

**TRAFFIC SAFETY COMMITTEE
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2015
SELECTBOARD MEETING ROOM – 4:00PM
MINUTES**

Members present: Town Manager Peter B. Elwell, Fire Chief Mike Bucossi, Public Works Director Steve Barrett, Police Chief Mike Fitzgerald, Planning Director Rod Francis, Chamber of Commerce Representative Leo Schiff, and School Representative Betsy Gentile.

Selectboard member present: Donna Macomber.

Other staff members present: Assistant Town Manager Patrick Moreland and Police Captain Mark Carignan.

Others present: Alice Charkes, Peter Falion, Tim Kipp, Prudence MacKinney, and others who did not sign the attendance sheet.

Town Manager Peter Elwell called the meeting to order at 4:00pm.

Approve Minutes – August 20, 2015.

MOTION BY BETSY GENTILE, AND SECONDED BY STEVE BARRETT, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM AUGUST 20, 2015 AS PRESENTED. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Public Participation – Prudence MacKinney spoke about her concerns for pedestrian safety downtown during the sidewalk improvement project with traffic lights turned onto flash. She said that pedestrians are unable to cross streets safely without the pedestrian phase on the traffic lights. Town Manager Elwell said that a control box was struck by a truck at the corner of Elliot and Main Streets and was damaged so lights are on flash until the box could be fixed. He said that the flashing lights also facilitated traffic flow through Main Street. Police Chief Fitzgerald said that he spoke with the Deputy Sheriff on duty and repositioned him in order to be more constructive. He said there was considerable congestion downtown with the construction and that pedestrians must use crosswalks and obey directions while motorists must be more aware of their surroundings. There was a brief discussion.

Alice Charkes provided an update on the activities of Safe Streets. She said that reflective bands were ordered and Safe Streets sent letters to area businesses and non-profits offering the reflective bands for distribution to the public.

Monthly Report on Pedestrian and Bicycle Incidents – Chief Fitzgerald reported there was a total of 73 accidents in the last month, 61 of which had no injuries, 12 with injuries, none involving pedestrians, and 1 involving a bike. He said that the bicyclist was struck in the crosswalk at the intersection of Birge Street and Washington Street and the cyclist sustained only minor injuries. He said that the driver of the car was cited for failure to yield to a pedestrian. There was no discussion by the Committee.

Traffic Calming Plan Safety Action Items

Elwell asked the Committee to discuss the third Traffic Calming Plan item at this time to accommodate the members of the public in attendance to speak to the matter. The Committee agreed.

Chapin, Chase, Oak and Forest Street Traffic Concerns – Continue Discussion with Neighborhood Residents Invited. Tim Kipp and Peter Falion were present and discussed their concerns about the traffic in the neighborhood, including increased traffic, motorists illegally turning left from Chase Street onto Route 30, traffic illegally turning right from Route 30 onto Chase Street, and speed of the traffic through the neighborhood. They asked for better signage and traffic enforcement particularly during high traffic periods of 7-9am and 4-6pm. Chief Fitzgerald reported that the police department had been conducting directive patrols in the neighborhood during the past month and issued several citations for running the stop sign on Chapin Street. Captain Carignan discussed the directive patrols and said the patrols would

continue. Barrett asked for more information about the Linden and Chase Streets traffic. There was much discussion by the Committee and it was agreed that traffic enforcement should continue.

Moore Court Tenants Association – “Caution Kids at Play” Sign or other safety measure(s) Update. Elwell reported that the representative from Moore Court Tenants Association withdrew their request and that the Association would be working with the Brattleboro Housing Partnerships to install signage and take other action in the Moore Court area. There was no discussion.

Update on the Use of “Speed-o-Meter” for Monitoring and Reducing Speed. Barrett provided and discussed traffic data contained in his memo dated September 11, 2015. He noted that the average speed in each of the areas measured was within 2 or 3 miles per hour of the posted speed limits and summarized that traffic within the 85th percentile appeared to be traveling at reasonable speeds for the areas and conditions. He said that the radar device would be posted in various locations throughout the year and would continue to collect data. Schiff noted there had been positive movement in reducing the speed in the Putney Road/Harris Avenue area since the radar device had been installed and through various actions by the Committee over time. He thanked Terry Carter (who was not present) for her vigilance in bringing the matter to the Committee’s attention. There was much discussion by the Committee. Barrett was asked to provide additional traffic data now that schools were open.

Other Business – Barrett reported that Brattleboro Memorial Hospital (BMH) was increasing its parking spaces and was required by the Act 250 petition to perform a traffic analysis at the intersection of Belmont Avenue, Canal Street and Oak Grove Avenue. He said that the results did not necessitate a traffic light at the intersection but that BMH voluntarily approved the purchase of pedestrian crossing devices for installation at that intersection to assist pedestrians crossing Canal Street. He said that Public Works Department would install the devices and the Town would take over ownership and maintenance of them. He suggested that this was an opportunity for BHM and the Town to partnership in a public safety promotion. Barrett also suggested that the Committee consider other locations in town to install other pedestrian crossing devices that had previously been approved through an AARP grant. There was much discussion by the Committee, including other possible locations on Canal Street and elsewhere to assist with student and pedestrian crossings. The Committee asked Barrett to provide additional information for future discussions about possible locations for the other devices.

Elwell reminded Committee members that the next meeting would be held on October 15 at 8:00am. Schiff noted that Matt Mann, from Windham Regional Commission, was unable to attend Traffic Safety Committee meetings on the third Thursday of the month due to his travel schedule. There was some discussion about rescheduling the meetings and the scheduling difficulties encountered in the recent change to the meeting schedule. It was generally agreed to continue to obtain information from Mann and consider rescheduling particular meetings to enable Mann to attend and participate.

There was no further business.

ELWELL ADJOURNED THE MEETING AT 4:53PM.