

**BRATTLEBORO TRAFFIC SAFETY COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, JANUARY 28, 2014
8:30AM – SELECTBOARD MEETING ROOM
MINUTES**

Members present: Interim Town Manager Patrick Moreland, Fire Chief Mike Bucossi, Planning Services Director Rod Francis, Police Chief Gene Wrinn, School Representative Betsy Gentile, Chamber Representative Leo Schiff, and Citizen Representative Robert Immler.

Selectboard representative present: David Gartenstein.

Other staff members present: Highway/Utilities Superintendent Hannah O'Connell.

Others present: Terry A. Carter, Matt Speno, Rachel Zamore, Debra Kitzmiller, Teta Hilsdon, Laura Barcomb, Hannah Neff, David S. Wheelock, Steve Nelson, and others who did not sign the attendance sheet.

Interim Town Manager Moreland called the meeting to order at 8:30am.

MOTION BY DAVID GARTENSTEIN, AND SECONDED BY BETSY GENTILE, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM DECEMBER 24, 2013 AS PRESENTED. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Public Participation – Terry Carter said that she had been attending Traffic Safety Committee meetings for over a year. She said there had been misunderstandings of her requests, and she asked for more citizen-friendly protocols and procedures. She said the process can be intimidating and daunting for citizens to appear before the Committee to voice their concerns. There was some discussion by the Committee requesting clarification and one suggestion that the Traffic Calming Plan recently implemented may help in promoting communication.

Sidewalk Plowing – *East Side of Cedar Street from Western Avenue to Acorn Lane.* Moreland said that David Wheelock sent a letter requesting that the sidewalk be plowed on the east side of Cedar from Western Avenue to Acorn Lane. Wheelock was present and said that he was a crossing guard on the corner of Union Street and Western Avenue. He said that sidewalks in that area do not get plowed and have mounds of snow that have frozen into ice banks. He said that school children must walk in the traffic portion of Cedar Street to get to the intersection to cross Western Avenue to get to school. He said that he recently saw two children slip off the mound of snow, and that one slid into the roadway but fortunately no cars were travelling there at that time. He said that it was very dangerous and he asked that a portion of the sidewalk from Western Avenue to Acorn Street be plowed for the safety of the children and their parental escorts.

An unidentified speaker said that she lives on Myrtle Street and spoke about the substantial amount of traffic on Cedar Street and the lack of sidewalk plowing. She requested that the sidewalk be plowed to Myrtle Street.

Another unidentified speaker said that she lives past Myrtle Street and asked that the entire sidewalk on the east side of Cedar Street be plowed.

Hannah Neff said that she lives in the area and has child in a wheelchair and they cannot walk safely in the neighborhood because they have to walk in the street. She said that all sidewalks in the neighborhood should be plowed.

Debra Kitzmiller said that she lives near Myrtle Street past the stop sign. She said that the Myrtle Street intersection was dangerous because the cars parked on the street made visibility difficult and consequently it was unsafe to walk there.

There was much discussion by the Committee about the sidewalks on Cedar Street, parking on Cedar Street, mileage of sidewalks in Town, mileage that are plowed and the time it takes to plow them, the cost of plowing, reduction of plowing staff and equipment over the years, and plowing ordinances.

Gartenstein said that the Committee did not have authority to add plowing to the route and that procedurally the Committee could forward a recommendation to the Selectboard. There was further discussion to add the matter to the next Traffic Safety Committee meeting to look at the sidewalk plowing map as a whole and possibly discuss a recommendation to the Selectboard.

Gentile, as a Committee member and representative for the School District, spoke in strong support of plowing that section of sidewalk. She said that the Western Avenue intersection was particularly dangerous and that plowing near and around schools was a priority. She spoke about the heavy amount of traffic on Cedar Street, speed of the traffic, parked cars on both sides of the street, lack of sidewalk plowing on the street, and the need for school children to walk in the street. She suggested looking at the sidewalk plowing map as a whole but requested temporary plowing as an emergency procedure because of the possible snow storms before the next meetings of the Committee and Selectboard. She said that she intended to make a motion to plow that area of sidewalk as a temporary emergency measure and to seek long-term plowing at a later time. There was discussion over clarifying the motion.

MOTION BY BETSY GENTILE TO ASK THAT PUBLIC WORKS TEMPORARILY PLOW THE SIDEWALK ON CEDAR STREET TO ACORN LANE AS PART OF THE GREEN STREET SCHOOL EARLY SCHOOL PLOWING PROGRAM, AND THEN INVESTIGATE THE POSSIBILITY ABOUT GOING FURTHER ON CEDAR STREET AND LOOKING AT THE MAP AS A WHOLE.

Schiff offered a friendly amendment to the motion to add plowing the sidewalk on the east side of Cedar Street to Myrtle Street. Gentile accepted the friendly amendment.

AMENDED MOTION BY BETSY GENTILE TO ASK THAT PUBLIC WORKS TEMPORARILY PLOW THE SIDEWALK ON THE EAST SIDE OF CEDAR STREET TO MYRTLE STREET AS PART OF THE GREEN STREET SCHOOL EARLY SCHOOL PLOWING PROGRAM, AND THEN INVESTIGATE THE POSSIBILITY ABOUT GOING FURTHER ON CEDAR STREET AND LOOKING AT THE MAP AS A WHOLE. MOTION CARRIED BY MAJORITY VOTE (MORELAND ABSTAINED).

The Committee thanked Wheeler for bringing the matter to its attention and for his work as a crossing guard in keeping the children safe.

Traffic Calming Plan Safety Action Request Forms – There was a discussion by the Committee about how information about the availability of the Traffic Calming Plan would be distributed to the public.

(a) Terry Carter – Putney Road, Area from Brattleboro Common to Veterans’ Bridge. Moreland reviewed the history of discussions regarding this area, including previous requests for a crosswalk and other devices, mechanisms, line striping and/or actions to add a calming effect to the area. There was discussion by the Committee about having previously rejected the installation of a crosswalk and having considered a number of other requests for improvements to the area. Moreland said that since the adoption of the Traffic Calming Plan, Carter filed a Safety Action Request form and the Committee was asked to hear her request. Carter reiterated her past requests, spoke of dangerous experiences she experienced in the area, and asked that some action be taken, including line striping in the breakdown lane, installation of bollards, and a speed device. There was further discussion by the Committee about the new request and past discussions and decisions.

MOTION BY PATRICK MORELAND TO HOLD TO THE POSITION THAT UPON ACQUISITION OF THE NEW TRAFFIC SAFETY EQUIPMENT, IT WILL BE DEPLOYED TO THAT LOCATION AND THE RESULTS WILL BE MONITORED. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Carter asked for clarification on the action just taken by the Committee and whether line striping was included in the decision. There was further discussion about the matter, then it was determined that the Committee had discussed and voted on the matter, and procedurally would continue onto the next agenda item.

(b) Steve Nelson – Speno Court. Steve Nelson was present and requested that a No Parking sign be installed on the east side of Speno Court by the 40-50 foot long sidewalk. He said that an eight-unit

apartment building was located on the corner of Speno Court and Western Avenue and another apartment building was located on the other side of the street. He said that guests of the apartment buildings park along the street but that the road was not wide enough to allow for parking on Speno Court and for cars to back out of the apartment building's parking lot across the street. He said that it was also difficult to turn onto Speno Court from Western Avenue when cars were parked on the street. Gartenstein said that the Development Review Board (DRB) recently considered a matter expanding the occupancy in one of the apartment buildings and he asked what the DRB determined about adequacy of parking. Speno said that the DRB heard his request to increase the living units in his apartment building from 7 to 8 units. He said that a "no parking here to corner" sign may address the issue.

Sue Bellville said that Steve Nelson had been given the DRB permit to expand the living units in the building from 7 to 8 units, and at the DRB hearing the neighbors raised the parking issue. She said there were safety concerns by the neighbors and that as a condition of the permit Speno was asked to consult with Traffic Safety Committee to address parking and the smooth movement of traffic to and from Speno Court.

Matt Speno spoke in favor of discontinuing parking on that side of the street. He said he was concerned about the safety issue and that the Fire Department and Rescue could not get through in the case of an emergency.

There was discussion by the Committee around needing more information to clarify the request, including a map or picture of the area, distance to the intersection, length of the sidewalk, and parking ordinances and/or statutes. It was agreed that more information would be provided and the Committee would continue the discussion at its next meeting.

There was also discussion about the process to address Safety Action Request Forms and how much preliminary review or preparatory work Public Works Department should do prior to bringing it to the Committee. It was suggested that DPW speak with the person submitting the request and then gather necessary or pertinent documents and provide a package of information to the Committee.

Monthly Report on Pedestrian and Bicycle Incidents – Chief Wrinn reported that since the last Traffic Safety Committee meeting, there had been no bicycle accidents and nearly 70 vehicular accidents, including one pedestrian accident on 12/27 at 7:00am where a vehicle struck a pedestrian on the sidewalk on Canal Street by Dominos Pizza, a 3-car motor vehicle accident at Union Hill/Western Avenue intersection, and an accident on 1/16 at 10:30pm in West Brattleboro where officers found a vehicle on its roof. He also reported that preliminary data regarding bicycle accidents showed there were 6 accidents in 2009, 7 accidents in 2010, 6 accidents in 2011, 5 accidents in 2012, and 9 accidents in 2013. There was a suggestion to track the location of the incidents so the Committee could to determine areas of concern, but Wrinn indicated that type of tracking software was not available.

Other Business

Gartenstein asked that a design update on the Western Avenue/Union Hill intersection be added to the agenda for the next meeting.

Chief Bucossi noted that the Department Heads just completed a very difficult budget session with the Selectboard and he asked that budget concerns be considered by the Committee when discussing improvements. There was a brief discussion.

There was no further business.

**MOTION BY GENE WRINN, AND SECONDED BY BETSY GENTILE, AT 9:40AM TO ADJOURN.
MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**