

**BRATTLEBORO TRAFFIC SAFETY COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 26, 2013
8:30AM – SELECTBOARD MEETING ROOM
MINUTES**

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

Selectboard representative present: David Gartenstein.

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

Others present: Matt Mann from Windham Regional Commission, Susan Avery, Linda Fagan, John Meyer, Hugh Bronson, Vicki Meyer, Douglas Switzer, Melissa Hays, David Walter, and others who did not sign the attendance sheet.

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

MOTION BY BETSY GENTILE, AND SECONDED BY STEVE BARRETT, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM THE OCTOBER 22, 2013 MEETING, AS PRESENTED. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Public Participation - None.

Speed Study – South Street. O'Connell and Barrett, from Public Works, spoke about a traffic speed study performed in September between the addresses of 161 and 247 South Street. They each reviewed certain aspects of the findings, including that the average vehicle speed was 34mph even though the speed limited was posted at 25mph. Matt Mann from Windham Regional Commission explained some of the data acquired from the speed study and spoke about variables within in the study, including directional speed results.

John Meyer, of 317 South Street, spoke about safety issues on South Street due to excessive speed, lack of sidewalks, and large amounts of regular pedestrian traffic. He said that he supported keeping the speed limit at 25 mph. He offered two remedies, including placing a speed limit sign between Thayer Ridge and Juniper Ridge and utilizing police officers with radars to ticket speeding vehicles during commuter hours.

Doug Switzer, who lives at the intersection of South Street and Thayer Ridge, spoke of dangers being a pedestrian on the side of South Street, about speeding traffic, and several blind driveways. He spoke in opposition to raising the speed limit, requested that speed limit signs be installed going up and down the hill, and asked for police enforcement to curb speeding traffic.

Melissa Hays, of 360 South Street, spoke about her blind driveway and the danger of traffic speeding down the hill. She also stated that a speed sign had disappeared last year and had not been replaced.

Susan Avery, whose family owns 397 South Street, spoke about traffic speeding up and down the hill. She also suggested replacing the missing speed sign.

Hugh Bronson, of 301 South Street, spoke of the traffic dangers during commuter times and asked for assistance to control speeding traffic and about installing speed signs.

There was discussion by the Committee about the data and summary of the speed study, speed of traffic traveling up and down the hill, posted speed limits on gravel and paved roads, utilizing the Traffic Calming Plan, and using Police enforcement to reduce the amount of speeding vehicles. Barrett said that Public Works would review the signage on South Street and also determine the transition in the speed limits along the road.

MOTION BY DAVID GARTENSTEIN, AND SECONDED BY LEO SCHIFF, THAT DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS DETERMINES WHETHER THERE IS AN APPROPRIATE LOCATION TO INSTALL A 25 MILE PER HOUR SPEED SIGN COMING DOWN SOUTH STREET AND THEN TO INSTALL THAT SIGN, AND THAT THE POLICE DEPARTMENT LOOK INTO REASONABLE ENFORCEMENT ON SOUTH STREET. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Loading Zone – Main Street. Moreland said that the Committee received a letter from David Walter, owner of DF Walter, Inc. a business located at 81 Main Street, requesting to relocate the loading zone in front of his store. Moreland reviewed the loading zone ordinances pertaining to Main Street. Barrett said that the loading zones had been approved by the Traffic Safety Committee about 10 years ago, and at that time the Committee worked with the Police Department, Parking Enforcement, and downtown businesses to determine locations and delivery times. He suggested speaking with downtown businesses to determine their current needs and possibly re-examining loading zones as business demands may have changed.

David Walter, owner of DF Walter, Inc., spoke of his concerns with large trucks, box trucks, and tractor trailers using the loading zone and blocking the front of the business. He said that often the trucks' loading ramps block the adjacent driveway and he spoke of safety concerns when drivers were unloading heavy loads down a steep slope going down the hill. He said that the loading zone was a hazardous location and he suggested moving the zone one spot forward toward the intersection which would help with visibility of his store, give better access to other businesses, and reduce the downhill loading ramp hazard. He said that some business owners on Main Street had expressed a desire to have a loading zone in front of their stores. He spoke in support of canvassing businesses on the east side of Main Street to get a sense of their different needs and functions around loading zones.

Linda Fagan, owner of Distinctive Decor, spoke of her need for a loading zone to be located close to her business to unload stock and provide for customer pick-up. She said that she regularly used the loading zone after 11:00am and into the early afternoon. She also spoke of the neighboring restaurants' needs for the loading zone to be located close to those businesses.

There was discussion by the Committee about the times and locations of loading zones in the area and other areas on Main Street, the necessity of having loading zones on Main Street, taking a comprehensive look at loading zones on Main Street, and the ordinance amendment process if changes were recommended. The Town Administration was asked to gather more information with details about times of loading use, and to bring it back to the Committee for discussion, review, and possibly developing a process for change.

Ongoing Projects – Updates:

Traffic Calming Plan – Moreland said that the Selectboard recently approved Traffic Planning Plan. The Committee thanked O'Connell for all of her work on the Plan.

Citizens' Bridge Intersection – Matt Mann said that he learned that VTrans funding was available through the High Risk Rural Roads Program (now High Local Rural Roads) for projects at certain intersections which may be utilized for the Citizens' Bridge and Western Avenue intersection. He spoke of some requirements of the Program, including a 10% local match, and said that funds could be requested in February or March. There was discussion by the Committee about the VTrans Program, traffic issues at the intersection, determining a plan to consider scoping out a project to relieve traffic problems at that intersection, and a recent pedestrian accident in the area. There was interest in continuing to investigate the VTrans Program and alternatives to improve the intersection.

Other Business – None.

The Committee agreed to meet next on Tuesday, December 24. There was no further business.

MOTION BY BETSY GENTILE, AND SECONDED BY LEO SCHIFF, AT 9:35PM TO ADJOURN. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.