

**PORTSMOUTH
TRAFFIC & SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING
8:00 a.m. – Thursday, October 11, 2007
City Hall – Eileen Dondero Foley Council Chambers**

DRAFT

I. CALL TO ORDER:

Councilor Ken Smith, Chairman called the meeting to order at approximately 8:05 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
Assist. Fire Chief Steve Achilles	Christina Westfall, Member
Deborah Finnigan, P.E., Traffic Engineer	Eric Spear, Member

Excused absence: Jonathan Bailey

III. ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES:

IT WAS VOTED on a Motion made by Ted Gray to accept the minutes of the September 13, 2007 meeting. Seconded by John Connors. Motion passed.

III. NEW BUSINESS:

- (A) **Marcy/Cate Streets** – Speeding and Request for Crosswalks – Ted Gray referred to the onsite and stated that both the streets and sidewalks are very narrow and the only place for a crosswalk would be at the north end of Gates as the sidewalk goes down the hill towards Gates on the east side and then Gates St. crosses and goes over to the west side at that intersection. The best place to put the crosswalk would be the north side of Gates across Marcy and hopefully people will slow down.

The Chair asked if we could get a stealth stat on Gate St. and a report back at a later date.

Deputy Police Chief DiSesa responded “yes”.

MOTION made by Ted Gray to install the crosswalk together with the stealth stat for a report back. Seconded by Asst. Fire Chief Achilles. Motion passed.

- (B) **Miller/Lincoln Ave. Intersection** – Request for Pavement Markings/Crossing Guard – John Connors referred to the on-site stating that the crosswalks have been painted and are well marked. A resident brought to our attention the limbs cover the blinking lights and you are not able to see them until you get right on them and Mr. Parkinson will have the limbs taken care of. A recommendation would be to repaint over the yield markings for the crosswalks in road would help the situation. Also noticed the same problem down over the hill at 263 Rockland, there is quite a bit of traffic there and suggested repainting these at the same time.

MOTION made by John Connors to repaint over the faint yield markings for the crosswalk in the road and at the same time repaint the crosswalk at 263 Rockland

and a report back regarding the crossing guard. Seconded by Ted Gray. Motion passed. Motion passed.

Debbie Finnigan mentioned the request for a crossing guard and should be able to tell them how the process works in order to get one.

Deputy Police Chief DiSesa will check this, the Police Department to the training for crossing guards and this is the first time he is aware the someone requested a guard. Will check to see how many children cross there and report back.

- (C) **Broad Street and Sherburne Avenue** – Request for Slow Children Signage as well as evaluation of the area (e-mail dated 10/2/07 attached) – Steve Parkinson referred to e-mails regarding Broad St. and Sherburne Ave. area. Broad St. is being used as a cut through and could more appropriate signage be erected there to calm traffic. A request for a speed table or speed bumps and feels it would not be appropriate. The on-site committee did not have any other recommendations. The Chair stated this is Elwyn and Sherburne Ave. Steve Parkinson stated Elwyn and Sherburne issue is different dealing with people walking and cutting across Sherburne Ave. area at Elwyn. There are stop signs there but because of the construction that took place the marking have not been put back down on the ground. All the markings should be redone next week.

John Howe referred to the Sherburne ext. where the two stops signs are there are no sidewalks and asked if this is a concern as children cut through there to go to Little Harbor School.

MOTION made by John Connors to leave this up to the discretion of Public Works Department because of the new construction and wherever crosswalks or visible road markings need to be put and the possibility of sidewalk if they deem them so, can go to Safe Routes to School Committee to look at and a report back. Seconded by Deputy Police Chief DiSesa. Motion passed.

Debbie Finnigan stated there is also a request for “Slow Children” sign. For the record, “Slow Children” signs are not longer used as it causes children to feel safer playing in the street which is a false sense of security and the cars don’t pay attention to those signs.

- (D) **Cate and Bartlett Streets** – Speeding issues – (e-mail dated 9/27/07 attached) – Assist. Fire Chief Achilles stated we have been to the area before for another redesign of that intersection and looking at that and the mirror request for Bartlett St. It did not look appropriate for a mirror and the Committee believes that as the corridor gets rebuilt at that intersection it might affect the speed.

MOTION made by Assist. Chief Achilles to place on file and address it at a later time when there that intersection is redesigned and is not appropriate to have a mirror. Seconded by John Howe. Motion passed.

Ted Gray stated that putting up mirrors is something the City does not do.

- (E) **Broad Street** - Intersection of Sagamore/South Streets – Bicyclists, Speeding and Request for Signage (Resident letter attached) – Mr. Moody 563 Broad St. read letters from neighbors who requested speed reduction measures on Broad St.

between South St. and Jones Ave. There are blue ribbons on the trees as an indication of the neighborhood's concern regarding the recent accident involving a child. Ask that this Committee come up with a solution to help keep Broad St. safe. The second letter states there are 25 children under the age of 10 years. Requests speed bumps or speed tables, 15 MPH and enforcement or make it a one-way. Large trucks use Broad St. for deliveries to Jones Ave. businesses. Mr. Moody stated anything you can do would be greatly appreciated by him and all other parents on Broad St.

Deputy Chief DiSesa wants to go on record stating "they are very concerned about speeding on all City streets and a survey done by UNH Survey a couple of years ago indicated that the No.1 concern for the city of Portsmouth residents was speed on the streets. In a way he is glad that is the No.1 concern and is not a more serious crime. On the other hand it is a serious issue because of the danger factor and the fact that we have children." An updated stealth stat survey was conducted for Broad St. in May. The accident involving the young boy was in August. Deputy Chief DiSesa wants to go on record as saying "speed was not a factor in that accident". The stealth stat survey that was done in May, the 50 percentile of cars on that street were 20 MPH, which is the posted speed limit. The average speed was 20.42 MPH. The high speed was 40 MPH, the low speed was 10 MPH. About 560 cars were monitored for that 24 hour period. We concentrated our enforcement efforts as a result of the complaints received and the accident involving the young boy was an accident, speed was not a factor, driver was not exceeding the limit.

Debbie Finnigan asked what the 85 percentile speed was on the survey?
Deputy Police Chief DiSesa responded the 85 percentile was 28 MPH.

Mrs. Michelle Verdi 574 Broad St. had a question as to where exactly was the speed survey clocked? There are two sections of Broad St., the lower end, north of South St. and the upper end which is where these residents are from, which is the other side. Her concern being on the Jones end, there is ample opportunity for cars to pick up speed by the time they get to the Jones end. Deputy Police Chief DiSesa responded he will report back and feels it was between South and Jones as this is the area of concern. Stealth stats are not placed between stop signs as it interferes with what they want to get a run of the street to see if cars have enough time to accelerate to get up to a dangerous speed level. The stealth stat is a computer box that has a broad range, not just 10 yards from the box, it picks up cars 200-300 yards down so you can get a gauge of distance.

Ms. 566 Broad St. suggested speed bumps on one side of the street.

Mr. Tom Marden, 1240 South St. referred to the comments regarding speeding issues and in terms of doing research and ideas asked if there are things the Committee has done in terms of researching what other communities have done in terms of how effective is signage, stripping or putting in electronic signs in so that when people write in concerning other issues, if you had a similar situation, you would know how to address it.

The Chair stated one thing we don't do is put in speed bumps and the reason being once the snow flies, the plows come along and the speed bumps are gone

and the same thing with dip downs, when plows hit it the street is ripped up. Over time we have looked at what other communities have done and what we have done and in some areas we have tried to narrow down streets, bump out and brought sidewalks closer so that distance in crossing a street is shorter as well as slowing down traffic. These are some of the areas we have started on. Steve Parkinson stated there are many issues trying to use devices of any type to slow traffic. Speed bumps, speed tables are not a recommended device to control speed. The best device we have found of late is narrowing the road. Broad St. was rebuilt 7 years ago and was narrowed up somewhat as it was wide open and is still a broad street.

Mr. Marden stated that he and some neighbors have done is some research on speed tables in different communities.

Deputy Police Chief DiSesa stated there have been national studies done on what it takes to slow people down, it is a national epidemic especially the ways cars are being designed for speed and have been for many years. The national studies have shown educational enforcement and engineering to slow traffic. Stop signs are not effective in slowing down traffic. What we need to do is educate the public and get them to cooperate with us. Certainly the Police Department and the City will do their part to engineer the roads down and enforce the laws. The stealth stat in 2007 indicates that some degree has slow down has occurred from the 2004 stat. We ask the public to take some responsibility.

The Chair referred to the discussion at the on-site of the thru traffic portion and there really is no way of the thru traffic portion and there really is no way to enforce regular cars who are cutting around. The trucks on the other hand can certainly be enforced.

MOTION made by Deputy Police chief DiSesa to table for a report back next meeting on exactly where the stealth stat survey was done and possibility of other enforcement ideas. Seconded by John Howe. Motion passed.

Mrs. Marden 586 Broad St. referred to the through street and noticed early morning there are vehicles going to Sunbridge. Sunbridge gives directions by going Broad St. to get to Sunbridge and asked if there was a way to contact Sunbridge and ask them to please don't give Broad St. out as a direction, to give Sagamore as part of the directions.

Deputy Police Chief DiSesa responded the appeal can be made and recommended that the neighborhood get together with a petition or letter as a good neighbor of Sunbridge and if Sunbridge wants to be a good neighbor that we do enforcement and educational piece, perhaps ask for a meeting to please help us and the Deputy Chief will speak to Sunbridge personally and follow through with this.

The Chair suggested having a representative from Sunbridge to be present at our next meeting and reminded them in putting their letter together it still is a public street, cannot be for residents only, but trucks, etc. we can make sure they are not on the street.

Sheila Jenkins, 434 Broad St. stated they have approached Sunbridge who stated they weren't responsible.

Deputy Police Chief asked if at that time they requested that they not give out Broad St. as part of directions?

Ms. Jenkins responded “no”.

- (F) **Taft Road** – Request for 20 MPH Speed Limit Signage – Police Department referral (E-mails dated 9/12/07 attached and 10/3/07) - Deputy Police Chief DiSesa stated there are some 20 MPH signs posted, the request was made for more signage and “Children Playing in Street” signs and referred this to Debbie Finnigan.

Debbie Finnigan stated we need to have more 20 MPH signs for enforcement. Suggested looking at figuring out where the most appropriate place for those 20 MPH signs. There are no playgrounds in Elwyn Park so the “Children Playing in Street” sign is not appropriate and personally a basketball hoops should not be in the street as it puts the children at risk. Recommended this be referred to Public Works Dept. for placement of more 20MPH signs and deny the “children at Play” sign.

MOTION made by Deputy Police Chief DiSesa to refer this to Public Works for a report back whether additional signage is needed, where should it be placed or move current signs and the “Children Playing in Street” sign is denied. Seconded by Christina Westfall.

Steve Parkinson stated that if you target Taft Road you will need to target all the streets there.

Christina Westfall asked if he felt the signage out there is sufficient?

Steve Parkinson responded “he feels they should be looked at where they are currently being placed or where they are and are we missing any”, but feels the expense of putting up additional signage which is going to be ignored is an expense the City does not need to incur. Mr. Parkinson feels there is appropriate signage on every street entering that neighborhood and should be sufficient.

Deputy Police Chief DiSesa stated that 20 MPH is sufficient for enforcement and there are signs entering the area stating 20 MPH in the whole park. Also, in most surveys that have been done shows that the ones speeding are the people living in the neighborhood.

IV. OLD BUSINESS:

- (A) **Osprey Landing** – Report Back – Debbie Finnigan reported on a previous Motion for no parking and the Committee recommended no parking on all four corners. The Committee needs to either pass this on to Parking or revise the previous motion to state we will not put up “No Parking Here to Corner” signs on that side. She has not received a complaint about the “No Parking” signs not being there at this point since we have put up the rest of the signs on Boulevard and Osprey Drive and suggested making a new motion stating those signs will not be put up.

MOTION made by Ted Gray that the existing signs are sufficient. Seconded by John Connors. Motion passed.

- (B) **Signalized Intersections** – Street Signs on Mast Arms - Report Back (Report attached) – Debbie Finnigan stated that the survey of all the signalized intersections in the City, one side the City maintains signals and one side the state maintains signals. Typically the street name signs are put on mast arms, we do have some in the City with 6” letters which are hard to see. We will be getting two new signals and those signs are slated to have 8” street names attached. In checking the price of a double sided street name sign found it is \$56.43 per sign. Most of the mastarms locations in the City do not have signs.

MOTION made by Steve Parkinson to add the signs periodically throughout the year as money allows. Seconded by John Connors. Motion passed.

- (C) **Middle Road/Ward Place** – Report back – Debbie Finnigan reported that someone requested a crosswalk from Middle Rd. onto Ward Place and contacted the state who knew about ADA regulations and they do not have a crosswalk start at a sidewalk and end at a grassy area in the state. Recommended that a crosswalk not be placed there.

The Chair stated that the City Council has started negotiations to redo the Lafayette School and there is a possibility to have sidewalks and then to have a landing location.

MOTION made by Ted Gray to place on file and look at it again if and when sidewalks are added when redoing the Lafayette School. Seconded by John Howe. Motion passed.

Before adjourning the Chair brought up the area of speeding throughout the City is becoming a bigger and bigger problem and outside of having an officer on every corner the signs that don't slap the people, speed bumps, tables don't work. This is an on-going concern with both the Police and DPW and at the next month's meeting have a discussion on other ideas, other alternatives. What can we do about speeding?

John Howe asked about striping to narrow roads for traffic calming.

Steve Parkinson responded “to a certain degree”.

Deputy Police Chief DiSesa stated that the stealth stat shows that people are not driving at an unreasonable a speed which is the reality of a statistical analysis.

The stealth stat shows in most cases 85% of the cars going through a street are going the speed limit or slightly above.

Christina Westfall stated it is her understanding there really isn't an issue on Broad St. according to stats, it is a roadway for travel of cars, children should not be playing in the street and not on the road, it is a roadway.

Deputy Police Chief DiSesa stated for the record, he absolutely agrees with Ms. Westfall and what we implore for parents and guardians to be responsible and watch their children at all times when they are playing at or near street and that will go along way towards traffic calming.

John Connors also agreed with Ms. Westfall, and every time you go up Broad St. kids are in the middle of the road. Just that one section from the top of the hill to Jones, it seems that street is a playground. There are always kids there,

skateboarding, roller skating, playing whatever. No other street in town has kids in it like that street does, there are always kids there. The Elks, Sunbridge, the junk yard have been there for years and there is traffic going there.

John Howe referred to Sherburne Ave. they also have a basketball hoop in the street. Is there a City Ordinance stating the roads are roads and thou shall not basketball or whatever.

Deputy Police Chief stated he didn't believe there is and will check into it. and we ask that parents not put a basketball court in the street.

Debbie Finnigan stated based on the Ordinance, when you look at the definition of a roadway, it states for travel, that's what it says, playing basketball and kids in the street is not traffic, vehicle traffic only which includes bicycles.

V. ADJOURNMENT

Respectfully submitted,

Elaine E. Boucas, Recording Secretary