

**BRATTLEBORO TRAFFIC SAFETY COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, JULY 24, 2012 – 8:30AM
MINUTES**

Members present: Town Manager Barb Sondag, Betsy Gentile from Windham Southeast Supervisory Union, Public Works Director Steve Barrett, Police Chief Gene Wrinn, Fire Chief Mike Bucossi, Planning Director Rod Francis, Robert Immler as Citizen Representative and Leo Schiff from Chamber of Commerce.

Selectboard representative present: David Gartenstein.

Additional staff present: Sue Fillion.

Media present: Howard Weiss-Tisman representing the Brattleboro Reformer.

Others present: Robert Rottenberg, Dianne Shapiro, Kate Anderson, Patrick Kitzmiller, Leon C. Boyd, Jr., Peter Putnam and others who did not sign the attendance sheet.

Town Manager Sondag called the meeting to order at 8:30am in the Selectboard meeting room. She confirmed that the meeting was properly warned. Minutes from the June 26, 2012 meeting were presented.

MOTION BY DAVID GARTENSTEIN, AND SECONDED BY BETSY GENTILE, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM JUNE 26, 2012 MEETING. MOTION WAS APPROVED BY MAJORITY (BARRETT ABSTAINED).

It was decided to make an adjustment to the agenda order.

Walk Audit – Living Memorial Park to Maple Street. Planning Director Francis and Planner Sue Fillion discussed the walk audit held on July 19. Fillion provided a written report and reviewed the findings in the report. There was discussion about the traffic speed on Guilford Street, location and use of speed limit and stop signs, whether to consider installing speed bumps/plateaus or an electronic speed measuring device, and pedestrians using the bridge and park. Barrett said that he had been collecting information on various traffic calming devices and tools, and suggested that the Committee review the information and then discuss if/how the devices could be utilized into a town-wide plan in accordance with town-wide standards. Gartenstein said that the Selectboard recently discussed his suggestion to move the stop signs near Citizens' Bridge and that it tabled the discussion in order to review the walking audit report before making a decision. It was agreed by the Committee to hold a special meeting on Wednesday, August 8, 2012 at 8:00am to discuss traffic calming devices and look specifically at what can be used in various areas of Town.

Pedestrian, Bicycle and Vehicular Safety – Continue Discussion, Bullock and Whipple Streets, Putney Road/Harris Avenue Intersection. Barrett provided photographs of Bullock and Whipple Streets. There was discussion about Bullock Street, Whipple Street, the width of the streets, changes that had been made over the years to address ongoing problems, maintenance of the streets, use by cars and other vehicles as cut-offs, speed of traffic, disrepair of the retaining wall and sidewalk on Whipple Street, use of lines to determine the drive lane and walk areas, adding a traffic calming device to Bullock Street, no-parking areas and street signs. Barrett said that prior to the next meeting he would measure the width of both streets, provide a layout with added lines narrowing the width of the vehicle lanes and defining a walking area on one side of Bullock street. Sondag also asked for costs to repair the sidewalk on Whipple Street so that it ran the full length of the street.

Gartenstein asked that the State Agency of Transportation be contacted to ask that the bike lanes on Putney Road be repainted soon because they were worn and faded so the travel lanes were unclear making the situation very dangerous.

Putney Road/Harris Avenue Intersection – Barrett distributed photographs of the area and addressed the request previously made to add a crosswalk in the vicinity. He discussed the change in elevation across

the street which would require removing some of the existing sidewalk and changing the grade in order to meet ADA Guidelines. He also said that Harris Avenue did not currently have a sidewalk and traditionally a crosswalk would not be constructed into a roadway without connecting to a sidewalk. He added that a short section of sidewalk could be built if a crosswalk was installed. He discussed traffic speed, changes in speed limits and the line of site. There was discussion by the Committee about the safety of pedestrians crossing Putney Road in that area, speed of the traffic, signage, the existing sidewalk, foot traffic in the area, and need for a pedestrian count if a crosswalk was pursued. The Committee agreed that it did not have clear evidence that a crosswalk was necessary and to let the matter sit and take no action.

One-Way Traffic Strip – Western Avenue by First Congregational Church. Sondag said that the unnamed strip of roadway in front of the First Congregational Church was not a driveway but was Town-owned roadway. Barrett provided photographs of the area and described the chaotic activity on the strip in front of the Church, on Western Avenue and in the general area during drop-off and pick-up times for students at Academy School. There was discussion about the drop-off and pick-up activity, use of the strip by parents for parking and driving during those times, utilization of the parking lot for drop-off and pick-up activity and closing the strip or making it one-way during drop-off and pick-up times similar to that of the Green Street School system. There was further discussion about establishing a one-lane drive-through which would force parents to park in the lot if they wanted to get out of the car, angled parking lanes, design issues and the school's favorable drop-off infrastructure. Barrett said that he would speak with Andy Paciulli, Academy School Principal, about possibly closing the strip in the morning and afternoon, changing the parents' routine and the need for the School's participation in the efforts to organize the activity and improve safety. Sondag said she would research the ownership/use of the strip with the Town Attorney.

Street/Sidewalk Safety at Co-Op Entrance Betsy Gentile spoke of her concern of pedestrians exiting the new Co-Op building and not having directional signals to cross the driveway onto the sidewalk while vehicular traffic was turning into the parking lot. She suggested installing a jersey barrier or other device to protect pedestrians during the balance of the construction. There was discussion by the Committee. Sondag offered to contact the Co-Op to discuss the pedestrian safety issue.

Paint the Pavement Project – Cedar and Myrtle Streets. Patrick Kitzmiller and Dianne Shapiro from the neighborhood, and Kate Anderson from the Arts Committee, were present and discussed the neighborhood initiative of painting the pavement at the intersection as a traffic calming measure. They provided a suggested design for the painting. Shapiro said that building an identity for the tree-streets neighborhood was also part of the initiative. Kitzmiller said that purpose of the project was to slow traffic and bring awareness to drivers, and he spoke of safety concerns for the children in the neighborhood because Cedar Street was used by a substantial number of vehicles traveling from/to Route 30. He said that drivers often failed to fully stop at the stop sign. Anderson spoke of similar projects in other cities in the country. There was discussion by the Committee about the design, the possible confusion for drivers approaching the intersection, placement of the painting in an area other than the intersection, maintenance of the painting, maintenance responsibilities of current and future neighbors, creating a maintenance contract, other neighborhoods that may want a similar project and consistency of criteria regarding such projects throughout the Town. The Committee asked for more information about the project, including traffic data and experiences by other cities. Anderson said that she would provide informational links to the Town Manager's office who could forward them to the Committee. The Committee agreed to review additional information and discuss the matter further at the special meeting on August 8.

Other Business

There was a brief discussion about possible grants to fund some of the suggested traffic calming devices. There was no further business.

MOTION BY BETSY GENTILE, AND SECONDED, TO ADJOURN. MOTION WAS UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.