

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

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
	Jonathan Bailey, Member

III. ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES:

IT WAS VOTED on a Motion made by Ted Gray to accept the minutes of the October 11, 2007 meeting. Seconded by Christina Westfall. Motion passed.

III. NEW BUSINESS:

- (A) **Bridge Street** – Request for Sign and Additional Crosswalk – The Chair received a request for an additional advance “crosswalk ahead” sign on Bridge at Hanover Sts.

Bridge Street – Request for Sign and Additional Crosswalk - **MOTION** made by Ted Gray to place an additional advance “crosswalk ahead” sign on Bridge at Hanover Sts. Seconded by Christina Westfall. Motion passed.

- (B) **Martin Hill Inn** – Request for One-Way Sign – The Chair referred to the request for a one-way sign. Steve Parkinson stated that on Union St. there are a couple of parking lots for apartment houses that come out on Union St. which is one-way from Islington to State Sts. People come out of the parking lots take a left, and it makes sense, safety wise, to place a notification that it is a one-way.

MOTION made by Ted Gray to place a one-way sign on Union St. between Islington and State Streets. Seconded by John Howe. Motion passed.

- (C) **Dunlin Way** - Request for Barrier (e-mail dated 10/13/07 and aerial photo attached) – Deputy Chief Len DiSesa referred to a signed petition that residents sent to Police Department, Police Commissioners and an e-mail sent to Traffic & Safety Committee regarding speeding cars, unsafe situations, and a request for a barrier to be placed between Osprey and Portsmouth Blvd. The roll over accident they cited did not happen on Dunlin, but another street in the area. Enforcement was stepped up, ran stealth stats for Dunlin and a patrol car there all hours of the day and night and found traffic to be unremarkable. Several times there was no traffic to be monitored. Deputy Chief DiSesa is familiar with the area and has done patrols in his unmarked car and not seeing the

problem that is described. We have a speed sign there and will continue to be present there and to monitor. Deputy Chief DiSesa is opposed to putting up a gate and sealing off the road there due to the safety issues of the access way. There were two burglaries in the area over 3 years. Seems to be a well kept quiet area, cars are not parked on the street. Will continue to monitor this and will continue to work with the neighborhood. Feels the gate should be tabled.

The Chair suggested a stealth stat there and Deputy Chief DiSesa will have a stealth stat there to monitor speed.

MOTION made by Deputy Police Chief DiSesa to table and to continue to monitor with a stealth stat and report back. To continue to work putting in a cul-de-sac as that development continues. Seconded by John Connors.

Ted Gray asked what time of day or night the alleged problems are. Mr. DiPentima responded “any time of day or night”.

Mr. Richard DiPentima 16 Dunlin Way explained the problems of speeding, people parking on the side in the area. Amount of trash in the area, refrigerators, stoves, car parts, whole demolished car left there, tires, furniture that he brings personally to the recycling center. Numerous issues with break ins and asked that the gate be placed there to restrict the residential area, Portsmouth Blvd is a heavily developed and being developed property. Numerous trucks in the area and have to make turns. While understanding the issue of the gate, this was originally designed on the Master Plan to have a cul-de-sac where Portsmouth Blvd. is and Dunlin Way. We had a meeting with the City Manager, Deputy City Manager and Planning Director and all agreed to allow us to have and would support this as a trial basis for 6-12 months to see what impact it may have or what consequences, unfortunately none of the representatives are here today. In lieu of a gate they would propose putting in speed bumps or speed platforms to help reduce some of the speed as people come around that turn. There is no signage now. If you can't decide on a gate, would appreciate signage and speed platforms.

Steve Parkinson met with the City Manager and is representing the City Manager supporting what has been proposed. The property owners of the commercial section and the Manager did express that they would be willing to try this on a temporary basis to see how it affected traffic and whether or not it solved any problems. Ultimately as the remaining parcels go forward in commercial development the plan has always been to dead end and cul-de-sac that section of Dunlin Way from the commercial portion.

Asst. Fire Chief Achilles stated if there were gates they would need to have 24 hour access, whether it be a key or a lock box. We would need some mechanism for 24 hour access.

Deputy Chief DiSesa stated that he sees no problem with putting speed signs there if there are none. Again, he is not seeing that traffic and speed. Deputy Chief DiSesa would like to be invited to the next neighborhood meeting and speak with the residents.

Motion passed. Steve Parkinson and Jonathan Bailey opposed.

- (D) **Islington Street Between Albany and Bartlett Streets** - Request for No Parking Area (Aerial photo attached) – Steve Parkinson referred to the map showing the current Ordinance shows no parking on the stretch of Islington St. between Bartlett and Columbia. There is a current Ordinance that there is no parking on the southerly side of Islington St. from Cass St. to Rte.1 By-pass Bridge. There is another section of the Ordinance “No Parking on the northerly side of Islington St. from Albany. There’s a stretch from Albany to Columbia on the northerly side which people for the most part are not parking on that side but when they do causes real traffic issues with moving traffic through this corridor. On the southerly side between Cass and Columbia there have been issues with cars parking too close to the corners even with the current “20’ to corner” signs. Recommended including in the “No Parking Ordinance” that the northerly side from Columbia to wherever the previous Ordinance terminates which is beyond Darlene’s and there is an exception in front of Darlene’s. Also have Public Works evaluate what would be an appropriate distance above the 20’ state requirement from the intersection on the southerly side from Columbia to Cass St.

MOTION made by Steve Parkinson to include in the “No Parking Ordinance” that the northerly side from Columbia to wherever the previous Ordinance terminates which is beyond Darlene’s and there is an exception in front of Darlene’s. Also have Public Works evaluate what would be an appropriate distance above the 20’ state requirement from the intersection on the southerly side from Columbia to Cass St. Seconded by Deputy Chief DiSesa. Motion passed.

The Chair asked that a letter be sent to the neighborhood association letting them know of this decision.

Eric Spear asked how wide the parking space and the double yellow line on Islington, is it not wide enough for cars to get by.

Steve Parkinson responded “it is very narrow”.

Eric Spear though it was a good idea but feared that by taking away the parking it becomes wide and would encourage speeding.

Steve Parkinson stated it would possibly afford us the opportunity to put in a stripped bike lane.

John Howe stated that the area especially just beyond Dunkin Donut is very narrow and Trolley drivers and Wildcat Transit operators are very uncomfortable there because if a car is parked at the bus stop they have to stop in the middle of the street and is a safety issue.

- (E) **Miller Ave.** – Request for 20 MPH Speed Limit – **MOTION** made by Deputy Chief DiSesa to place a stealth stat there and report back. Seconded by Jonathan Bailey. Motion passed.

Jonathan Bailey referred to talk of adding a crossing guard or flashing light, some sort of school crossing at Lincoln and Miller intersection and try to work as a student/pedestrian corridor.

The Chair stated we approved it for crosswalks which were painted, advance signs will be done and the trees will be trimmed.

IV. OLD BUSINESS:

- (A) **Marcy/Gate Streets** – Speeding & Request for Crosswalks – Report back, Police Dept.- Deputy Chief DiSesa stated there were problems with the stealth stat and were not able to run it, the readings were not bonafide readings.

MOTION made by Deputy Chief DiSesa to table until next month. Seconded by Jonathan Bailey. Motion passed.

- (B) **Miller/Lincoln Ave. Intersection** – Request for Pavement Markings/Crossing Guard- Report Back Police Dept. – Deputy Police Chief DiSesa reported that the rationale for putting a person to monitor traffic is usually a traffic choke point and have limited resources. If possible, would have a school crossing guard at every intersection, but it's not possible. It is not an area where there's that much traffic to justify it, such as South St. It is not practical at this point and does not meet the criteria.

MOTION made by Steve Parkinson to accept the police report and place on file. Seconded by Jonathan Bailey. Motion passed.

- (C) **Broad St./Sherburne Ave.** – Request for “Slow Children” Sign and Evaluation of the Area – Report Back Police Dept. – Steve Parkinson stated that one issue was Broad St. itself between South and Jones Ave. dealing with speeding issues and no through traffic and the Police Department was going to do additional work there.

The Chair suggested opening Item D as well to include this whole area which is the Broad St. Intersection of Sagamore and South St.

- (D) **Broad St. Intersection of Sagamore/South Sts.** – Bicyclists, Speeding and Request for Signage – Report Back Police Dept. -

Deputy Police Chief DiSesa referred to the question by the residents as to where the Stealth Stat was placed on Broad St. as it is such an elongated street. It was in fact placed right in the middle of Broad St. between South St. and Jones which is the target area that was the issue. The Stealth Stat reading was pretty accurate and showed an occasional car speeding, but for the most part the speed was unremarkable for 85% of the cars. Deputy Chief DiSesa contacted David Ross, Administrative Director of Sun Bridge and they have discontinued advising their staff to use that roadway to get to Sun Bridge. The “not a through street” signage was researched and could not find where it is not a through street and ascertained about 15 years ago or so, a former City Councilor had that sign put up. There is a traffic sign there advising “no through traffic”. It would be very difficult for the Police to enforce the” no through traffic” for actual enforcement to get cars not to use that street. We have increased presence out there, traffic enforcement is done and will continue to do that but at this point there is not much more the Police can do.

Ted Gray stated this came before this Committee 8 or 9 years ago that the traffic sign went up, whether that came to the Committee via a Councilman, cannot remember.

John Connors stated the sign went up when lower Broad St. was redone from Merrimack to Jones Ave.

Asst. Fire Chief Achilles suggested speaking with the Elks and encourage deliveries not go down Broad St.

David Ross from Sun Bridge stated they are doing this. Mr. Ross stated that the “No Through Traffic” sign on the Jones side of the street is obscured by trees and it visible coming from South onto Broad St. but not so much when you are on Jones,

The Chair thanked Mr. Ross for being present and suggested that the directions on the Website be checked.

Jonathan Bailey suggested that the Committee or the City should consider is an opportunity to remove these signs since they are unenforceable and inconsistent and provide something we can’t give.

The Chair suggested leaving them up as it acts as a deterrent even if not enforceable.

Deputy Police Chief DiSesa will contact the Elks regarding deliveries.

MOTION made by Ted Gray to accept Police Department report for Item C. Seconded by John Connors. Motion passed.

MOTION made by Ted Gray to accept the Police Department report for Item D. Seconded by Steve Parkinson. Motion passed.

- (D) **Court St. – Parking – Report back Public Works Dept. (photo attached) – Steve Parkinson** referred to the request received from Strawberry Banke concerning some of the parking spaces on Court St. east of Atkinson St. towards Marcy. Since the reconstruction of Court St. parking cars there inhibits the flow of traffic especially traffic coming down Atkinson trying to take a left onto Court St. as the building is so close to the corner. In researching the Ordinance currently 2-hour parking is allowed on the northerly side of Court St. starting at Atkinson for a distance of 121 ft, roughly the area of the little park and before the park was developed there was parking along there. Two hour parking is also allowed on the southerly side from Atkinson towards Marcy to a distance 118 ft back from Marcy St. where the parking has been occurring. With reconstruction it is very narrow there, there is not enough room to allow parking as well as the two travel lanes. Recommended eliminating the two sections of 2-hour parking currently existing in the Ordinance on Court St.

MOTION made by Steve Parkinson to eliminate the two sections of 2 hour parking currently existing in the Ordinance on Court St. From Pleasant St. to Marcy St. on Court St. would now be no parking. Seconded by John Connors.

Eric Spear stated he is voting against it because he likes the fact it is so congested, feels it discourages people from using Court St. in favor of State St., the more thoroughfare type of street. Also slows cars down as it is so narrow. Feels if we were to have any parking at all on Court St. would make more sense to have it on the same side of the St.

Christina Westfall stated there is a park there and would not want people to park there.

John Connors agrees with Mr. Parkinson and delivery trucks coming down Atkinson and turning right onto Court, they are in the other lane and some go up on the sidewalk on the other side of the street. The 121 ft. has been there for

years with the corner park and prior to putting curbing in you were able to pull up against the fence. Cars parked there now it is almost impossible for trucks to get around and the same problem is on Marcy St. with trucks.

Asst. Fire Chief Achilles appreciates the fact it is nice to keep that street slow, unfortunately, it gets really congested there and is a critical street to access the waterfront and Strawberry Banke and is in favor of Mr. Parkinson's suggestion and voting in favor.

Ted Gray is sad to see loss of parking, however, in the interest of safety, in this case have no choice and will vote in favor.

The Chair goes along with the Motion agreeing, doesn't like to lose parking spaces and having parking forces you into the other lane, it does slow down traffic, however, it is a liability and safety issue for the City.

Motion passed. Eric Spear opposed.

V. CORRESPONDENCE:

- (A) **Rte.1 Lafayette Road at Wilson Road** – Thank you letter dated October 4, 2007 attached.

Mr. Al Romano, Coakley Road was present at the last TAC meeting where it was recommended they come to Traffic & Safety and thought the developer was going to speak today regarding traffic issues at Coakley Rd and By-Pass

Councilor Smith stated it was not brought to his attention for this Agenda.

Debbie Finnigan stated they called on Tuesday, and we prepare the Agenda the week before and would have had to request that last week. It will be the December Agenda.

Mr. Romano requested a crosswalk and pedestrian light and it was recommended at a previous Traffic & Safety meeting that the State provide a pedestrian light and crosswalk at Coakley and By-Pass.

The Chair stated a letter has been sent to the State and we are now waiting a response.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Respectfully submitted,

Elaine E. Boucas, Recording Secretary