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**TRAFFIC SAFETY COMMITTEE
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2020, 8:00AM
HELD REMOTELY ON GoToMeeting
MINUTES**

NOTE: Per the “Stay Home – Stay Safe” order issued by Governor Scott, this meeting was held remotely with no physical location using GoToMeeting.

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

Other staff members present: DPW Engineering Technician Josh Carnes and Planning Technician Andrew Graminski.

Others present: Junie Pereira and Prudence MacKinney.

Town Manager Elwell called the meeting to order at 8:01am.

Approve Minutes – August 20, 2020

Elwell asked the committee to approve the minutes from the August 20, 2020 meeting. There was no discussion.

MOTION BY LOUISE ZAK, AND SECONDED BY ALICE CHARKES, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM THE AUGUST 20 MEETING. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Public Participation

None.

Monthly Report on Pedestrian and Bicycle Incidents – Police Chief Mike Fitzgerald reported that since the August 20th meeting, 77 motor vehicle accidents occurred, 73 of which were without personal injuries, 4 with personal injuries, and none involved pedestrians or bicyclists. He added that one of the personal injuries was a fatality which took place near 729 Upper Dummerston Road on September 22 at approximately 7:30pm. He said it was a single vehicle crash and the accident was still under investigation. There was no discussion by the committee.

Monthly Report on Traffic Data Collection –

(a) *Monthly Report*

(b) *Demonstration of Interactive Speed Data Map*

(a) Josh Carnes, Engineer Technician with the Department of Public Works, reviewed the data collected from radar devices in various locations from August 13 through October 8, as set forth in his report dated October 9, 2020. There was a brief discussion about the excessive speed on Putney Road. Police Chief Fitzgerald noted that copies of this report were routinely provided to the patrol division to do some selective speed enforcement in the areas that were more than 5mph above the 85th percentile. Public Works Director Barrett added that the State recently reduced the speed limit on Putney Road to 35mph and he suggested that reduction in speed may assist in reducing the speed of traffic coming into town on Putney Road. He said that DPW was also looking into speed devices with newer technology. There was some discussion by the committee.

(b) Andrew Graminski, Planning Technician, presented a potential online interactive map that could be accessed by the public on the Town’s website. He said it could display data that was provided in the traffic data collection report that Carnes’ just provided. There was some discussion about the data set that could be included, maintaining historical data, how to operate the map, and when and how to launch it to the public.

1 Updates/Continued Discussion on Ongoing Matters -

- 2 (a) *Putney Road Speed Reduction and Putney Road Interim Safety Improvements*
- 3 (b) *Marlboro Road Speed Reduction*
- 4 (c) *Route 9 Bike Lane Scoping Study*
- 5 (d) *WRC Study of Pedestrian Crossings at South Main Street and Canal Street*

6
7 (a) Elwell provided information on the Putney Road Interim Safety Improvements, as well as the Putney
8 Road Speed Reduction Plan. With regard to the Putney Road Interim Safety Improvements and the RRFB
9 (rectangular rapid flashing beacon) being installed at Town Crier Drive, Elwell said that VTrans put the work
10 out to bid, selected a contractor, and the work to install the pedestrian crossing device was underway. He
11 said that all of the underground work would be completed before winter. He noted that the pedestrian
12 crossing equipment at the Hannaford Plaza and the painting of the crosswalk would take longer and may not
13 be installed until late winter or early spring. He said that the painting of the bike lanes would not take place
14 until the spring. With regard to the reduction of speed limits on Putney Road, Elwell said that the State had
15 performed a traffic study and the data indicated a need to reduce the speed limit to 35mph (from 40mph) and
16 the new speed signs had already been installed. There was no discussion.

17
18 (b) Elwell said that the State performed a speed study on Marlboro Road and the data indicated the need to
19 reduce the speed from 40mph to 35mph. He said that the speed signs had been installed. There was no
20 discussion.

21
22 (c) Planning Director Sue Fillion provided an update about the Route 9 Bike Lane Scoping Study. She said
23 that the Town was working with Dufresne Group to provide engineering work on the project. She said she
24 was working with the engineers about how, in the COVID era, to schedule a meeting to obtain the public's
25 input. She said that the consultants and State Project Coordinator recommended forming a Steering
26 Committee to provide some guidance during the project. She noted that Prudence MacKinney, from the
27 Planning Commission, would sit on the Steering Committee. She said that she was seeking a member from
28 the Traffic Safety Committee, as well as a business or homeowner on the route, to be a part of the Steering
29 Committee. Alice Charkes volunteered to serve on the Steering Committee. Other committee members
30 agreed to her appointment.

31
32 (d) Planning Director Fillion said that Windham Regional Commission (WRC) conducted a study of the
33 crosswalk at the intersection of Canal Street and South Main Street. She spoke about the data and
34 information contained in her memo, dated October 8, 2020, and the accompanying graphs. She noted that
35 due to COVID, and the temporary closing of the Drop In Center, the amount of pedestrian traffic downtown
36 was lower than in a normal year. She said that data on bicycle usage was also collected and would be
37 shown in a future chart. Elwell suggested that the Committee ask WRC to repeat the study after the end of
38 the COVID pandemic when pedestrian traffic was closer to normal, and then compare the two sets of data
39 before taking any actions. He also suggested counting the number of pedestrians who used the signalized
40 crosswalk north of this intersection. He also noted that the Department of Public Works had added reflective
41 materials on the signage posts at the South Main Street intersection in order to improve the safety in this
42 area. There was some discussion by the Committee, including the number of pedestrians that do not use
43 the crosswalk, and it was suggested that the next study be performed when school was in session and
44 Groundworks was open,

45
46 Street and Sidewalk Safety Policy Action Requests -

- 47 (a) *Crosswalk at South Main Street and Canal Street*
- 48 (b) *Speeding on Upper Dummerston Road at and near East Orchard Street*
- 49 (c) *Request for a Left Turn Lane on Guilford Street at Western Avenue*
- 50 (d) *Request for "School Zone" Designation Near the Community Schoolhouse*

51
52 (a) *Crosswalk at South Main Street and Canal Street* – This matter was discussed under "Updates/
53 Continued Discussion on Ongoing Matters" above.

54
55 **Agenda adjustment** - The Committee agreed to move item (d) (*Request for "School Zone" Designation Near*
56 *the Community Schoolhouse*) to this point in the meeting.

57
58 (d) *Request for "School Zone" Designation Near the Community Schoolhouse* - Junie Pereira, from The

1 Community House, requested that the zone around The Community House, on the corner of Oak and High
2 Streets, be designated as a school zone. He said that the school had grown over the past few years and
3 that students often took walks and hikes in the area. He mentioned the illegal drug activity across from the
4 school. He said that by declaring the area a school zone, awareness that children were in the area would be
5 raised. Police Chief Fitzgerald said that he recommended designating the area as a school zone and spoke
6 of the illegal drug activity at 33 Oak Street. He said that designation of such a zone would allow greater
7 police protection under Vermont Statutes, including restrictions on tobacco use, the sale and use of drugs,
8 and vehicle enforcement, as set forth in his memo dated October 6, 2020. He said that boundaries of a
9 school zone would be set at 500 feet from the school zone signs. He said that he contacted the Vermont
10 Agency of Education and Windham Southeast Supervisory Union for instructions on how to designate a
11 school zone, but neither organization could provide instructions. He said he learned that the Traffic Safety
12 Committee could make the designation. Elwell said that designating the area as a school zone would not
13 require Selectboard action nor an amendment to the Town Ordinances, so staff could implement the
14 necessary signage. He added that this Committee had previously recommended establishing a school bus
15 stop on Oak Street by The Community House, but such a stop was unable to be implemented due
16 regulations regarding student school bus operations. There was a brief discussion by the Committee.

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18 **MOTION BY LOUISE ZAK, AND SECONDED BY ALICE CHARKES, TO DESIGNATE THIS AREA AS A**
19 **SCHOOL ZONE, SUBJECT TO THE POLICE DEPARTMENT AND DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS**
20 **COLLABORATING ON THE SPECIFIC LOCATION OF THE SIGNS. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**
21

22 (b) *Speeding on Upper Dummerston Road at and near East Orchard Street* – Police Chief Fitzgerald said
23 that two Safety Action Requests had been received with concerns about the speed of vehicles on Upper
24 Dummerston Road and failure of vehicles to stop at the stop sign at Orchard Street and Upper Dummerston
25 Road. The citizen had requested that speed bumps be installed on Upper Dummerston Road. Chief
26 Fitzgerald said that speed studies were conducted in July of 2019 and June of 2020 near the Country Club.
27 He said that the posted speed limit was 35mph, and that the 2019 study showed northbound traffic traveled
28 at an average speed of 34mph and the 2020 study showed it traveling at 34.2, with the 85th percentile being
29 only 4mph over the posted speed limit. He said that the 2019 study showed southbound traffic traveled at an
30 average speed of 29mph, with the 85th percentile being 2mph under the posted speed limit. He said that the
31 traffic speed was not excessive from an enforcement perspective. He added that only 6 accidents had
32 occurred on that road in the past two years and that enforcement occurred periodically along the road. He
33 requested that Public Works conduct another speed study, particularly on southbound traffic since that study
34 was over one year old. Elwell noted that the road was not a good location for speed bumps, and that speed
35 bumps were not installed on through roads but more likely near a facility, such as Living Memorial Park.
36 Public Works Director Barrett noted that the use of speed bumps at Living Memorial Park were still being
37 studied and that he had received much feedback from neighbors, including about noise pollution. Elwell said
38 that other options could be explored. There was some discussion by Committee members, along with a
39 request to add this matter to the next agenda.

40
41 (c) *Request for a Left Turn Lane on Guilford Street at Western Avenue* – Public Works Director said that a
42 number of requests over the past few years had been received to install another turn lane off of Guilford
43 Street at the intersection with Western Avenue. He said that at the time of the installation of Citizens' Bridge,
44 it was determined by the Traffic Safety Committee, VTrans, staff, and residents not to install a slip lane, or
45 turn lane, or stacking lane so as to discourage the use of Guilford Street as a through street from the south
46 side of town and thereby diminish the volume of traffic on Guilford Street. Elwell added that a study had
47 been conducted about installing a traffic signal at the intersection, and the studies determined that traffic
48 would backup on Western Avenue and create a much worse problem at the I-91 interchange. He said that
49 staff recommended that no action be taken on this request. There was a brief discussion. No action was
50 taken.

51
52 Other Business – Informational Items.

53 Prudence MacKinney announced that BCAT (Brattleboro Coalition for Active Transport) recently launched a
54 survey to gather information and data on people's concerns and needs concerning active transportation in
55 Brattleboro. She asked committee members to encourage participation in the survey by spreading the word
56 about the survey and provide a link to the survey to other people. Elwell agreed to add a link to the Town's
57 website. Planning Director Fillion noted that the link had been added to the Planning Department's
58 Facebook page and the Energy Committee's Facebook page.

1 Alice Charkes added that BCAT had applied through the League of American Bicyclists that Brattleboro be
2 recognized as a bicycle friendly community. She said that such a designation would require a survey from
3 the community, so a second survey would be issued on November 1 with November 15 return deadline.
4 There was a brief discussion about possible confusion in the community about receiving a second survey.

5
6 There was no further business.

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8 **ELWELL ADJOURNED THE MEETING AT 9:34AM.**