be able to drive into the closer ramp to the bridge to back across the roadway and get into the fishing pier. It isn't perfect and asked if anyone had any other suggestions.

Steve Parkinson asked if he had worked with the Recreation Dept. as they are the ones that operate the boat launch and responsible for the operation. The Chair suggested to continue this for a report back and see if there are any comments from the Recreation Dept. Do not need a motion on this.

- (D) **Tanner at Hill Streets** – No Parking at Tanner St. at Hill Street – Report back (maps attached) – Debbie Finnigan referred to the maps and technically a “No Parking Here to Corner” sign on Tanner St. at Hill St. if the committee determines this is a good location for it. Steve Parkinson would like to take another look at this.

- (E) **Woodbury Avenue** – Speed – Truck Traffic – Report back - Capt. Ferland reported they have done a lot of work around the area. Woodbury Ave. at Farm Lane is the area looking, the Stealth Stat report for a Sat. and Sun, 25 MPH is the

average speed, the mean is between 28 -37 MPH, high speed was 67 MPH, second highest speed was 57 MPH, a concern to them. The second concern on Woodbury Ave. was the truck traffic. We have an outlined report where an officer spent most of October 16th following these trucks, getting their names, etc. All trucks he found that day were doing local deliveries. There are two recommendations, a sign near Market St. about local delivery and the shrubs at the sign by the Anchorage Inn need to be trimmed and will continue to monitor the area.

MOTION made by Capt. Ferland to post a sign near Market St. about local delivery and the sign by the Anchorage Inn, the shrubs need trimming from the sign to make it more visible. The area will continue to be monitored. Seconded by Ted Gray. Motion passed.

III. INFORMATIONAL:

- (A) **Islington Creek Neighborhood Transportation and Parking Concerns –**
(Notice of Meeting attached)

VII. ADJOURNMENT: Adjourned at approx. 9:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted

Elaine E. Boucas, Secretary