

MEETING MINUTES

PARKING and TRAFFIC SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING

8:00 A.M. – July 7, 2016

City Hall – Eileen Dondero Foley Council Chambers

I. CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Lown called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

II. ROLL CALL:

Members Present:

Chairman, Brad Lown
Deputy City Manager, Nancy Colbert Puff
Public Works Director, Peter Rice
Deputy Fire Chief, James Heinz
Police Lieutenant, Chris Cummings
Member, Ted Gray
Member, Harold Whitehouse
Member, Ronald Cypher
Member, Shari Donnermeyer
Alternate Member, Mary Lou McElwain

Staff Advisors Present:

Parking and Transportation Engineer, Eric Eby
Transportation Planner, Juliet Walker

III. ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES:

Ron Cypher motioned to accept the June 2, 2016, meeting minutes.

Ted Gray seconded.

Motion passed 9-0.

IV. FINANCIAL REPORT:

Harold Whitehouse motioned to accept the financial report dated May 31, 2016.

Shari Donnermeyer seconded.

Motion passed 9-0.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT:

No public comment.

VI. PRESENTATIONS:

A. Islington Street Lab project– Doug Roberts, Chair, Portsmouth Smart Growth for the 21st Century (PS21), presented to the Committee. Peter Vandermark, PS21 Board Member, was also present. Mr. Roberts provided a report, presented a video and discussed highlights of the project. The report is posted on the City's website under the July 2016 Current Calendar section.

Mr. Roberts discussed the following aspects of the project: community participation, sponsorship, community survey results and comments regarding the project area, traffic, street elements and design. He stated the three main goals were to: guide permanent street improvements to increase the vitality, walkability and safety of Islington Street, using traffic calming, safer pedestrian options, place making and beautification; increase civic engagement and diversify the network of advocates in the West End neighborhood; demonstrate and develop support for the use of tactical urbanism projects in Portsmouth.

Harold Whitehouse thanked PS21 for their work and inquired about the possibility of a roundabout on Islington Street at Albany Street. Deputy Fire Chief Heinz commented that insufficient time was provided to review the report. He was present during the project and would have appreciated having his concerns expressed on the video. Mr. Roberts concluded by saying the survey results support the project.

VII. NEW BUSINESS:

A. Petition by White Heron Tea for permanent crosswalk on Islington Street at Albany Street, referred by City Council – Eric Eby informed the Committee this agenda item was presented at the June 20th City Council meeting. The White Heron Tea business owner submitted a petition for a permanent crosswalk, along with 250 signatures, to the City Council. The matter was referred to PTS. Eric Eby stated that, if the Committee wanted to consider a sidewalk at this location, the staff recommendation would be to install a temporary crosswalk with bump-out at the same location as the PS21 project, for a period of up to 30 days. The pilot project would determine the impacts and effects of a crosswalk at Islington and Albany. He proposed installing the newly purchased traffic cameras in order to observe traffic patterns and record data. Mr. Eby stated that staff is not recommending reinstalling the three parking spaces in the right-turn lane on Islington Street.

Harold Whitehouse asked about additional measures for safety, such as strobe lights. Eric Eby stated the crosswalk would include a bump-out and signage for safety. Public Works Director Rice reminded the Committee that this item had been presented before and the recommendation was not to pursue a crosswalk due to the number of lanes pedestrians had to

cross. He stated that a bump-out would increase safety by eliminating one of the lanes to allow for a shorter and safer crossing. Mary Lou McElwain expressed support for the pilot project. Shari Donnermeyer motioned to approve a permanent crosswalk with bump-out. After Committee discussion, Shari Donnermeyer revised her motion to approve the 30-day pilot project to study impacts of a temporary crosswalk, bump-out and signage on Islington Street at Albany Street. Ron Cypher seconded.

Harold Whitehouse expressed safety concerns regarding the project, but stated he would vote in support. Deputy Fire Chief Heinz stated he would not support the pilot project because Islington Street is a major response route. He stated the project could affect response time to an emergency and there is already an established crosswalk at the signaled intersection of Bartlett and Islington. Deputy Fire Chief Heinz stated he actively participated in the charrette and is opposed to the temporary project.

The Committee discussed traffic flows and queues as a result of the pilot project, bump-out impacts and the narrowing of Islington Street at the temporary crosswalk.

Public Works Director Rice advised the Committee that the pilot program implementation would take time, but an update would be provided at the August PTS meeting.

Vote 6-3, to approve a 30-day pilot project to study impacts of a temporary crosswalk, bump-out and signage on Islington Street at Albany Street.

Deputy Fire Chief Heinz, Ted Gray and Chris Cummings, Police Lieutenant, voted opposed.

B. Banfield Road local delivery route ordinance. Clarification on truck restriction requested by Dave Ecker – Eric Eby stated Mr. Ecker expressed concern regarding truck traffic on Banfield Road at several public meetings. Mr. Ecker believes that the ordinance was intended to allow local delivery trucks on Banfield Road only when making deliveries to a Banfield Road address. Eric Eby stated the ordinance does not specifically state that trucks may only use a local delivery route when conducting business at a property on the roadway. He stated that judging by the streets that were included in the local delivery route ordinance, it appears that being designated as a local delivery route would allow trucks to use the street to get to other streets. Staff recommended examining the original intent of the local delivery route ordinance and report back with a recommendation to clarify the ordinance.

Public Works Director Rice motioned to have City staff review the history and intent of the ordinance and report back on recommended changes to the ordinance to clarify where and when trucks are excluded. Shari Donnermeyer seconded.

Harold Whitehouse asked about the location of Hayes Place (number 22 on ordinance), and if the ordinance restricts truck travel for the Peirce Island Wastewater Treatment Facility construction project. Public Works Director Rice stated the existing ordinance would have no impact on the project. The Committee discussed enforcement.

Vote 9-0, to have City staff review history and intent of ordinance and report back on recommended changes to ordinance to clarify where and when trucks are excluded.

C. Audible pedestrian signals, request for information – Eric Eby stated a citizen had requested information as to when and how audible pedestrian signals are installed. The request was submitted to the Fire Department. Eric Eby provided a detailed memorandum, which is available in the packet, outlining the requirements. He stated an engineering study would be conducted to determine the need and certain requirements that must be followed.

Deputy Fire Chief Heinz stated there is an existing audible pedestrian signal at South Street and Lafayette Road. Mary Lou McElwain asked about installing audible pedestrian signals when there are changes in signalization at a crosswalk.

No action required on this action item.

D. Stark Street one-way traffic flow reversal – Eric Eby stated that the request is due to the summer construction project to build a cul-de-sac at the end of Myrtle Avenue at the entrance to the New Franklin School. Eric Eby stated this design would allow school buses to use Myrtle Avenue to enter and exit the school grounds. School buses would no longer exit onto Woodbury Avenue. The remaining school traffic would exit by way of Stark Street to Dennett Street. The ordinance would need to be changed in order to accommodate the new traffic patterns.

Eric Eby stated that Stark Street is restricted to one-way traffic heading into New Franklin School. The ordinance change would reverse the one-way flow to allow for one-way traffic leaving the school. There is a residential driveway at 2 Stark Street. The road would continue to allow 2-way traffic between the driveway and Dennett Street. The resident would still have access to the driveway under this change.

The Committee discussed the school bus routes, nearby tennis courts and cul-de-sac. Eric Eby stated a few trees would need to be removed as part of this plan, but the tennis courts would not be affected.

Shari Donnermeyer motioned to change the one-way flow on Stark Street bridge to allow New Franklin School traffic to exit onto Dennett Street. Ted Gray seconded. **Vote 9-0, to change the one-way flow on Stark Street bridge to allow New Franklin School traffic to exit onto Dennett Street.**

E. Bicycle riding restrictions in parks, referred by City Council – Eric Eby stated the issue was presented at the last City Council meeting. There was a question posed about the use of bicycles in parks. Eric Eby stated City Ordinance Chapter 8, Article II, Section 8.204, addressed this topic. Staff requested time to review the ordinance and city park designs to determine if there are paths that are suitable for bicycles. If paths were determined to be suitable for bicycles, signage or markings would need to be installed. Staff is recommending time to review the issue and report back.

Harold Whitehouse motioned to have City staff review existing ordinances and report back with recommendations and clarification. Ron Cypher seconded.

The Committee discussed adding hover boards, Segways, scooters and skateboards to the list of items that are restricted in parks. Public Works Director Rice requested the language be broadened to include anything other than pedestrian. Chairman Lown suggested keeping the action item to the review of bicycles as directed by City Council for the present motion. The Committee discussed enforcement. Juliet Walker, Transportation Planner, advised the Committee that further review is needed before a recommendation is provided.

Vote 9-0, to have City staff review existing ordinances and report back with recommendations and clarification.

F. Request for crosswalk on Elwyn Road at Harding Road, by Vernon Pearce – Eric Eby stated the Committee conducted a site visit at the location on Tuesday, July 5th. The crosswalk would be placed on Elwyn Road at Harding Road near a gated entrance of the Urban Forestry Center. Eric Eby stated traffic speeds on Elwyn Road were recorded at 35 mph instead of the posted 25 mph. He stated that a stopping sight distance of 250 feet is needed for a roadway speed of 35 mph. Because of the curvature of the roadway, it would not be safe to have a crosswalk at this location. He recorded pedestrian activity in a 24-hour period at the location. There were less than 20 all day and only 4 in an hour. The standard for a crosswalk is a minimum of 20 pedestrian crossings during the peak hour.

Eric Eby stated due to vehicle speeds, poor sight lines, and low pedestrian activity, staff would not recommend installing a crosswalk on Elwyn Road at Harding Road.

Harold Whitehouse motioned to accept staff communication and place on file. Ron Cypher seconded. **Vote 9-0, to accept staff communication and place on file.**

VIII. OLD BUSINESS:

A. Moped, motorcycle and scooter parking – Eric Eby stated that parking enforcement staff are monitoring moped parking downtown. Staff will review data and determine where designated on-street parking would be most appropriate for mopeds and motorcycles. He stated mopeds are currently parking on sidewalks and are being ticketed if they obstruct pedestrian pathways.

IX. PUBLIC COMMENT:

Peter Vandermark addressed concerns expressed by several Committee members regarding the Islington Street Lab project survey and video. He expressed his personal support for a crosswalk on Islington Street at Albany Street due to pedestrian safety.

Jonathan Blakeslee spoke to his petition submittal for a permanent crosswalk on Islington Street at Albany Street that was provided in the PTS packet. He expressed concern for

pedestrian safety and addressed the traffic queuing. He thanked the Committee for the 30-day pilot project approval.

Doug Roberts thanked the Committee for the 30-day pilot project approval. He expressed concern that the crosswalk was only one element of the project. He supported the corner modification at Islington Street and Bartlett Street.

X. INFORMATIONAL:

A. 4-way stop at Arboretum Drive and Pease Boulevard – Eric Eby updated the Committee on the 4-way stop installed on Tuesday, July 5, 2016, at Arboretum Drive and Pease Boulevard. Harold Whitehouse asked if the Pease Development Authority (PDA), Pease Association, PTS, or City Council is responsible for granting approval of this request. Public Works Director Rice stated that the Legal Department should be consulted regarding the specifics of the agreement between the PDA and City.

Harold Whitehouse requested a review of the intersection at International Drive and New Hampshire Avenue. Eric Eby informed the Committee that PDA has completed a master plan of the transportation improvements and would be implementing improvements as required.

Public Works Director Rice conveyed appreciation to the participants and coordinators of the Islington Street Lab project. He stated that a design plan of the entire corridor is underway and other city departments will be consulted. He stated that many of the areas identified in the project would be addressed as part of the design plan.

Ron Cypher asked the Deputy Fire Chief Heinz if the fire trucks were equipped with devices to change streetlights. Mr. Heinz stated there are approximately 20 intersections equipped with the technology. The Committee discussed using the technology on new equipment at Islington Street and Bartlett Street when improvements are made.

Harold Whitehouse asked for an update regarding his request from the June meeting for a report on any city or town that has passed an ordinance on pedestrians looking at electronic devices while crossing in a crosswalk in a central business district. Eric Eby stated he did investigate the issue and discovered that no legislation has been passed in any other jurisdiction regarding this issue. He stated there is pending jurisdiction in New Jersey regarding distracted walking.

Mary Lou McElwain requested an update on her request from the June meeting regarding a monthly report on bicycle and pedestrians accidents. Chris Cummings, Police Lieutenant, stated he would talk to Police Captain Warchol. Public Works Director Rice requested that vehicular accidents be included in the report.

Mary Lou McElwain asked if there would be an update on The Music Hall design plan. Nancy Colbert Puff, Deputy City Manager, stated they are scheduled to go back to the Historic District Commission for public comment at the August meeting.

XI. ADJOURNMENT – At 9:07 a.m., voted to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted by:

Amy Chastain
Secretary of the Committee