

**TRAFFIC SAFETY COMMITTEE  
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2019, 8:00AM  
SELECTBOARD MEETING ROOM, MUNICIPAL CENTER  
MINUTES**

Members present: Town Manager Peter Elwell, Police Chief Mike Fitzgerald, Public Works Director Steve Barrett, Planning Director Sue Fillion, Fire Chief Mike Bucossi, Chamber of Commerce Representative Deb Bunker, Citizen Representative Louise Zak, and School Representative Alice Charkes.

Selectboard Representative: Tim Wessel.

Other staff members present: Highway/Utilities Superintendent Dan Tyler and DPW Engineering Tech Josh Carnes.

Others present: Bill Ashcroft, Arthur Griffith, Bill Daley, Judy Daley, Leila Wilson Bate, Mollie Burke, Ken Roswell Jr., Norma Willingham, Ron Covey, Judy Covey, Lynn Minor, Shawn Minor, Kenneth Roswell III, Harold Dompierre, Gail Roswell, Kevin Yager, Josh Roberts, Fred Gaines, Donald Dompier, Karolina Oleksy, John Goddell, and others who did not sign the attendance sheet.

Town Manager Elwell called the meeting to order at 8:03am.

Approve Minutes – August 15, 2019

Elwell asked the committee to approve the minutes from the August 15 meeting. Tim Wessel asked to amend the minutes to add the name “Joshua Roberts” to replace “unidentified speaker” on line 26 of page 1. The amendment was accepted.

**MOTION BY ALICE CHARKES, AND SECONDED BY LOUISE ZAK, TO APPROVE THE AMENDED MINUTES FROM THE AUGUST 15 MEETING. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Public Participation

None.

Monthly Report on Pedestrian and Bicycle Incidents – Police Chief Mike Fitzgerald reported that from August 16 to September 15, 2019, 43 motor vehicle accidents were reported, 40 with no personal injuries, 3 with personal injuries, with one of those involving a pedestrian. He said that the pedestrian accident happened on August 30 at 3:00pm on the corner of High and Main Streets. The vehicle was turning west off of Main Street onto High Street and struck a pedestrian in the crosswalk (traveling south) who was crossing against the signal. He said that alcohol by the pedestrian was a contributing factor and no citations were issued.

Monthly Report on Traffic Data Collection – Josh Carnes, Engineering Technician from Public Works, spoke about the data in his report dated September 16, 2019. He said the timeframe covered the period from August 8 to September 4. He reviewed some highlights in the report. Members in the attendance requested that the mobile radar device be installed on Williams Street near the radio station and requested increased police presence in the area. Chief Fitzgerald spoke about the procedure to alert the officers to the location and said that the location would be added to the police patrol. There was discussion by the Committee about the report.

Updates/Continued Discussion on Ongoing Matters

- (a) *Parking at 263 Canal Street*
- (b) *Traffic Flow Concerns on Green Street*
- (c) *Western Avenue/High Street Bicycle Scoping Study & Grant Award*

(a) Highway/Utilities Superintendent Dan Tyler said that a site visit was performed and traffic speed data had been collected (as reported earlier in the meeting). He said that the average vehicular speed in the area of 263 Canal Street was 28mph (in a 25mph zone). He said the shoulder of the road was extremely wide near the parking lot entrance which provided good site distance for drivers exiting the parking lot to see beyond the cars parked in roadway and view traffic on Canal Street. He did not have recommendations for

the committee to consider; however, he suggested that the property owner could add line striping in the parking lot to alert or direct exiting traffic. There was a brief discussion by the committee.

(b) Fire Chief Bucossi noted that concerns were brought to staff's attention in late spring about the speed of traffic on Green Street and the congested flow of traffic around Green Street School. He said that staff visited the site on several occasions to observe parking and the one-way traffic pattern at the time of student drop-off in morning and pick-up at the end of school. He said no significant speed issues were found (as reported earlier in the meeting). However, he said that parking near the school on Green Street during those times were sporadic and the signage was irregular. He said that the signs would be corrected by the Public Works Department and the Police Department would provide additional enforcement on Green Street. He reported that the school hours had changed but the one-way traffic pattern had not been updated. He suggested that the committee recommend three ordinance changes to the Selectboard: (1) the times of the temporary one-way traffic pattern be changed in the morning to 7:15am-8:30am (from 8:00am-9:00am), and in the afternoon to 2:15pm-3:30pm (from 2:30pm-3:30pm), which would correspond with the school hours; (2) change the parking area in the cut-out directly in front of school to begin at the westerly boundary of the school (from the easterly boundary) and extend to the intersection with Western Avenue; and (3) to allow 1-hour parking in the cut-out in front of the school from 8:30am to 2:15pm for the convenience of visitors going into the school. He said that staff met with school officials and they were in agreement with the proposed ordinance amendments. There was some discussion by the committee about the requested changes.

**MOTION BY ALICE CHARKES, AND SECONDED BY DEB BUNKER, TO ADOPT THE ORDINANCE CHANGES, AS PRESENTED. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

(c) Planning Director Sue Fillion noted that a request had been received to install bike lanes on Western Avenue from Speno Court to the interstate exits (which may now extend from downtown to the Interstate). She said that VTrans (Vermont Agency of Transportation) had requested documentation of public support of the project, so staff applied for a scoping study grant. She was recently notified that the grant had been awarded to the Town for this purpose. She said the scoping study would involve public process and an engineering study with documentation of historic, archeological and environmental conditions. She said that the study would likely take place in the spring, followed by a contractual process with engineers, and full public input. There was no discussion by the committee members.

Williams Street/Western Avenue Intersection Project – Update. Elwell spoke of the history of the nearly 2-decade long safety concerns at the intersection of Williams Street and Western Avenue, including the geometry of the intersection, movement of traffic, vehicles backing into the roadway, and safety for pedestrians and bicyclists. He said that the committee received four preliminary engineering proposals at the last Traffic Safety Committee meeting and was asked to hold discussion on the proposals at this meeting. He said that any plan that was approved would involve community engagement, approval by the Selectboard, and financing approval from Representative Town Meeting (RTM). Barrett spoke of the history of past proposals since the 1980s. He said that different concepts had been considered over the years, including a 2001 concept plan and proposal of \$270,000 that was defeated at RTM. Consequently the plans and project went dormant for several years. He said that in 2016 the Traffic Safety Committee voted to recommend funding to revitalize the project and develop concept plans. He stressed that the four plans being presented at this meeting were only conceptual and that any process to implement a plan would be a lengthy process which would include substantial public hearings. He introduced John Goddell, an engineer from Southern Vermont Engineering. Goddell presented and discussed concept plans which contained existing conditions and 4 preliminary improvement concepts. He said the proposals included closing the west leg of Williams Street with parking on Western Avenue on the south side only, north side only, both sides, or no on-street parking. He spoke about other related improvements, such as landscaping, traffic calming measures, re-routing traffic around the store, site distances, retaining wall, bike lanes, and rights-of-way. Elwell invited members in the audience to speak and asked that they particularly consider improvements within the constraints of the current roadway because expanding the roadway would require acquisition of private land, which would be much more cumbersome, expensive, and lengthy.

Several people in attendance – Fred Gaines, Ken Roswell, Harold Dompierre, Ken Roswell, Jr., Norma Willingham, Gail Roswell, Alice Charkes, Karolina Oleksy, and Lynn Minor – provided their comments and opinions and spoke of their concerns. Bill Daley and Judy Daley, owners of Vermont Country Deli, spoke of their safety concerns in the area, the business' contributions to the community, and their willingness to work

with neighbors and the Town to improve safety in the area. Public Works Director Steve Barrett said that improvements to the area would require difficult decisions. He also announced that work on the failing retaining wall on Williams Street would begin in the upcoming week and he noted that additional equipment would be in the roadway. Elwell thanked the participants for providing their comments and suggestions and said that the engineers would take the information that they learned from this meeting into consideration in reviewing more design options. There was no discussion by the committee.

Request to Install Crosswalk on Western Avenue at Coopers Coop On The Avenue. Wessel said that he recently spoke with the new owners of Coopers Coop On The Avenue who expressed their safety concerns for pedestrians and vehicles in front of the store. Elwell suggested that this matter be added to the agenda for the next meeting in order to provide staff time to review the situation and provide information to the committee for a full discussion. He cautioned that the combination of the curve of the street and change in elevation made for poor visibility and would be an unsuitable location to install a crosswalk. Bill Ashcroft, owner of the store, spoke of his concerns for customers crossing the street and the speed of vehicles on Western Avenue. He asked for more police presence in the area to reduce the speed of traffic. He added that if parking along the street was eliminated to create a bike lane that his store would lose on-street parking spaces. Arthur Griffith, owner of the property, asked if a crossing zone could be installed to allow people to cross Western Avenue. Elwell suggested that the mobile radar device could be installed in the area to monitor the speed of traffic. He also stated that installing anything official to allow pedestrians to cross in an unsafe area would increase the danger for pedestrians and the liability for the Town. He asked that pedestrians cross in the designated crosswalks for their safety. Planning Director Sue Fillion added that the bicycle scoping study would consider the impact of on-street parking. Wessel spoke of the science behind traffic calming measures. Elwell said that this matter would be on the next agenda for further discussion.

Other Business – Informational Items

There was no further business.

**ELWELL ADJOURNED THE MEETING AT 9:50AM.**