

**PORTSMOUTH
TRAFFIC & SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING
8:00 a.m. – Thursday, May 10, 2007
City Hall – Eileen Dondero Foley Council Chambers**

I. CALL TO ORDER:

Steve Parkinson, Vice Chairman called the meeting to order at approximately 8:10 a.m.

II. ROLL CALL: Members Present:

Councilor Ken Smith, Chairman	Ted Gray, Member
Steve Parkinson, P.E. Public Works Director	John Connors, Member
Deputy Police Chief Len DiSesa	John Howe, Member
Fire Chief Chris LeClaire	Christine Westfall
Deborah Finnigan, P.E., Traffic Engineer	Eric Spear

III. ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES:

IT WAS VOTED on a Motion made by John Connors to accept the minutes of the April 26, 2007 meeting. Seconded by Ted Gray. Motion passed.

III. NEW BUSINESS:

(A) Islington Creek Neighborhood – Traffic, Signage, Overall Safety Concerns

(letters dated March 13 and 14, 2007 concerns list from November 2006 meeting) – Eric Spear referred to the on-site walk. Did not take a look at all the crosswalks and the possibility of adding crosswalks. In some cases as Rockingham St. they thought that there were adjacent crosswalks or crosswalks at intersections one block away and don't have a crosswalk at every intersection and they decided that probably wasn't a good idea. Also didn't propose to move crosswalk on Cornwall to line up with the park entrance as it would cause too many problems on the north side of Islington St.

The suggested locations for crosswalk on Brewster St. there was a problem with cutting into parking on Langdon St. problem with gas station being there. Thought it would be appropriate for a crosswalk on Winter St. crossing State St. to get to the park, the park entrance is there and a school behind the park. A site walk took place a few months ago on Bridge and Hanover St. and decided visibility was sufficient for that crosswalk and did not need a 4-way stop sign at that intersection.

Uncertain whether they came to a conclusion on having 3-way signs on every stop sign. Definitely saw that a lot of signs had been improved on McDonough St. especially.

In terms of speed on McDonough, people do cut through there to get to Islington. Do not like the idea of using stop signs or speed bumps to slow people down.

There are some other tools that we could use, stripping the street, tradeoff may lose parking.

Steve Parkinson would like to have the public comment on their concerns and needs. Debbie Finnigan stated that we have discussed these signage issues last summer, put in a work order, provided the Committee members with a large map, a lot is currently being done, there are some locations that need, based on this map, need to be completed. Pearl St. in particular, there was an Ordinance change, Rock St. signage "no parking this side of street", the park signs are up, if we need more, we will look at putting more up. Do not Enter signs, Ordinance passed, No parking sign

in front of Getty's needs to go up. Cabot St. at Islington "No parking here to corner" has not gone up, it is been my understanding the rest has been put up. Len DiSesa referred to a safety issue and have worked with Public Works Department to install six "Crime Watch" signs went up last week. Also ran the last 5 years of accidents for the entire area of Islington Creek found 13 accidents mostly unremarkable accidents, only 3 at the intersections, nothing that would indicate that this is a traffic accident haven.

Public Comments:

Beth Shepard Rabadam 7 McDonough Street, thanked the Committee for their interest and have seen signs going up. Concerns relate to pedestrian safety in the neighborhood of children. Her issue is the Hanover/Bridge St. intersection. It is difficult exiting the neighborhood onto Hanover St. Low visibility and cars travel at a high rate of speed. Residents report frequent accidents. Feels it is a hot spot they would like more discuss with the Committee. People walk through their neighborhood because they don't want to walk on Islington St.

Gino Bona 68 McDonough St. at the corner of McDonough and Cornwall. Regarding stop signs if we could have just one stop sign be put up at Langdon St. There are presently two stop signs, the last one at Cabot. St. Sees cars going 40 MPH on his street, there is parking on both sides of the street, cannot get two cars crossing at once. Not so much concerned with vehicle accidents occurring as they are with speeding, there are a lot of children in the neighborhood. Feels crosswalks and a stop sign would make a safer neighborhood

Deputy Chief DiSesa referred to Mr. Bona's statement of cars speeding on McDonough heading towards the downtown area. Mr. Bono responded "yes".

Ms. Whitney 427 Hanover St. referred to expansion of neighborhood with a lot of children that visit the Rock St. Park to play and as summer is approaching wants to make sure it is safe for the children.

Carolyn Loder 48 Pearl Street referred to residential parking and problematic as people park on the street all day for free and is here today to plea for residential parking on Pearl St.

Steve Parkinson reported that this Committee passed on the recommendation to City Council which approved the Ordinance changes for certain signage and will check to see if they have been put up.

Ken Smith stated that residential parking is an issue that will be taken up with the Parking Committee.

Deputy Chief DiSesa stated that residential parking is any resident of the City not just the neighborhood.

Eric Spear asked if there are any speed statistics for McDonough St., and if not, could we get them?

Deputy Chief DiSesa will take care of this.

Debbie Finnigan asked Deputy Chief DiSesa if he had speed data on Bridge St.? Deputy Chief DiSesa will check on this.

Jonathan Bailey stated it has been the experience of this Committee that the speeding in neighborhoods is done by the residents of that neighborhood. Deputy Chief DiSesa responded “that is correct”.

Eric Spear stated that the Bridge/Hanover Sts have been looked at in the past and decided it was fine the way it was. At that time we looked at restricting parking on Bridge St. closer to Hanover for more pedestrian visibility. As parking is sensitive issue in the City with limited spaces, this was not done. Since this issue continues to come up suggested relooking at it.

Jonathan Bailey stated if we can go back and revisit that decision, the reason we left the parking in place there was intention of some traffic calming trying to narrow the pavement, reduce the overall area of pavement, more pavement, more speed which was the reason the Committee left it the way it was.

Eric Spear stated the other issue of speed on McDonough St. is that we do have tools one of which is striping with white lines for parking, yellow lines tends for perception of narrowing road. Down side is losing parking spaces. Would like to see more guidance from the community if that is what they want. Another idea is that McDonough St. is being used in some cases to bypass Islington St., block of a portion of McDonough St. which would require changing some one-way streets.

Ted Gray stated stop signs cannot be used to control traffic and speed.

Steve Parkinson as a possible motion suggested asking Debbie Finnigan Traffic Engineer to look at the warrants for stop signs or four-way stop signs at intersection at McDonough and Langdon as well as relooking at the issues and warrants at Bridge and Hanover Sts. Obtain speed data from Police Department. There is on-going signage being installed throughout this neighborhood based on studies and input and surveys. So moved by Ken Smith. Seconded by Jonathan Bailey. Motion passed.

Eric Spear would like to add one crosswalk on Winter St. crossing State St.

Beth Shepard Rabadam asked consideration of a sidewalk on the North Mill Pond side of McDonough as a way to narrow the street.

Ken Smith asked Fire Chief LeClaire with the narrower road would fire apparatus get through?

Chief LeClaire responded the Bridge St. end of McDonough is an issue. Stated he is not in favor of closing McDonough St. for safety issues.

The meeting was turned to over the Chair.

(B) Parade Mall – Work Session

Jeff Johnston from Cathartes Private Investments, Robin Bousa from VHB and Greg Milcolaities from Appledore Engineering. Mr. Johnston stated that the Parade Office Mall is a 4 acre site currently with 85,000 sq.ft. office building.

They are proposing a mixed use development approx. 375,000 sq.ft. over a 300 car parking garage. Referred to the plans and stated there will be a new 22 ft. boardwalk connecting Vaughan Mall to downtown. There is a parking exit off Maplewood with a left turn only. There are 20 condo units, 128 hotel rooms, 70,000 sq. ft of retail and two office buildings of approx. 75,000 sq.ft. a piece. The parking entrance on Hanover and exit on Maplewood. At the HDC work session the proposal is to submit our final next Friday. A model of the proposed Mall was shown to the Committee.

Mr. Johnston stated that one question that came up was it a private way, yes, it is a private way with vehicular access for the public. The Chief asked about enforcement which they are working through. The maintenance is the responsibility of the owner for sand, sweep, and plow. To correct the record it is a “right turn only” onto Maplewood.

The Chair asked about handling speeders on a private road?

Deputy Chief DiSesa stated they have no enforcement powers.

Attorney Sullivan responded that every different offense is established either by a statute or Ordinance typically road of the rule kind of offenses state offenses by statute require that the offense occur on a street or public way, by case law is actually pretty broad. For this kind of offense somebody drunk drives down through that private way you can arrest and prosecute successfully. However, the best analogy to look at a private way is that it is like somebody’s driveway. There is some limited police authority to do traffic enforcement work on that private way, but not as broad as a public street.

Mr. Johnston spoke specifically to the speed, their architect has proposed a traffic calming table to slow traffic down, it is not a speed bump.

John Connors asked Attorney Sullivan that this basically would be the same as a shopping center parking lot.

Attorney Sullivan stated it is exactly like a shopping center parking lot.

Chief LeClaire referred to the private way, and is his understanding that it is a private way between the buildings over the parking garage.

Mr. Johnston responded “yes”.

Robin Bousa, Director of Transportation Systems at Vanasse Brustlin, Inc., Bedford NH. Ms. Bousa gave a short presentation to summarize the findings of the traffic study, referred to the private way stating in looking at speeding aspect you need to focus on what’s the project physical features of it. It is a one way roadway. She referred to the narrow area with the raised speed table, which is really a raised intersection, a long extended speed bump. Literally the speed table raises the intersection up to slowing traffic in order to go over it, easy to maintain yet functions in a traffic calming way and really slows down traffic. A full study was submitted. The study focused on Deer St. extending from Market all the way to Maplewood and the intersection of Market and Russell Sts. and Hanover St. from intersection of Maplewood and all intersections. The updated traffic count were done in the spring. The study is conservative in two aspects. One is they adjusted all traffic data collected to reflect a summer peak month

reflecting on what happens in the downtown area during the summer. The second aspect is the trip generation is based on standardized ITE rates. An aspect of the plan they liked was they proposed access, they looked at the latest plan the Westin submitted and think they can put back another 9 parking spaces on Deer St. between the private way and to achieve this the sidewalk will be on their property, so the roadway will be wider to include the extra parking.

Ted Gray stated he liked the idea of moving the lot backwards to allow for more spaces.

Ken Smith asked her to go over the details for reopening of Fleet St.

Robin Bousa responded there is parking proposed behind the hotel and retail, proposed one way traffic flow and would come into parking area from High St., one way traffic flow out Basically across from Fleet St. where there used to be a curb cut at that location, exiting Fleet St. you can take a left or right and existing from the driveway onto Hanover you could take a left or right hand. All of the intersections allow Hanover from Fleet St.

The Chair asked in doing so, how many spaces are we losing now on Hanover St.?

Jeff Johnston responded they will come back with that answer.

The Chair then asked about parking on your private roads, basically what you're doing is giving free parking and they will fill up quick, there are no meters, no parking enforcement etc. Thoughts on how you will handle this.

Jeff Johnston stated they are proposing private meters.

The Chair asked how that would work with enforcement of people paying tickets, etc.

Mr. Johnston responded "on us".

Attorney Sullivan stated the analogy to the supermarket parking lot.

The Chair stated it was on them, if somebody doesn't pay their parking ticket.

The Chair referred to the sidewalks around the property, existing sidewalks all going to remain, Deer St. Hanover St., Market St.

Robin Bousa responded the final improvements will be with the Westin Hotel, there will be sidewalks maintained.

The Chair referred to parking spaces already set for people on the Hill, Hilton Gardens that you are handling, is the 300 space parking garage primarily for the new buildings and retail or will you be able to handle some parking from the existing Hilton Gardens Hotel?

Both hotels will use the garage.

Jonathan Bailey asked if there was anything in place to prevent people from taking a left turn when exiting the garage?

Robin Bousa responded there will be signage and the slightest angle of the garage people will not be able to make that left turn onto Maplewood.

Chief LeClaire asked if the private way and Fleet St. will be exit only, there are no security gates now, are there gates planned for the future?

Mr. Johnston answered “no”

Ted Gray asked if there are any restrictions on any of these private places such as the garage, the area between the Hill and the hotel as far as general public parking, would it be open to the general public?

Mr. Johnston responded “yes”. In the back of the hotel there is a gate proposed for the Hill, there are 24 spaces for the Hill and are proposing a gate system on Garden Lane behind the Hill.

The Chair asked with the turn movement going into the parking garage off Hanover St. how are you handling cars coming in so there is not a queue ? Is it a pass system, someone taking tickets or do you come in and pay when you leave? The Chair’s concern is backing out onto the street if there is an event at the hotel.

Mr. Johnston answered there is a monthly parking pass as well as the hourly. We will have more details at the next meeting.

John Connors asked if there are any other locations where you have metered private parking? You are talking about private meters on private property that are not enforceable by law and does now know how you will enforce it?

Mr. Johnston will have the information at the next meeting.

Attorney Sullivan stated it has been our experience that the private road concept seems attractive to property owners and developers during the building and construction phase, but once everything is done and all is left is to maintain it, pick up trash, etc., in every case so far, at some point private road owners come to the City and say “would you like to take care of the road? Since this is the history of private roads, the thought to at least have it in mind now in the sense of in a general way, requiring the private road be close the City standards.

Mr. Johnston responded meeting with the City a few times and relatively speaking is being built to City standards.

Ken Smith asked if there is no objection he would ask if there was anyone in the public who has any particular questions during the work session, this is not normally done

Attorney Sharon Somers with Donahue, Tucker & Ciandella representing the Hill Condominium Association and Karen and Scott Logan are present to speak. Attorney Somers stated she would like to bring to the Committee’s attention as you begin this review process are some traffic issues having to do with the intersection of Garden Way and one-way street between Harbor Hill Condominium and the new proposed retail and residential area. They have two concerns. 1. With the Hilton approval there are truck deliveries made to the Hilton, and it’s not working, it’s a problem. The large trucks block traffic sometimes parking in front of the Blue Mermaid Restaurant interfering with that activity and if traffic is going to be increased because of this development, they have serious concerns about the conflict between those two, the parked delivery truck and the increased pedestrian traffic. We hope that both the Committee and Applicant will be addressing this specifically as part of their traffic study it is not

acceptable now and have great concerns it will get even worse. 2. We, as part of the settlement agreement with the Parade Mall have an easement for 24 parking spaces and as Mr. Johnston alluded to there will be eight for this to make sure that only Hill people can get in there. With the problems of potential truck blockage also concerned that their ability to get in and out of that parking area is going to be interfered with and the fact that their access from Deer St. is now blocked off, don't want to be blocked off by trucks. The radius could be problematic with any delivered needed to be made at the hotel. Attorney Somers encouraged the Committee to have a good pedestrian flow for the Hill and at the same time make sure the emergency access vehicles are able to get through. They propose to have the walkway straddling the two properties function as a major pedestrian thoroughfare and would like to have the proposed crosswalk moved over so that it links up more closely with the existing walkway.

Karen Logan owner of the Blue Mermaid, stated she appreciates the efforts and work that has gone into this with many positive aspects of the project. Again asked the Committee to be mindful of the small business owners, residents and big business as well. The Plan does not work for everybody, it works for them in their large development, it doesn't work for her or her neighbors behind and beside her. The traffic flow was going to come in off Deer St. to alleviate build up on Market and Hanover. Now that access from Deer St. is going to be gone. Also very concerned about the dead end feel going through Garden Way. Safety is a concern, emergency vehicles, fire, doesn't the plan benefits our customers. Feels there is an opportunity to make the plan work for everybody, but does not work now. Please think of the residents/businesses on the Hill.

The Chair encourages conversations to continue between the developer and members of the hill to work the details out.

IV. OLD BUSINESS:

- (A) **Islington Street** – Safety Improvement – Report back (memorandum attached) Steve Parkinson referred to the letter from Debbie Finnigan regarding a study that we did in 2005 on safety improvements along the corridor of Islington St. and are broken in down into 4 zones of improvements.

Zone 1 - Rte.33 to Essex Ave. Improvements to the curb of Islington St. of Islington at the old BPX driveway. Recommendation is to install advisory speed limit signs and signs denoting the curb in the roadway. A longer term suggestion is to add a sidewalk from Plains Ave. to Essex St. on the south side and add bike lanes on the north side of Islington St. The most immediate thing that we could do is the advisory speed limit signs and Chevron denoting that curb.

Zone 2 Essex Ave. to Plaza 800 not including the Plaza, we have preliminary funding for the realignment of Spinney Rd. into Islington St. and the suggestion to install new crosswalk across Islington St. at Barberry Ln. Rutland St. and appropriate pedestrian crossing warning signs.

Zone 3 - At Plaza 800 the large project for many years is the realignment of Islington St. at Bartlett St. and Jewel Ct., in turn upgrading of the signals at that intersection and installing new crosswalk across Islington St. and Albany St. pedestrian crossing warning signs.

Zone 4 - Columbia St. to Maplewood Ave. install crosswalk across Islington St. at Salem/Union St. and provide pedestrian and install a new crosswalk across Islington St. at Brewster St.

Some of these are long range projects and some can be put into place relatively inexpensively.

John Howe reported there is one problem in that stretch that is a problem for bus drivers is the section running from Dunkin Donuts to Sunoco gas station, due to parking on the north side is Islington, there is no parking before or after that area, but because of that parking, the bus is forced to transverse over the double yellow line.

Steve Parkinson stated this is an area which there may be an Ordinance for no parking and signs have disappeared. This is an area of interest.

MOTION made by Fire Chief LeClaire to accept report. Seconded by John Connors. Motion passed.

- (B) **Peeverly Hill/Route 1** – report back (attached letter) – Steve Parkinson referred to the letter received from the State DOT is self-explanatory.

MOTION made by Ted Gray to place on file. Seconded by Christina Westfall. Motion passed.

The Chair reminded the Committee there will be a meeting on May 24th, site walk on May 22nd, Deer St. and Westin Hotel projects.

V. **ADJOURNMENT**

Respectfully submitted

Elaine E. Boucas, Recording Secretary