

**BRATTLEBORO TRAFFIC SAFETY COMMITTEE  
TUESDAY, AUGUST 27, 2013  
8:00AM – SITE VISIT, INTERSECTION OF PUTNEY ROAD AND HARRIS AVENUE  
8:30AM – SELECTBOARD MEETING ROOM  
MINUTES**

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

Selectboard representative present: None.

Other staff members present: Highway/Utilities Superintendent Hannah O'Connell, Police Captain Mike Fitzgerald, and Finance Director John O'Connor.

Others present: Terry A. Carter, Rick Neumann, Liza King, Ainsley Gilligan, David Chappell, and others who did not sign the attendance sheet.

Interim Town Manager Moreland called the meeting to order at 8:35am.

**MOTION BY STEVE BARRETT TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES FROM JULY 23, 2013 AS PRESENTED.  
MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Public Participation – David Chappell read a letter that he wrote to the Committee regarding a motor vehicle accident that took place on August 3, 2013 on his property located at 1205 Western Avenue. Moreland suggested that the matter be added to the agenda next month so his concerns may be discussed by the Committee.

Putney Road/Harris Avenue Area – Discussion. Moreland said that preceding the meeting, the Committee met for a site visit at the intersection of Putney Road and Harris Avenue after several statements by Terry Carter about safety concerns at the intersection. The Committee members summarized their observations following the site review. Francis discussed the location of the intersection and the surrounding environment, including reduction of the speed limit, hill to the north, line of sight to the south, and width of Harris Avenue at the intersection. He suggested that the whole side of the road starting at the church may have to be addressed. Police Captain Fitzgerald agreed that it was a dangerous area that had limited line of sight. He spoke about the speed of traffic in the area and of his concern that a crosswalk would create a false sense of security for pedestrians. He suggested that other traffic calming measures be implemented in the area. Fire Chief Bucossi agreed that the area was difficult and he cautioned the Committee about creating an unsafe situation. Public Works Director Barrett discussed the same sight concerns and suggested reviewing the minutes when the previous Traffic Safety Committee made its decision. Schiff disagreed with the statement that a crosswalk created a false sense of security. He suggested that seeing a crosswalk actually was the start of a conversation between drivers and pedestrians. He also spoke about the speed of traffic in the area, noted that two other crosswalks were located in the vicinity, and stated that other traffic calming measures may be taken. Immler said he was in favor of installing a crosswalk. He spoke of his experience earlier in the morning when he was crossing the road in a crosswalk and the traffic stopped, but when crossing where no crosswalk existed the traffic did not stop and it took him longer to cross. Moreland said that it was not a safe location for a crosswalk due to the crest of the hill and the limited line of sight in the area, and that other traffic calming measures may be more appropriate. Police Chief Wrinn addressed the speed of traffic and said that Police Officers were often in that area enforcing traffic speed.

Terry Carter clarified that she was concerned about pedestrian safety on all of Putney Road, and she acknowledged that much of the road was State highway. With regard to the Putney Road/Harris Avenue intersection, Carter suggested that the road at least be marked to (1) better define it as a single lane road and (2) indicate that it was a residential neighborhood. She said that the Harris Avenue intersection was a blind spot and that the intersection was wide and appeared dark without much clarity.

Moreland said that the matter would be placed on the next agenda and that copies of the minutes from the meeting of the previous Committee's decision would be distributed.

Strand Avenue – Review plans. Barrett discussed the history of the project and provided an update with the current construction. He said that the project was currently delayed due to a misunderstanding between the engineers and contractors about the size of the blocks necessary for the retaining walls. He said that additional blocks of the correct size had been ordered and that construction was expected to start again next week. He also said that some of the current property owners were new since the inception of the project, so they had not been part of the original discussions and agreements. Barrett said that one of the concerns with the current property owners was the width of the new road. He provided a copy of the engineer's plans and said that the previous road width varied from 14' to 18' and that the width of the new road would be 16', which was the minimum standard for a new roadway. He said that with the change of the dynamics of a new roadway, it was appropriate to discuss the possible installation of warning or advisory signs.

Ainslie Gilligan spoke of her concern about the increased road width, particularly with the addition of a guardrail. She asked for clarity on the process for neighbors to request the installation of speed bumps and/or signs. Liza King discussed her concerns for the safety of pedestrians walking on the road. Rick Neumann spoke of his concerns about the speed of traffic after the new road was constructed.

Moreland suggested that if the neighbors had concerns after the construction was complete, that they submit a written request to the Traffic Safety Committee and asked to be added to the agenda to discuss their concerns, possible signage, speed bumps, or other traffic calming tools.

I-91 Bridge Project – VTrans Resident Engineer. Eric Foster from VTrans Construction Section, and Caleb Linn from PCL Civil Constructors, discussed the plans for the reconstruction of the I-91 bridge over the West River. Foster said they will employ some new techniques, including the Smart Work Zone Package using multiple live-time message boards, to notify drivers and other interested persons about delays, closures and detours. Linn said that a website had been set up – [i91BrattleboroBridge.com](http://i91BrattleboroBridge.com) – to communicate about the project, disruption in traffic, and closures. He said that interested persons could visit the website and sign up to be added to the notification list.

There was discussion by the Committee about redirecting large trucks, cars, bicycles, pedestrians and water traffic during the construction, especially when Route 30 would be closed. Terry Carter spoke about the bike path on the north side of the river that was also a nature trail, and she asked that the construction workers be sensitive to the reptiles and amphibians using the nature path. An unidentified speaker said that he attended a meeting at the high school last week where he signed up to be on the notification list, and said that he was pleased with the notices.

Traffic Calming Plan – Review proposed changes, continue discussion. Moreland said that this matter was postponed from the previous meeting because David Gartenstein had requested fairly substantive changes be made to the Plan. Gartenstein had a schedule conflict and was not able to attend this meeting. The Committee agreed to postpone the discussion to the next meeting. Terry Carter inquired whether the Plan would also include Harris Avenue area.

Radar Sign/Data Collection Trailer – Data collection report. Hannah O'Connell said that a demo radar trailer had been loaned to the Town by a vendor to demonstrate the effectiveness of a radar speed device, and she said that the trailer had been set up on Western Avenue near Academy School for about a week. She said that the speed display on the trailer was bagged for a couple of days so that approaching traffic could not see their speed, but their speed was being recorded. Then the bag was removed so that approaching traffic could see their speed. She said that according to the report, the overall average speed of traffic in that area was 26 mph (with a posted speed of 30mph), that the speed of the 85th percentile when the device was bagged was 32 mph, and that the speed of the 85th percentile when the device was not bagged dropped to 31 mph. She said that the cost for the device and trailer was \$4,100, but there were other types of mobile and non-mobile devices available.

There was discussion by the Committee about the data results, the difference in the amount of data collected with and without the bag, the average speed of the traffic being below the posted limit, the scant effect of the bag on traffic speed, time of year of the study, effect of other traffic control devices already installed in the area, and the perception of traffic speed versus actual speed.

There was also discussion about the cost of the equipment, the usefulness of the equipment in various areas, and differences in technology for similar data collection tools (different sizes, portability, and collection of data other than speed).

Moreland suggested that the Committee complete its adoption of a Traffic Calming Plan and then decide whether to recommend that the Selectboard approve funds for the purchase of data collection tools to support the Plan.

Putney Road Lane Striping – *Letter to VTrans, Mollie Burke*. Moreland said that at the Committee's request, he recently mailed a letter to Scott Rogers at Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans), with a copy to Representative Mollie Burke, for a request that the bicycle lanes and other line striping on Putney Road be painted annually in the spring, rather than the fall, and that the frequency be increased to two times per year. Terry Carter inquired about the authority of this Committee regarding lane striping on State highways, and stated that the lane striping on Western Avenue was helpful. There was a brief discussion by the Committee.

Municipal Center Parking Lot – *Discuss safety options*. Finance Director John O'Connor said that he is on the Safety and Wellness Committee and the Committee received a citizen complaint about pedestrian safety in the Municipal Center parking lot. He said that vehicular traffic uses the parking lot as a thoroughfare from Grove Street to Linden Street, and that some pedestrians complained that drivers do not slow for them as they cross to their parked cars. He also said that some employees were concerned about their safety in the dimly lit parking lot when it is dark. There was some discussion about past traffic calming measures, including previously having a painted crosswalk from the back of the Municipal Building to the parking lot. Barrett said that a crosswalk could be added in the fall when the lines are painted again. There was also some discussion about the number of parking spaces that will be impacted when construction of the Police facility begins.

Crosby and Williams Street – *Review brush clearing*. Barrett said the brush clearing in the Town portion of the right-of-way at the intersection of Crosby and Williams Streets would start in September in order to improve visibility in that area. He said that notices were recently sent to residents in the area, and that he received complaints from residents who had over time planted trees and bushes in the Town right-of-way. He said that members from Public Works were meeting with the residents. Wrinn said that a Police Officer may be made available to assist with traffic control, if necessary.

There was no further business.

**MOTION BY GENE WRINN AT 9:57AM TO ADJOURN. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**