

**TRAFFIC SAFETY COMMITTEE
THURSDAY, JULY 21, 2016
SELECTBOARD MEETING ROOM – 4:00PM
MINUTES**

Members present: Town Manager Peter Elwell, Fire Chief Mike Bucossi, Police Chief Mike Fitzgerald, Planning Director Rod Francis, Public Works Director Steve Barrett, and Citizen Representative Louise Zak.

Selectboard Representative: David Gartenstein.

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

Others present: Leo Schiff, Alice Charkes, Terry A. Carter, Prudence MacKinney, and others who did not sign the attendance sheet.

Town Manager Elwell called the meeting to order at 4:04pm.

Approve Minutes – June 16, 2016

Elwell asked if anyone had corrections to the April 21 minutes. There was no discussion.

MOTION BY LOUISE ZAK TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM JUNE 16. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Public Participation

Terry Carter inquired about the status of a scoping study to improve the Harris Avenue/Putney Road area. O'Connell said that scoping study grants through the State would not be available until next spring, that grants applied for this year were still pending and intended for use in two areas on Western Avenue, and such grants require a 50/50 match. She said that the cost of a scoping study would be approximately \$50,000 so funds would have to be allocated for it.

Alice Charkes inquired about the removal of the retaining wall on Whipple Street. Barrett said that the condition of the wall had become dangerous so the Town obtained easements and rights-of-way to remove the existing wall and a new will be reconstructed. He said that the improvements would also include installation of a sidewalk.

Monthly Report on Pedestrian and Bicycle Incidents – Police Chief Fitzgerald reported that since the last meeting, there were 71 motor vehicle accidents, 59 of which had no injuries, 12 with injuries (11 of which were minor), and 1 motorcycle fatality on Canal Street on July 3 where the incident was still under investigation. He reported another motor vehicle/pedestrian accident on private property where an 11 year old boy was bumped by a vehicle backing up in the parking lot at Urgent Care on Putney Road and the injuries appeared to be only bruises. He also reported a fatality involving a 57 year old female who was on the railroad tracks and struck by a train on July 15. There was a brief discussion.

Monthly Report on Traffic Data Collection

O'Connell said there was no data to report due to technological problems by the company that analyzes the data from the mobile radar device.

Street and Sidewalk Safety Policy Safety Action Requests

(a) *Crosswalks in Area of Linden Street, Main Street/Putney Road, Williston Street.* O'Connell noted that Dr. Senior appeared before the Selectboard on May 17, 2016 to speak about safety concerns in this area, and he made specific requests to increase the signage at the crosswalks, improve site distance issues near the island in front of the Library, install rumble strips on Linden Street to warn traffic about pedestrian activity, and install pedestrian crossing signals at the crosswalks. O'Connell reviewed the crosswalk configuration and provided photographs of the area. She said that the intersection of Linden

Street and Main Street/Putney Road were constructed according to VTrans' plans when the traffic pattern was revised and that installation of additional signs may not meet traffic control standards. She said that after DPW reviewed the intersection, a fluorescent arrow was installed to highlight the pedestrian crossing. She said that it was not advisable to install rumble strips in a downtown area due to the noise factor. She also said that due to the complexity of the intersection, a pedestrian crossing device was not recommended. Barrett said that the island in front of the library was created in 1995 when the traffic pattern was revised and that Brattleboro Savings and Loan paid to have the island landscaped and previously maintained it, but that the Recreation & Parks Department since took over the maintenance of it. He said that the site distance was obstructed by hedges on the island near the crosswalk and recommended adjusting or removing the hedges to open the site line. Elwell noted that over the past five years no accidents had been reported in that area. There was some discussion by the Committee about the general area and the hedges on the island impacting the site distances. It was suggested that the hedges not be removed so as to maintain a green area and be trimmed to reduce the size or be substituted with another type of plant with a shorter height.

MOTION BY ROD FRANCIS THAT THE COMMITTEE TAKES NO ACTION ON THIS ITEM AND THAT THE ACTIONS TAKEN BY STAFF IS DEEMED ADEQUATE AT THIS TIME.

There was discussion about rephrasing the motion to better indicate the committee's agreement that trimming or removing the hedge should be done and that other actions already taken were sufficient.

FRANCIS WITHDREW THE MOTION.

MOTION BY ROD FRANCIS, AND SECONDED BY DAVID GARTENSTEIN, THAT STAFF'S RECOMMENDATIONS TO MAKE ADJUSTMENTS TO THE EXISTING PLANTINGS SHOULD PROCEED AND THAT NO OTHER FURTHER ACTION ON THIS ITEM WILL BE TAKEN. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

(b) *Linden Street Pedestrian Improvements Near Entrance to Brattleboro Retreat.* Barrett said that the pedestrian crosswalk across Linden Street between the Phoenix House and the Retreat campus was unsafe due to parked cars on either side of the crosswalk obstructing pedestrians stepping into the crosswalk. He said that the Retreat had agreed to contribute to the cost of improving the pedestrian crossing in the area. He said that Southern Vermont Engineering reviewed the area and prepared a plan, which was presented to the Committee for discussion. The plan would remove the existing crosswalk and move it further north on Linden Street, remove the sidewalk along Anna Marsh Lane and replace it with another sidewalk leading pedestrians to the new crosswalk, and add landscaping material to direct pedestrians toward the new crosswalk. He said that the proposed plan would require moving parking spaces and promoting a change of pedestrian behavior and habits, but the new crosswalk would meet safety standards where the current one did not. He said that the Retreat was in support of the proposed plan. There was discussion by the Committee about the new plan, concerns with moving the crosswalk, removing parking spaces, and implementing public outreach and communications.

MOTION BY MIKE BUCOSSI, AND SECONDED BY ROD FRANCIS, TO MOVE FORWARD WITH THE PLANS PROVIDED BY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS, AS PRESENTED. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

(c) *Union Hill Crosswalks.* O'Connell stated that a Safety Action Request form had been received from a school crossing guard, Leanoshka Fishell, about the crosswalks at the intersection of Union Street and Western Avenue. O'Connell provided a background of the construction project at the Union Street intersection, which was finally completed in June, 2015 in partnership with VTrans after many years of studies and plans. She said that the completed project involved multiple professional engineers, approval by the VTrans bicycle and pedestrian safety group, three public meetings, the Traffic Safety Committee, and the Selectboard. She said that the design reflected best management practices, community input, and sound professional engineering judgment and had addressed several issues (distance of the crosswalks, difficult setback, vertical and horizontal curves, steep grade on Union Hill, and unconventional shape of the intersection). She said that another crossing guard had provided suggestions in the public meetings and those suggestions were incorporated into the final plan. O'Connell said that the Town recently applied for a grant to fund installation of a pedestrian crossing

device at that intersection. There was much discussion by the Committee and it was generally agreed that the intersection had been studied at length and no further recommendations were suggested.

MOTION BY MIKE BUCOSSİ, AND SECONDED BY ROD FRANCIS, THAT NO ACTION WOULD BE TAKEN FOLLOWING THE COMMITTEE'S CONSIDERATION TODAY.

Gartenstein offered a friendly amendment, which was accepted by Bucossi and Francis, to add, "except for the application for a pedestrian push button signal as part of the crosswalk on the east side of the intersection."

AMENDED MOTION BY MIKE BUCOSSİ, AND SECONDED BY ROD FRANCIS, THAT NO ACTION WOULD BE TAKEN FOLLOWING THE COMMITTEE'S CONSIDERATION TODAY, EXCEPT FOR THE APPLICATION FOR A PEDESTRIAN PUSH BUTTON SIGNAL AS PART OF THE CROSSWALK ON THE EAST SIDE OF THE INTERSECTION. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

(d) *South Main Street Speed Limit Signage.* O'Connell said that a Safety Action Request had been received requesting more speed limit signs on South Main Street and for the brush around the signs to be cutback and maintained. She said that speed limit signs (25 mph) were installed on both ends of the street and there were no set standards on the frequency of posting speed signs. She said that the Windham Regional Commission performed a speed study two years ago where it was determined that the average speed was 29 mph and the 85th percentile was 35 mph. She said that in 2008 in response to complaints about speed, DPW restriped the street to narrow the travel lanes. There was discussion about vehicular speed on South Main Street, whether to consider restriping to make the travel lanes even narrower, the size and amount of trucks and plows that use the street, use of State and Federal road standards, use of the mobile radar device in the area, maintenance of the brush, rigorous enforcement of speed limits, whether the posted speed limit was proper for the area, and the character of the street. It was generally agreed to make no changes in the signage but to continue enforcement of the speed limit.

MOTION BY DAVID GARTENSTEIN, AND SECONDED BY MIKE BUCOSSİ, TO LEAVE THE SIGNAGE AND STRIPING ON SOUTH MAIN STREET THE SAME BUT TO ENCOURAGE REGULAR ENFORCEMENT OF THE SPEED LIMITS IN THAT AREA.

Elwell suggested adding the occasional use of the mobile radar device to the motion. Gartenstein agreed to add it as a friendly amendment.

AMENDED MOTION BY DAVID GARTENSTEIN, AND SECONDED BY MIKE BUCOSSİ, TO LEAVE THE SIGNAGE AND STRIPING ON SOUTH MAIN STREET THE SAME BUT TO ENCOURAGE REGULAR ENFORCEMENT OF THE SPEED LIMITS IN THAT AREA AND TO ADD THE USE OF THE MOBILE RADAR DEVICE FROM TIME-TO-TIME. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Other Business

None.

There was no further business.

ELWELL ADJOURNED THE MEETING AT 5:12PM.