

**PORTSMOUTH
TRAFFIC & SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING
8:00 a.m. – Thursday, February 10, 2011
City Hall – Eileen Dondero Foley Council Chambers**

I. CALL TO ORDER:

Councilor Ken Smith, Chairman called the meeting to order at approximately 8:15 a.m.

II. ROLL CALL: Members Present:

Councilor Ken Smith, Chairman	Ted Gray, Vice-Chair
Steve Parkinson, Public Works Director	Ron Cypher, Member
Deputy Police Chief Steve DuBois	Harold Whitehouse, Member
Fire Inspector Carl Roediger	Kent Kirkpatrick, Member
Jon Frederick, Parking & Transportation	John Connors, Member
Absent: Christina Westfall	

Also present were Rick Taintor, Planning Director; Mike Bergeron, Service Credit Union; Kim Eric Hazarvartian, Traffic Engineer; Bradlee Mezquita, Appledore; Roland Cote and Janet Morley.

III. ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES:

IT WAS VOTED on a Motion made by Ron Cypher to accept the minutes of the January 13, 2011 meeting. Seconded by Harold Whitehouse. Motion passed.

IV. NEW BUSINESS:

(A) Union Street - Middle to State Streets – Resident Request for One-Way – Jon Frederick reported that Janet Morley changed her request and would like us to take a look at parking on only one side of the street. Jon Frederick recommended referring this to the Parking Committee for further review.

Roland Cote, Union St. resident together with Janet Morley expressed their concerns regarding safety. The street is much narrower due to the snow banks and vehicles still park on the street causing much difficulty for an average size vehicle to travel through. They are concerned that an emergency vehicle could not get through. This is mostly during the hours 7:00 pm to 6:00 a.m. (during the daytime people are at work). He doesn't feel it is a plowing issue and stated that the Public Works Department does an A-1 job. Recently a parked car was sideswiped by a vehicle that could not get through. They are requesting that parking be on just one side of the street.

Councilor Smith requested a report back from the Fire Department for width of streets in order for emergency vehicles to get through and the Police Department for any continuing accidents in that area. Steve

Parkinson suggested for the Fire and Police Departments to make a list of streets throughout the City with these issues, in particular the South End.

MOTION made by Harold Whitehouse to refer to the March 10 Parking Committee for parking on one side of the street and a report back from the Fire and Police Departments regarding streets where widths are a concern.

Jon Frederick suggested that this issue be placed on the April 14th agenda as we already have a very aggressive agenda for March meeting.

AMENDED MOTION made by Harold Whitehouse to refer to the April 14 Parking Committee and a report back from the Fire and Police Departments. Seconded by Ron Cypher. Motion passed.

- (B) **Service Credit Union – Lafayette Road - Proposed Office Building** (Site Plan and Traffic Summary attached) – Bradlee Mezquita of Appledore Engineering presented the Committee with a plan for the proposed Corporate Headquarters building on Lafayette Rd between Longmeadow and Lang Roads, and across from the new Fire Station. There was a previous approval from the Planning Board as part of a project back in 2006 where there was discussion to put in the connector road from Lang out to extension of Longmeadow. The connector originally would provide access for the development outback as well as support of the facility that was originally proposed. In part of that approval there was the deeded right-of-way that was set aside for this road and for the Longmeadow extension. All the ground work was laid out back on a previous approval. As part of the Service Credit Union (SCU) proposal they are proposing to install and construct those roadways in a manner that would restrict left turns from Lang onto Lafayette for traffic traveling up Lang from Rye. That traffic would be sent left onto the connector road, right onto Longmeadow to the signal at Longmeadow and Lafayette Road to take a left on southbound Lafayette Road.

Steve Parkinson questioned their building the road; the plan shows a private road easement.

Mr. Mezquita responded there is current discussion on construction, as the agreement happened between them and the City, timing and whose contractor. It will be constructed as part of this project, it is intended to be a public road. Originally, the previous proposal had a private way as part of that agreement. Very recently, the City has discussed accepting that as a public way, discussions are ongoing. He referred to the plan where proposed parking would be. All employees are intended to go out and access the signal at Longmeadow and Lafayette, providing easy access for employees to Route 1 as well as helping the City to avoid the conflict of left turns off Lang onto Lafayette.

Steve Parkinson referred to another entrance/exit that appears to be gated, what is the purpose of the gate, who will be using it and why not leave it open?

The intent was that loading vehicles not be brought across in front of the building. There have been discussions with the Fire Department.

We have been to TAC twice and cannot make recommendation until City Council readings. We are going back in March for formal approval.

Deputy Police Chief DuBois asked about traffic volume taking a left out to Lang - are you redirecting out behind the building?

Mr. Hazarvartian responded under the existing condition the weekday p.m. peak hour 29 vehicles want to turn left out of Lang and in a.m. peak hour 93 vehicles wanting to turn left. There will be signage "To Rte.1 South take a left" at the point where Lang intersects the new road. There will also be pavement markings at the end of Lang Road and "No Left Turn" signs. There is not enough room to put in a real pork chop, you need a larger radius.

Sidewalk will be provided along east side of Lafayette Road.

Members were concerned with increased traffic.

Deputy Police Chief DuBois referred to Lang Rd where the left hand turn is going behind the property - is there a left hand turn lane?

It would be made from the existing single lane and volume is low enough that it would not be an issue. Would there be a line of traffic in front of the Fire Department to prevent them from getting out, there is a light there to stop traffic so they can get out but if traffic is actually stopped there. Would that cause a problem for the Fire Department?

Fire Inspector Carl Roediger understands from earlier discussions it would not be significant.

In winter time when traffic volumes are low the operation will be pretty much the same as now. In the summer time when traffic volumes are higher they will operate very similar as they do now. There will be some queueing in the summertime during that whole section of Rte.1.

Fire Inspector Carl Roediger stated the issue is that fire apparatus exiting Station 2 onto Lafayette Rd does not go through the signalized intersection. Apparatus departing the Station comes down the apron, there is a separate set of lights, but the issue is for apparatus exiting to proceed north. The queue of traffic coming southbound is attempting to make a left turn to get onto Longmeadow, if that queue is allowed to get long enough, in essence cuts off the apparatus being able to exit Station 2. Adjustments would be made to the signals that were going to limit the number of vehicles that queue to make that left turn so that they would not back up enough to impact apparatus coming out heading north.

Mr. Mezquita responded that what is going on at Lafayette Rd is largely governed by the big volumes out there now, the project in and of itself is not going to make a significant change to the area.

Fire Inspector Carl Roediger is concerned that with all these traffic changes, there still will be no restriction to vehicles proceeding southbound on Lafayette Rd who wish to get onto Lang that in no way are we restricting that left hand turn, coming down Rt.1 southbound on Lafayette, can still make left hand turn without having to go to the intersection, as the intersection will deal mostly with those that are accessing the proposed site. As that intersection gets developed and as the signals get tweaked, there needs to be a way to ensure that the timing does not exceed the point to where too many vehicles queue up blocking Lafayette Rd so that nothing can proceed out the Station.

Mr. Mezquita stated this is something that should be included in the signal timing and DOT will be involved with this as well.

John Connor is concerned with the traffic coming from Longmeadow to Lafayette indicates on the other side on Ocean Rd a break lane and a right turn lane, on Longmeadow onto Lafayette shows one lane - will vehicles be able to make a right turn?

Mr. Mezquita responded this has been analyzed, the lane is 20 ft width functions when traffic demands. Recommends leaving it as it is, traffic will optimize and people making a left turn from that approach, the other traffic will get around it, the traffic will make it work.

Steve Parkinson stated that staff is continuing to work with the developer regarding Longmeadow and this connector road.

John Connors feels it should be looked into, there will be a lot more traffic there.

Deputy Police Chief DuBois stated that a problem for the Police will be more accidents and a lot of complaints to the Police Department about enforcement there.

Steve Parkinson stated this is something that needs to be looked at.

Mr. Mezquita reported they designed the connector road working with Public Works regarding lane widths and shoulder widths.

The Chair referred to walking paths that are currently at the other locations and the proposed plan looks like seating areas and parks - would they be open to the public?

Mr. Mezquita responded it is meant for employees and not a public park.

A concern of the Chair, while he thinks it's a great idea, people are always looking for a nice place to walk, get exercise, walk their dog, etc. if this turns out where they start to use it, concerned people will pull over on the side of this access road to be able to walk into that area. Has anyone looked at these issues? The grading does not show on the plan, can people pull over in this grassed area? He is concerned about traffic coming over from the large housing complex.

Mr. Mezquita reported there is grading along the sides of the road so it's not conducive for them to pull off at that location.

Steve Parkinson referred back to the gate stating it appears the gate is probably a truck lane off the road and concerned people pulling in there not realizing it is a gate and having to back out into Lang Rd.

Mr. Mezquita responded the discussion they had was once the connector road gets put in place, people coming from Rye will realize they are not supposed to take a right at Lafayette anymore - will they turn around and then back out and come back around? The answer they came to is the people coming from Rye take the same route every day, so it will be a learning activity. They may make a mistake the first week the road is open and signage is up, but it won't be a movement that people make just passing by coming from Rye up Lang Rd.

Steve Parkinson asked if the Traffic study dated December 2010 is the latest one. He is concerned - was the gate part of the requirement of the project or is it not?

Mr. Hazarvartia responded it is the latest one, the difference is that at one point they proposed to not put the gate in and had an appendix in the main part and an appendix in the study you have. When they go to DOT, will essentially flip the appendix around.

Steve Parkinson asked where this stood in TAC.

Rick Taintor responded TAC is reviewing it and was postponed to March 1st TAC meeting. In order for this development to go forward, needs a zoning change which has had 1st reading at City Council. If things progress, it will go to 3rd reading March 7th and then a Special TAC meeting on March 8th.and back at Traffic & Safety March 10th, then the Planning Board March 17th. TAC is looking at this, the whole question of the connector road preexisted this development as part of the original sub-division approval for this property. The road is supposed to be connected in connection with the development for this parcel and front parcel, although there is a question as to who actually is responsible for creating that road. It is ambiguous as part of the sub-division process. With respect to the gate, TAC didn't ask for the gate and not sure the gate will actually survive. The site plan process is a lot of concern about the gate at TAC and perhaps the Planning Board. A work session will be held next week with the Planning Board to discuss the gate.

Steve Parkinson's understanding is the sub-division on this property required that connector road.

Rick Taintor responded required a connection be created that essentially function like beside Market Basket, a private road actually used by the public.

Ted Gray asked who maintained that connector road that was a private road that the public could use?

Rick Taintor responded that is one of the issues, it is ambiguous what the status is.

Steve Parkinson stated Market Basket is privately maintained. If in fact, it was a private road, we could not prohibit a left hand turn.

Rick Taintor stated the long range plan is to widen the road, create a median across Lang Rd to prevent any left turns; this is in the future. The reason for the connector road is morning people come from Rye, turn left on Lang, turn right on Ocean. It is that double left turn movement they are trying to avoid. Bringing them directly on Ocean eliminates that left turn altogether on Lafayette Rd.

Steve Parkinson referred to the existing signals at the intersection on Longmeadow - do you have current information and what qualifications may or may not be needed to the existing signal timing sequencing and have you discussed any of this with the State?

Mr. Hazarvartian responded he asked DOT for all existing settings and they stated we were better off going out and watching the signals, see how it works and then do a traffic analysis. The DOT is getting the traffic study, and Traffic folks and Bureau of Highway Design will look at it and provide us with advice. Mr. Hazarvartian kept the signal in its existing configuration, no signal heads were added, basically optimized the timing with reasonable setting.

Steve Parkinson stated there is some control of that intersection from fire Station. So when they push the button it activates the sequence going on, it does have some impact to the operation of that intersection.

Mr. Hazarvartian is interested in learning more about this as he is not aware of a control at that intersection, there is a signal in front of the Fire Station.

Fire Inspector Carl Roediger stated that's the one they have control over which right now is in question. Would it be possible, if we started to see that southbound to Lafayette, the queue to make that left turn onto Longmeadow, would it be possible to synchronize the signalized intersection, basically if the fire people had to exit the building, activation of the red lights in front of the Station would also trigger the intersection to activate the green left turn arrow?

Mr. Hazarvartian responded from a traffic engineering view, feels it could work but DOT would have to be involved.

Steve Parkinson will look at the signal plans for the changes made for the Fire Station. He believes that once they activate the system, it stops all traffic, stops northbound, Ocean Rd and dumps the southbound traffic. It is hooked up this way, went through the DOT Traffic Bureau and was approved and is in operation now.

Ted Gray asked if signage is planned, assuming the gate remains, to let public know this is a gated driveway? Would need one both North and South on Lang Rd. Are there plans for "No Parking" signs on Land and Longmeadow and proposed cut through road?

Mr. Hazarvartia responded he will make that recommendation and has been thinking of that design on that particular one.

Fire Inspector Carl Roediger's concern is if this body asked for removal of the gate. Given the site and location and the way the roads are coming, these are all private driveways, this is no different than Liberty Mutual or any other private company. Concern we have is if the gate were removed, now the offer to someone access from Lang to Longmeadow in a roadway that was never designed for anything other than to allow people coming to the building at a much lower rate of speed, between the twists and turns, crosswalk, people etc.. He feels if the gate was removed, it would put the people who work here in jeopardy.

The chair stated if it were his recommendation to remove the gate, would recommend that the road not continue all the way through, the purpose of that road is to come in and be a truck dump, then back out and the traffic could come through. Remove the gate and have a curb cut at the other end so it's that driveway is serving that specific purpose of being a driveway for trucks and delivery vehicles to access the building and not even be able to come through all the way.

Fire Inspector Carl Roediger responded the reason for discussion about their having the ability to have some control over the gate is that gate provides a key second means of access for emergency services to get to this location. Allows access from the North as well now as emergency apparatus coming in from the south and would not be in favor of anything that eliminated the ability to have more south access.

The Chair stated this is something that needs to be taken up at TAC, does not feel it should be a recommendation of this Committee to remove the gate. We need to base our decisions on what are actuals and if it's an actual the gate is there, then we have concerns and how to resolve with signage or what have you. If the gate is not there, we have other things we need to be concerned with.

John Connors asked if it would make a difference to place at the other end. **MOTION** made by Steve Parkinson to table this application until our next meeting pending remaining items coming out of TAC. Seconded by Ted Gray Motion passed.

V. OLD BUSINESS:

- (A) **Hislop Park Ball Field** – Neighborhood Concerns with Proposed Expansion - Report back from Public Works regarding parking under the bridge – Steve Parkinson referred to the suggestion of increasing parking in the area of the ball field. One suggestion was on the stretch between Ranger Way and Ranger Way, underneath I-95 structure. Currently, at this area people parallel park during games. Diagonal head-in parking would increase capacity. Believes this is probably doable but hard for us to see what is there now with the amount of snow. Everything between Ranger Way and Ranger Way is owned by the State of New Hampshire. The City has had the park and playground under the bridge since 1975, but the land is owned by the State. Suggested in the spring we look at this, if at a reasonable expense put pavement down, expand some diagonal parking.

MOTION made by Steve Parkinson to postpone to spring. Seconded by John Connors. Motion passed.

- (B) **Middle Rd** – Request for 2 deaf child signs and 20 MPH Speed Limit at Middle Rd/South St. triangle to Middle St. – Report back from Public Works to see if the funding can be done as part of our improvements. Report back from the Police Department regarding the stealth stat – Jon Frederick stated that it is a connector road between two 30 MPH roads which is something that is probably not permissible.

DuBois reported the Police Department has nothing on file from their stealth stat done in the past and with the current snow banks are unable to place a trailer there.

The Chair stated that if the warrants meet, could we be able to use stop sign at that corner?

Steve Parkinson stated it will not meet warrants. There is a sidewalk replacement project there and he is not doing a traffic study.

Fire Inspector Carl Roediger asked if 30 MPH is an appropriate speed from Middle Rd/South St intersection to Middle Rd/Middle Street.

MOTION made by Ted Gray to table until spring for placement of the stealth stat for average speed. Seconded by Fire Inspector Carl Roediger. Motion passed.

- (C) **Crosswalk Paint** – Update – Jon Frederick reported that yellow green is not available in the United States.
MOTION made by Steve Parkinson to table for continued report back.
Seconded by Deputy Police Chief DuBois. Motion passed.

VI. ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION made by Ron Cypher to adjourn. Seconded by Harold Whitehouse.
Motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,
Elaine E. Boucas, Recording Secretary