

**MINUTES OF THE
BLUE RIBBON COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION POLICY**

October 9, 2012

Conference Room A

7:30 a.m.

Members Present: Councilor Ken Smith, Councilor Brad Lown, Rick Chellman, Paige Roberts, Cliff Sinnott, Eric Gregg, Bill Lyons

Members Absent: None

City Staff Present: Rick Taintor, Steve Parkinson

Others Present: Burt Cohen & Patrick Ellis (Sustainability Committee)

Chairman Smith called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m.

As the first order of business Councilors unanimously approved the minutes from the September 11, 2012 meeting.

To begin the meeting, Planning Director Rick Taintor gave an overview of transportation sections in the City's 2005 Master Plan and discussed objectives and strategies in four key areas: walkability, balance/choice in the transportation system, transit, and downtown parking.

Public Works Director Steve Parkinson and committee member Bill Lyons briefly discussed how the Seacoast Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) could develop and fund the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

Chairman Smith stated that the Capital Improvement Plan is the starting point for all transportation projects.

Councilor Lown asked if meeting Portsmouth's long-term transportation infrastructure needs should be a private sector question.

Eric Gregg said it would be helpful to discuss the accomplishments of the Master Plan's transportation strategies since 2005 to focus the discussion.

Cliff Sinnott asked for clarification on the role of transportation policy in this Committee. Mr. Taintor suggested that the role would be to develop policy statements to guide the direction of the 2015 Master Plan.

Next, Rick Chellman discussed the history and concept of Complete Streets. The Complete Streets concept attempts to provide more balance to all transportation modes. According to Mr. Chellman, the City missed an opportunity to make State Street two-way during the recent State Street project and that there are other significant opportunities for the future.

Chairman Smith asked if the concept could improve areas outside downtown. Mr. Chellman noted that walkability could be improved on streets with sweeping curves.

Councilor Lown asked what else could make streets more pedestrian friendly besides converting one-way to two-way traffic.

Mr. Lyons said that the concept could help calm traffic, reduce the need for off-street parking, and make the downtown more attractive. Mr. Lyons suggested that outside downtown, Complete Streets could better accommodate bicyclists. He pointed to Islington Street and Route 33 out to Pease as challenging opportunities. Mr. Gregg said that the owner of Papa Wheelie's has said the City should find ways to support its many bike commuters.

Mr. Chellman suggested that streets should be designed for 20mph traffic to improve pedestrian safety. Mr. Parkinson said the City has completed a study of speed limits downtown, in order to support proposed speed limits. He explained that the State does not allow posting of speeds without documentation of need. Mr. Chellman also noted that AASHTO's standards were established so that streets are designed for evacuation in emergencies.

Burt Cohen and Patrick Ellis, from the Sustainability Committee, are interested in promoting Complete Streets as part of their committee's focus on transportation.

Following this discussion, the committee set the next meeting date for November 13, 2012 at 7:30am. The topics will include planning for bicycles and pedestrians and a status update on the transportation strategies in the 2005 Master Plan. December's meeting will include a presentation by the Sustainability Committee on Sustainable Portsmouth's 2011 Transportation Vision and the 2012 Memorial Bridge and Regional Transportation.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Rick Taintor
Planning Director