

**BRATTLEBORO TRAFFIC SAFETY COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, MAY 27, 2014
8:30AM – SELECTBOARD MEETING ROOM
MINUTES**

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

Selectboard representative present: David Gartenstein.

Other staff members present: Highway/Utilities Superintendent Hannah O'Connell and Police Captain Mike Fitzgerald.

Others present: Terry A. Carter, Marcia S. Steckler, Adam Hubbard, Mollie Burke, Alex Wilson, Jason Cooper, Lawrence Williams, Rick Neumann, Eva Shelby, and others who did not sign the attendance sheet.

Interim Town Manager Moreland called the meeting to order at 8:30am.

MOTION BY BETSY GENTILE, AND SECONDED BY STEVE BARRETT, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM APRIL 22, 2014. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Public Participation – Gartenstein discussed the dangerous parking situation in front of the Country Deli on Western Avenue, and suggested that a sidewalk be installed in that area and that parking be eliminated next to the store and restricted to the adjacent parking lot. He asked that the matter be communicated to the Planning Department (Planning Director was not yet present). There was some discussion by the Committee.

Terry Carter inquired whether \$5,000 allotted for a traffic calming device was still in the FY15 budget.

Adam Hubbard suggested adding more imprinted crosswalks, similar to the one near Green Street School, to other locations in Town.

Friends of West River Trail (FoWRT) – Multi-Modal Bridge over West River. Moreland said that the Friends of West River Trail (FoWRT) were present to discuss its proposal of installing an eight-foot wide pedestrian bridge over the West River under the I-91 overpass. Members from FoWRT, Marcia Steckler, Alex Wilson and Jason Cooper, were present and discussed the West River Trail network already in existence, future trail proposals, and the advantages of connectivity for recreation and safety. Steckler said that FoWRT's vision was to connect the trail with other assets in Town, such as the West River Park, Retreat Trail System, wildlife sanctuary, and eventually over the Connecticut River to New Hampshire trails. They discussed many aspects of the proposal for a pedestrian bridge over West River, including their collaborative efforts thus far with other entities, individuals, and organizations in Town, fund raising ideas, and a feasibility study around the issue of pedestrians on Route 30. There was a lengthy discussion by the Committee about many aspects, concerns and advantages of the proposed bridge, liabilities, and pedestrian traffic on Route 30. Schiff questioned whether the Committee had authority in the matter. The Committee was generally in favor of the concept.

MOTION BY STEVE BARRETT, AND SECONDED BY ROBERT IMMLER, THAT THE TRAFFIC SAFETY COMMITTEE SUPPORT THE CONCEPT OF THE INSTALLATION OF THE PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE OVER THE WEST RIVER NEAR THE I-91 OVERPASS ON ROUTE 30 TO THE WEST RIVER TRAIL. THE MOTION PASSED BY MAJORITY (SCHIFF ABSTAINED).

Bus Stop on Linden Street – Brattleboro Retreat and Stevens & Associates Engineering. Adam Hubbard, from Stevens and Associates Engineering and representing the Brattleboro Retreat, discussed a proposal to add a bus stop on Linden Street, eliminate the 4 southernmost parking spaces to create the bus stop, and install another crosswalk for people crossing Linden Street. He said that the Retreat was

interested in improving access to the facility and providing public transportation for clientele and employees, but was opposed to installing a bus stop on campus because of patient privacy concerns. There was much discussion by the Committee about the location of the proposed bus stop, alternative locations for a bus stop, vehicular and pedestrian traffic in the area, speed of traffic and line of site, use of the existing crosswalk and concerns about adding a crosswalk, and turnaround areas for the bus. Barrett suggested adding a curb cut behind Linden Lodge for the bus turnaround. The Committee agreed that it needed a better map of the area and existing parking spaces in order to review and better understand the entire area, and to schedule a site visit at 8:00am on June 24 before its next regularly scheduled meeting. The Committee asked that Hubbard provide more detailed maps of the area and that a representative from the Retreat be present to speak to the Committee at its next meeting.

Academy School/Western Avenue Safety Project – Update. Hannah O’Connell said that a public meeting was recently held to review the scoping study performed on Western Avenue in West Brattleboro and to gather public input and comments on the scoping study. She provided and discussed a PowerPoint presentation and reviewed the concepts developed by the engineers and presented to the public. She discussed the three primary concepts, being (1) designated striped bike lanes, (2) shared bike and vehicular traffic lane (share-row), and (3) a separate pedestrian pathway (similar to a trail) off of Western Avenue. She said the share-row was the preferred concept. She also discussed possible improvements to areas around the Seven-Eleven plaza, Greenleaf Street, West Brattleboro Fire Station, Academy School, and Congregational Church. There was discussion by the Committee about the proposed concepts, areas of concern, bike lanes, funding, and process to move forward. O’Connell said that a report of preferred alternatives would be presented to VTrans and a final report should be available to the Town in October.

Strand Avenue Traffic Calming – Hannah O’Connell said that prior to re-construction of Strand Avenue, the Department of Public Works had received concerns from the residents about the speed of traffic, pedestrian traffic, and unsafe areas in the Strand Avenue/Crosby Street/West Street area. She said that she met with Marcus Miller, from VTrans, who indicated that signage and traffic calming in the area were difficult due to the narrowness of the road and the intersection at the top of the hill. Miller suggested installing a mirror at the Crosby Street/Strand Avenue intersection at the top of the hill to provide better visibility and to install a cautionary sign near the top of the hill for traffic going down the hill. O’Connell discussed some suggested signs. Mollie Burke spoke on behalf of neighborhood and she reported that the primary complaints were the intersection at the top of the hill, needing some type of cautionary traffic sign, pedestrian safety, and street signs to identify Strand Avenue and West Streets. Steve Barrett said that signage was the final element of project and asked for an endorsement of the Committee. There was discussion by the Committee about the re-construction project, visibility, traffic speed, and signage.

MOTION BY LEO SCHIFF, AND SECONDED BY BETSY GENTILE, THAT THE COMMITTEE SUPPORT THE “WATCH FOR ONCOMING VEHICLES, NARROW ROAD” SIGN.

Moreland offered a friendly amendment to include installation of a mirror as suggested by Miller. Schiff accepted the friendly amendment. There was a brief discussion about the lower end of the hill.

AMENDED MOTION BY LEO SCHIFF, AND SECONDED BY BETSY GENTILE, THAT THE COMMITTEE SUPPORT THE “WATCH FOR ONCOMING VEHICLES, NARROW ROAD” SIGN AND INSTALLATION OF A MIRROR. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Parking on Depot Street – Moreland provided a memo and map indicating a section of Depot Street where Parking Enforcement was seeking a no parking ordinance. He said that the no parking request was for the area on the eastern side of Depot Street reaching around on the eastern side of the roundabout. There was discussion about the parking in the area, limited parking spaces, use of the roundabout by large vehicles, parking in non-designated spaces, and the status of the Archery Building. Barrett said that when improvements were made to the area, there was a vision to increase parking at a later date. Schiff suggested having a site visit and then discussing other means to discourage parking. Moreland said that if the Committee supported no parking in the area, it could make a recommendation to the Selectboard to adopt an ordinance change.

MOTION BY DAVID GARTENSTEIN, AND SECONDED BY ROBERT IMMMLER, THAT THE TRAFFIC SAFETY COMMITTEE RECOMMEND TO THE SELECTBOARD TO AMEND BRATTLEBORO'S CODE OF ORDINANCES TO PROVIDE THAT THE EASTERN AREA OF DEPOT STREET AND THE ENTIRETY OF THE ROUNDABOUT ON DEPOT STREET BE "NO PARKING." MOTION CARRIED BY MAJORITY.

Traffic Calming Plan Safety Action Request Forms – O'Connell said that no requests were ready for discussion. Gartenstein said that last year the State agreed to line stripe Putney Road in May, and he asked that someone from Public Works follow up on that matter. Barrett said that DPW would submit a formal request for the line striping in that area and other Class 2 roadways.

Monthly Report on Pedestrian and Bicycle Incidents – Chief Wrinn reported that since the last Traffic Safety Committee meeting, 44 accidents were investigated and 3 of those included bicycle and pedestrians. He said there was a bike accident on William Street where no vehicle was involved, a pedestrian struck in the BUHS parking lot with criminal charges resulting, and a bicyclist hit a truck at the Seven-Eleven intersection on Western Avenue. He said that the Western Avenue incident was still an active investigation.

Other Business - There was no further business.

MOTION BY PATRICK MORELAND AT 10:30AM TO ADJOURN. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.