

**PORTSMOUTH  
TRAFFIC & SAFETY COMMITTEE  
SPECIAL MEETING  
8:00 a.m. – Tuesday, November 21, 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
Deputy Police Chief DiSesa	John Connors, Member
Asst. Fire Chief Achilles	Eric Spear, Member
Deborah Finnigan, P.E., Traffic Engineer	Christina Westfall, Member

**III. NEW BUSINESS:**

- (A) **Presentation by NH DOT** – Connector Road from Route 1 By-Pass to Market St. Extension – Alex Vogt, Project Manager Public Transportation , NHDOT and Adam Chestnut, Bureau of Construction, NHDOT and is supervising part of the construction.

Mr. Vogt explained that because the Sara Long Bridge is not operating and not knowing how long it will be inoperable, we were asked to pursue and look at making a connector road from the By-pass to Market Street. This roadway came out of the Rte.1 By-pass study. We thought it would be a good idea to make this temporary connection now and salvage as much for future use. We have spoken with the Albacore and have a right of entry and are agreeable for us to go across their property on a temporary basis. We will be appraising the value of that and have some compensation. We also have an emergency wetland permit for the wetlands in the area that we are impacting. We are here today to talk to the City and make sure we don't cause any problems created by this. Feels this will be a benefit for getting traffic back on the By-pass and at the same time not over burdening Market Street. Mr. Vogt presented a plan of the Rte. 1 concept which is a short connection of 500 ft to Market St. from the Rte.1 By-pass. We are proposing to put a signal at Market St. temporarily connected to span wires and when the bridge is repaired will close this off. It is only a temporary connection, to do it right would need a signal at both ends, permanent signals. We would want to leave it in place so that next spring at the time of the permanent fix of the bridge we can open this again to traffic and anticipate another month shut down during the permanent fix.

Mr.Vogt asked for questions from the Committee.

Steve Parkinson asked how they proposed to control the light at Market St.? Mr. Vogt responded that there would need to be a fixed time on that signal and will speak with Traffic Bureau to see if loops can be put on the connector.

Asst. Fire Chief Achilles asked about the idea of having it open and once the bridge is operating closing it, asked if they had the ability to have it gated or some means for emergency vehicles to utilize that connector or will it be automatically closed?

Mr. Vogt anticipates it will be closed with jersey barriers which can easily be moved.

Chief Achilles referred to the southbound lane, when there's emergency, people try to turn around. Asked is they could investigate some means, not just Jersey barriers, it may not be an issue when opened permanently?

Police Chief DiSesa referred to the light at Market St. and asked if it would be set up so that anyone using the connector will trigger the light, other than that will remain green for the east and west bound traffic on Market St.?

Mr. Vogt responded it may be a timing system and will see if we can get some loops to trigger and will have to make adjustment so there are no backups. When the Rte.1 study was done it seemed that this location would function pretty adequately.

Deputy Chief DiSesa's concern is that Market St. is an arterial way for the City, and is heavily trafficked and anything that would unnecessarily impede the flow is a Police concern.

Ted Gray asked what the time line for opening. Mr. Vogt responded hope to have this opened by December 1<sup>st</sup>.

Jonathan Bailey asked does it have the capacity for the projected amount of traffic?

Mr. Vogt responded that in the plans and bridge design the capacity was evaluated. They are removing the island on the bridge and relocating sign for Albacore Park to meet capacity and safety requirements.

Steve Parkinson asked when the temporary connector is closed down once the bridge is in operation, will the median crossing be left in place on Market St.?

Mr. Vogt felt they would close it but is up to you.

Steve Parkinson stated there will be paved a pocket lane, temporary signals will be there and hopefully they will be controlled by the connector and wondered whether it would be beneficial to leave as is and not block it off to give better access to the Albacore.

Christina Westfall asked on Rte.1, will there be a median there, will there be a time when there is no left turn so that people know that is closed?

Mr. Vogt responded there will be a "no left turn" sign so people cannot get to the bridge. There are options being explored for this and will do everything to clarify that situation that it is a right turn only onto the By-pass off the crossover and left turn only onto the connector road from the By-pass. The bridge will have concrete barrier in front of it to show people it is closed.

Ken Smith's concern is the possibility of truck still doing a u-turn on the By-pass and not going down this new connector at all and how would this be handled?

Mr. Vogt responded it is hard to prevent that without blocking up the flow, but will put "No U-Turn" signage.

Ken Smith asked rather than try to stop it is there a way it can be designed into it to allow it to happen safely?

Mr. Chestnut responded they discussed options for keeping the cul-de-sac and allowing that turn, but the traffic flow from a safety perspective didn't work, utilizing the crossover and the cul-de-sac. The width is there, the road widens out significantly at the end but will be contingent on there not being other cars coming up the crossover and want to make that turn.

They are trying to avoid a lot of changes to stripping and channelization so that if this is opened and the bridge gets fixed in a month, we don't have to go back out there in the middle of winter and grind out lines and paint lines. They are open to options but are

trying to keep the By-pass as true to what it is as possible so that when the crossover is shut down it goes right back to its current configuration.

Steve Parkinson asked as you head north on the By-pass where you take a left into this temporary connector, do we have median barrier all the way to that point?

Mr. Vogt responded yes.

Steve Parkinson asked to eliminate that u-turn prospect would it be advisable to go to the end of that barrier across the southbound lanes with jersey barrier then you'd be forcing people coming up the connector that they can only take a right turn and the traffic heading northbound can only take a left turn and can't do a u-turn there. The u-turn currently is further back.

Mr. Vogt responded they have been exploring options to show them how to go north.

Steve Parkinson asked if they will be signing 95 getting off exit 7 coming southbound on 95 to access the By-pass?

Mr. Vogt responded a sign will be put somewhere before that exit. On the high level there are state line sign brackets and will utilize those for the By-pass signage, a package is being put together now.

John Connors referred to the jersey barriers and in an emergency how long would it take to open the road to be operational when it is closed after repair is completed for temporary and permanent?

Mr. Vogt responded it would not take long at all. The barriers can be moved with a back hoe. By the state doing this, would take time and in an emergency the City could do it.

John Connors would like to see the City have some control instead of relying on the state to open and close. Asked if some kind of a gate system could be used where the City could open it up in an emergency quickly instead of waiting for loaders to come in and move barriers around, turn on lights, etc.

Mr. Vogt stated that it will be plowed while it is being used, but when it is shut down it will not be plowed.

Ken Smith stated that once this road goes into place police and fire would like to access it when it is closed after its temporary use instead of sealing it with jersey barriers. A metal gate or even a regular chain link fence gate where they can unlock it with a key and be able to have access to get from the By-pass order to Market St. ext. and vice versa. Is this something that we can work out in the closing time?

Mr. Vogt responded this could be worked out when revisiting this next spring.

John Connors suggested the City have the option to use that to get people off Market over to Maplewood or to come into town a different way to make traffic flow more easily.

Mr. Vogt responded he agreed and to do this properly to have signals at both ends permanent.

John Connors would like to see the City be able to have some control with the state, so that City people could have control and not rely on the state.

Mr. Vogt stated currently there is a right of entry at the Albacore for the next 9 months which probably can be extended.

The Chair thanked Messrs. Vogt and Chestnut.

**MOTION** made by Steve Parkinson to approve the State's request to construct the temporary connector between Market Street and the US Rte.1 By-pass. Seconded by John Connors. Motion passed.

The Chair reiterated that at the end of repair of bridge, it will be shut down and they will ask permission again to open it up in the spring. If this is to become permanent it will come back to this Committee.

Steve Parkinson responded this is a temporary situation, a permanent solution would be more design and construction.

Ted Gray asked Steve if he wanted to stipulate that the median break between the north and southbound lanes of Market St. extension be kept open after it has been fixed?

Steve Parkinson responded there are a number of issues of how we are going to permanently close it after the repairs are completed on the Bridge.

Ken Smith suggested coming back with this after Debbie Finnigan has had a chance to do a study.

Steve Parkinson asked if there was a possibility of putting counters there to see what kind of usage there is? It would be interesting to see how much traffic uses it primarily coming down Market St. onto it. It will be interesting to see how many people utilize it coming from I-95 (exit 7) to the By-pass for future reference.

Mr. Vogt will put in a request and maybe have someone come out and count during the peak hours.

IV. **ADJOURNMENT:** Adjourned at approx. 8:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted

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Elaine E. Boucas, Secretary