

**PORTSMOUTH
TRAFFIC & SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING
8:00 a.m. – Thursday, October 9, 2008
City Hall – Eileen Dondero Foley Council Chambers**

I. CALL TO ORDER:

Councilor Ken Smith, Chairman called the meeting to order at approximately 8:35 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
Deputy Fire Chief Steve Griswold	Brendan Cooney, Member
Debbie Finnigan, Traffic Engineer	Christina Westfall, Member

Absent: Jonathan Bailey

III. ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES:

IT WAS VOTED on a Motion made by Ted Gray to accept the minutes of the September 11, 2008 meeting. Seconded by Brendan Cooney. Motion passed.

IV. NEW BUSINESS:

(A) Court St. – Request for crosswalk behind South Church on Court St. (e-mail dated 9/24/08 attached) – John Howe referred to the South Church request for a crosswalk to go from the rear of the Church across the street to the parish house, there are upwards of 200 children crossing that area on Sundays.

John Howe stated that a representative of the Church recommended rather than a crosswalk, have something similar to the Farmer’s Market on Saturdays where a traffic cone or two could be placed in the middle of Court St. between the two buildings to calm traffic during that time.

MOTION made by John Howe to refer the representative of the church to DPW to determine if this is something that could be done and the Church would be responsible for placing and removal of the cones.

The Chair stated that the item before us is the crosswalk, so we would need a vote of the actual crosswalk. As for the cones, a letter would have to go to the City Manager who would make the determination if it will come back to DPW or a vote of the City Council.

MOTION made by John Howe that the letter be placed on file regarding the crosswalk until other issues are addressed regarding this and a letter be written to the City Manager. Seconded by Ted Gray. Motion passed.

Megan Harris, Manning St. appreciated the suggestion of the cones, felt the crosswalk would be an easier solution, parents, children and teachers go back and

forth on Sundays. There used to be a crosswalk before repavement of Court St. and ask that it be repainted and asked that this be considered.

The Chair stated that if you want to proceed with the crosswalk, discussion at the site walk should be referred to legal because a crosswalk would then go to an active driveway which is the Fire Dept. and Baker's Automotive. Feels the best move is to table the letter.

- (B) **Hancock/Washington Streets** – Request for No Parking (Map attached) – Brendan Cooney referred to the onsite and reviewing section of Washington St. between Hancock and Gate Streets finding it very narrow especially for a two-way street and no parking there seemed to be justified. Discussed the possibility of no parking on both sides of street. Since this would have an impact of availability of street parking for neighboring homes, talked about notifying neighbors for an opportunity for their input before making a decision.

MOTION made by Brendan Cooney to table to next month and to request DPW to send notices to the neighbors on Washington between Hancock and Pleasant Streets. Seconded by Christina Westfall. Motion passed.

III. OLD BUSINESS:

- (A) **Clough Dr. and South St.** – Safety Concerns (e-mail dated 9/24/08 attached) Report back Police Department – Deputy Police Chief DiSesa stated that before school ended last year, this item came up and decided that when the new school year started we would do a stealth stat and also direct patrols and a report back. Referred to an e-mail regarding other traffic calming measures for us to look at. Deputy Police Chief DiSesa reported that on Tuesday, September 30th a Stealth Stat was done for a 24 hour period, specifically for that intersection and for the traveled portion of the road leading into that intersection. Monitored over 11,000 vehicles in 24 hour period, top speed was 40 MPH at 2:30 a.m., the minimum speed was 10 MPH and 50% of the cars traveling that road at 26 MPH. The 85th percentile which is in fact the percentile giving you the clearest maker of what the road supports for speed for that time frame was 31 MPH. When blinking lights are on it is posted 15 MPH when children cross during the school year and there is a school crossing guard. The average speed for the 11,000 monitored cars was 25 MPH. Concentrated traffic enforcement starting the end of August to mid September, stopped 20 cars for excessive speed, warned 16 cars for speeding and summoned 4 cars. We did 34 Traffic enforcement directive patrols during that time span, we also sometimes use a dummy officer and sometimes a real officer in a cruiser which is a tremendous deterrent. There haven't been accidents at that intersection as it is such a concentrated intersection. The stealth stat indicates that speed does not appear to be the safety aspect of the concern. We will continue to monitor that intersection especially times when children are crossing.

A petition signed by numerous people was presented to the Chair which he read to the Committee.

Steve Parkinson referred to a suggestion that could be done immediately is the pedestrian signage at the crosswalks, both advance and at the crosswalk itself. Would have to do research on whether the bright colored paint is legal.

Debbie Finnigan responded a test pilot was done by FHWA with florescent green paint. The paint was not a deterrent to reduce speed and making crosswalk more visible. Does not recommend that as a solution.

Deputy Police Chief DiSesa stated that we could provide cones for them if they wanted to do that.

Christina Westfall referred to Safe Routes to School (SRTS) which put in their grant for weebles and are earmarked for that location.

Deputy Police Chief DiSesa asked where would the cones be stored and carried out? Would prefer to see if the weebles would work before we start putting out cones.

Christina Westfall stated that they've had discussions about parents perhaps taking ownership of these cones, placing them out and bringing them in and the times.

MOTION made by Steve Parkinson to request DPW to place pedestrian signage at the crosswalks, both advance and at the crosswalk itself. Seconded by John Howe.

Christina Westfall suggested seeing if the weebles worked first before the cones. Debbie Finnigan stated that it is a SRTS grant and she sent in a letter about a month ago for approval to order weebles and has not yet received approval and until she does she cannot spend money or the City will not be reimbursed.

MOTION made by seconded by Ted Gray to suspend the rules. Seconded by John Howe. Motion passed.

Erica Taylor, President of PTA at Little Harbor School and stated that many parents are willing to take ownership of the cone issue if this could be done temporarily until the weebles come.

Sheri Nadeau stated that it would be nice to have either a cone or something there and asked if it was a permanent fixture?

The Chair responded they go up until the winter and taken down because of plowing.

The Chair suggested tabling this until an agreement is worked out on the responsibility of who will be responsible for handling this.

Steve Parkinson stated before tabling the whole issue, would like to go ahead and put up pedestrian signage irregardless of the weebles issue and placing of cones.

MOTION made by Steve Parkinson that DPW install advance and directly at the crosswalk appropriate signage for crossing as well as pedestrians symbols on the pavement. Seconded by John Connors. Motion passed.

The Chair stated we will work on the agreement and have it come back for the cones and weebles.

Steve Parkinson stated that this is coming out of the SRTS and believes it more appropriate for SRTS Committee to work with the parents of the appropriate schools to work with the SRTS, City Manager and City's Legal Department.

- (B) **Sagamore Ave. near Jones Ave.** – Site Distance – Report back – Debbie Finnigan reported she did some research on line to see if we could place a hidden driveway ahead sign and if they were still used. She did not come across that sign in particular but did come across some correspondence by Federal Highway and they proposed using a hidden driveway sign on a heavily traveled road. Ms. Finnigan recommended that we put one up going outbound.

MOTION made by Ted Gray to recommend that DPW place a hidden driveway ahead sign going outbound. Seconded by Steve Parkinson. Motion passed.

- (C) **Osprey Landing** – Request for Indefinite Continuation of Gates (letter dated September 13, 2008 attached) – Steve Parkinson stated that in accordance with City Council's request to put up on a temporary basis gate system and discontinue the traffic through this area, stating he has had no issues with this and recommends that it continue as is.

MOTION made by Steve Parkinson recommending approval of the continuation of the gates. Seconded by John Howe. Motion passed.

- (D) **Ocean Road/Winchester St./Suzanne Dr.**- Request for Sign – Report back (letter dated August 29, 2008 attached) – Debbie Finnigan reported she sent a letter to the State DOT asking whether we could place a crosswalk across Ocean Road, which is their jurisdiction and received a response stating that a crosswalk is not appropriate and does not meet the minimum standards. At some point within the next month there will be an agreement to start design on Ocean Road, we will take it over and at that point we can put a crosswalk in.

MOTION made by Steve Parkinson to accept report. Seconded by Christina Westfall. Motion passed.

- (E) **777 Middle Road - Riverbrook Condominiums** – Safety Concerns - Report back (Map attached) – Steve Parkinson referred to the complaint they went out to address was the condominium project only allows one car for each unit and if you have more than one car you have to park elsewhere. The issue has become the small lane that was constructed for the project is being used as a parking lot. Looking at the whole length of Middle Rd. gets too involved with certain areas. There are various areas throughout the whole of Middle Rd, some can have parking, some you can't so we decided to just concentrate on the area of the original complaint at the present time and propose on the northern side of Middle Road to prohibit parking from Sylvester St. to Sweet Ave. Parking is allowed on the opposite side of the street where all the homes are, where the sidewalk is, there is basically in that stretch no safer place to park. Not really inappropriate to define this as no parking. Recommended this be sent to the City Council for a "No Parking" Ordinance.

MOTION made by Steve Parkinson to forward to City Council for approval of “No Parking” on the northern side of Middle Road from Sylvester St. to Swett Ave. Seconded by Christina Westfall. Motion passed.

PROPOSED ORDINANCE CHANGE

IV. OTHER BUSINESS:

- (A) **Hancock Street** – Parking - Ted Gray referred to the parking situation on Hancock St. and asked if it should be looked at for the next meeting?

Steve Parkinson responded that this area has been brought forward by the Parking Committee and at the present time it was tabled from the meeting we just held to the next meeting to invite the neighbors of that particular stretch of street so they understand what is going on.

Ted Gray stated that many of the cars parked there have nothing to do with the neighborhood except it is close to down town.

- (B) The Chair informed the Committee that on October 14th at 6:30 p.m. in the Levenson Room at the Library we are having an Informational Session on Resident Only Parking Program.

V. ADJOURNMENT

Respectfully submitted,
Elaine E. Boucas, Recording Secretary