



# APPROVED

**Town of Plaistow - Highway Safety Committee**  
145 Main Street, Plaistow, NH 03865

## PLAISTOW HIGHWAY SAFETY COMMITTEE MINUTES

**MEETING DATE-** Tuesday, April 14, 2009

**PRESENT-** Chief Stephen Savage, *Chairman*; Chief John McArdle, *Vice Chairman*; Sean Fitzgerald, *Town Manager*; Dan Garlington, *Highway Department Supervisor*; Leigh Komornick, *Town Planner*; Michael Dorman, *Building Inspector*; Ernie Sheltry, *Citizens Representative*; Lisa Withee, *Citizens Representative*; and Dan Poliquin, *Selectmen Representative*

**EXCUSED-** Dan Travaglini, *Citizens Representative*

**ABSENT-** None

**MEETING CALLED TO ORDER-** 1:00 p.m.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT-**

No public present.

### **MINUTES-**

Chief Savage would like to accept the minutes of the last meeting on 03/17/09. L. Withee states a correction should be made on the spelling of Forrest. M. Dorman motioned to accept the minutes with the correction and L. Komornick seconded the motion. All in favor.

### **NEW BUSINESS -**

Sidewalk improvement – Palmer Avenue

Chief Savage states that many years ago the Committee always looked at and got involved in sidewalk issues as they are a highway safety issue. That the only sidewalk left is the Palmer Avenue sidewalk. Asks if the Committee wants to continue with discussions of sidewalks as they do service many people in the neighborhoods.

Chief McArdle states that many people use that sidewalk.

Chief Savage states that no improvements have been done to it and thinks it should be looked as a potential project.

L. Komornick asks if it should be looked at to be redone.

D. Poliquin comments that it is safety issue.

S. Fitzgerald asks if there are any building codes with regard to sidewalks.

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M. Dorman states they just need to comply with ADA standards.

D. Garlington states that some minor repairs were done to it about 12 years ago and found that the sidewalk space is not consistent.

S. Fitzgerald comments that is the result you get when no standards are set in place.

L. Komornick asks if the sidewalk is a State obligation.

Chief Savage states it is on a State road but is not sure if it is a State obligation. He is not sure where the right-of-way is on the sidewalk and whether you could get a 4' wide sidewalk on the road.

D. Garlington says you run into a similar situation all the way down Main Street, that there is a very good amount of the sidewalk that is not on the right-of-way.

Chief Savage states that years ago when they were doing sidewalk overlays all that was done was the overlay and trying to pick up an extra 12" in width. It was done at Town level and no excavation was done in order to avoid extra costs. This sidewalk however, appears to be costly, an overlay would not be sufficient, and we should look at grant options.

L. Komornick asks if she should contact Bob Kalan at the District to see where the sidewalk stands and whether or not it is a State obligation.

D. Garlington comments that the State most likely won't do anything. Usually once a sidewalk is put in they wash their hands of it.

L. Komornick states that sometimes they will acknowledge a sidewalk.

D. Garlington says the State will put as many in as you want as part of their project but then wash their hands of them so they don't need to maintain them.

Chief McArdle states that in case of an evacuation at Pollard School without buses, the school uses Elm Street as the route to get to the Fire Department for the evacuation. This sidewalk is also in disrepair.

D. Poliquin states that the Town use to have a sidewalk that ran by the corner of the Lagasse property and is now the Safety Complex in front of the pond and continue down that side of Elm Street, which use to have some asphalt but has been dug up from plowing over the years.

Chief Savage states when they did the overlay it went up Elm Street to the Safety Complex and created a sidewalk in front of the Safety Complex then so it would join the Palmer Avenue sidewalk. The Palmer Avenue sidewalk is in bad shape now and doesn't see the State doing anything with regard to it.

L. Komornick asks if we are looking at either TE or Safe Routes to School.

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S. Fitzgerald states when you do repairs to streets it is typically where you can find deficiencies to sidewalks. It is much more efficient to work on the sidewalks and streets at the same time.

D. Garlington states the road surface plan doesn't get into reconstruction so unless you are going down below a reclaim so you are dealing with 6" of road. In order to build a sidewalk right you need to go below that. So the cost doesn't fall within the overall road surface management.

S. Fitzgerald states that plan is specifically geared to maximize dollars and we are talking about major infrastructure improvements and adding components of sidewalks to an overall infrastructure plan that would involve not just maintenance. This would be a long term master plan. Questions if people envision sidewalks in Plaistow.

Chief Savage states in the past every year when they did the sidewalks it went through by Warrant Articles for overlays. General feeling back then was sidewalks contributed to the atmosphere of the neighborhoods.

S. Fitzgerald states they increase the value of homes. If you give residents sidewalks you can also set up a fund for sidewalks so every year you can do a certain amount of square feet of sidewalks including maintenance/repairs.

Chief Savage states he placed it on the agenda and encourages L. Komornick to put it on her radar from a planning perspective and also to remind everyone that the sidewalks need some attention.

L. Komornick asks if the sidewalk is an old TE project sidewalk.

Chief Savage states it is not a new sidewalk and we are not looking for maintenance on it, we are looking for reconstruction.

S. Fitzgerald states if we had \$100,000 for sidewalks how would we spend it, what would the priority be, and are there any studies on where to place sidewalks?

Chief Savage states there are no studies just observations and an attempt to maintain current sidewalks and link the Town buildings to create a village district.

Chief McArdle states that on a daily basis there is no fewer than 15 people you see on a daily basis walking this route.

Chief Savage states the need to start thinking about maintaining the sidewalks for the 8-9 months of the year they are utilized.

S. Fitzgerald states the need to look at what the best interest is for the Town and if applying for grants we need to better define the need, public safety, community access, recreation, and pedestrian paths as there are clusters of neighborhoods and populations demographically. Need to look at people getting out and walking around and giving them resources to do so such as bike paths and sidewalks. It might be better to get rid of the older sidewalks and put crush stone down.

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Chief Savage states crush stone will drive people onto the streets because it will be too difficult to push a carriage or ride a bike on crush stone. We want to avoid people using the roads in the breakdown lane. Also, it is important for the Committee to be aware of it and it is also an issue for the police department because highway safety is also pedestrian safety.

S. Fitzgerald asks how many pedestrian fatalities the Town has had.

Chief Savage states there have been 2 one by the Town Hall and the other by the funeral home.

Chief McArdle states 2 in the past 3 years and 3 if you go back further.

Chief Savage states it is a quality of life for the Town and we should keep the sidewalk issue in our radar and look for possible grants.

S. Fitzgerald states if you build a nice sidewalk people will want to use it.

Chief Savage states that the sidewalk outside the Town Hall all the way to Ingalls Terrace was by grant and the overlay down to the Library was also through the grant. It tied Ingalls Terrace to the Town Hall.

L. Komornick will check into grant options and inform the Committee of her results at the next meeting. Feels there should also be discussions with the Planning Board and Board of Selectmen.

D. Poliquin states the Board of Selectmen looks at future maintenance costs and also the safety issues. He would like to see more sidewalks in Town.

S. Fitzgerald states if you look at road patterns you could create a great walk path/loop.

Chief Savage says when originally discussing TRHS years ago it was discussed about linking TRHS to the Town village, which has been a long-standing issue.

S. Fitzgerald states we need to build a broader conception of how valuable the sidewalks can be for everyone.

D. Garlington comments that some residents might not want the value of their house to increase as costs will increase on them.

S. Fitzgerald states if a home value goes up \$5,000 it is worth something and if the value of the home goes up the owner can use it towards their personal financial benefits.

Chief Savage comments that the sidewalks would create a village district.

D. Poliquin states that there has been an increase in pedestrians since the sidewalks were built all the way up to the recreation field.

L. Komornick states that the Little River Village area would probably be more of a walking trail.

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M. Dorman states it will be a walking trail only, no bikes.

S. Fitzgerald states there are a lot of features in the community that are unique and would be good if you can get people walking through the community and seeing areas such as the wetlands.

Chief Savage comments about the economic piece and the possibility of finding vendors to assist in placing sidewalks during their projects.

M. Dorman states that all new subdivision requires a 4' – 5' wide sidewalk at grade with a stripe, instead of a curb sidewalk.

S. Fitzgerald comments about how sidewalks have evolved over the years.

M. Dorman states if you create a curb sidewalk the costs increase due to drainage costs.

Chief Savage states at some point when the State works on Route 125 by the Cumberland Farms area you will probably see at some point all of Route 125 with a curb sidewalk, which could help join TRHS and the Town village.

S. Fitzgerald states a way to get to this goal is to start with prioritizing and looking at ordinances. Suggests looking at other communities and what their ordinances are for subdivisions, and what the best practice is for design to help the Town create a uniform standard.

M. Dorman states they still do both some with curb and others at grade but stopped doing the curb sidewalk because nobody could afford it, including the Town after the fact.

D. Garlington comments that there are a few of them such as the subdivision by Little River, which would be a perfect model on what a sidewalk should be. You would have 20' of hot top, a grass swale shoulder, utilities, drainage, and just at the end of the right-of-way you have a 5' walkway.

M. Dorman states that is the most current model.

Chief Savage asks if there are any more comments with regard to sidewalks. None.

## **OLD BUSINESS -**

"NH DOT placing an additional no u-turn sign on Rte 125 southbound after the median by Chandler Avenue".

Chief Savage comments that the no u-turn sign has been installed and drivers have already been written up in violation.

E. Sheltry states that drivers are still making u-turns there but if they cause an accident they will be responsible.

## **OLD BUSINESS -**

"Continue review of Revisions to Chapter 205 Vehicles and Traffic"

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Chief Savage passed on the final draft of Chapter 205 and suggests that everyone take it under advisement and discusses any changes or comments at the next meeting. Prior to the next meeting contact S. Gibbs with any comments or changes. States that it is the last draft before it goes before the Board of Selectmen.

## **OLD BUSINESS -**

“Continue review of “Transportation Improvement Program” project listing.”

L. Komornick states that they did go with the list that she proposed at the last meeting and added the North Avenue/Main Street intersection to it. Would like the Committee to endorse it so it can go to the Board of Selectmen and then to Rockingham Planning Commission (RPC). Reiterates that RPC has a long range plan and short range plan and as projects go, they go from the long range plan to the short range plan. The Town for years was moving the Route 125 projects so we are at a void now of projects in the long range plan to move into the transportation improvement program's short range plan because of the Route 125 projects. Even if we do the corridor study of Main Street, it is not going to fund the intersections so we need to get the projects on the long range list so they can be funded. Would like to pass this along to the RPC as our recommended list.

S. Fitzgerald asks regarding the intersections along Main Street if the Committee decided if they are stand alone projects. It makes sense to get on their long range list so we need to be advocates on this, as there are 27 communities on the RPC.

Chief Savage states month ago the Board of Selectmen asked the Committee to identify dangerous intersections, which is difficult to do until we have data such as crash data and/or the corridor study. Before anyone suggests which is the most dangerous, we need to look at the entire corridor.

D. Garlington states if one intersection changes it can adversely effect another intersection.

L. Komornick asked if the corridor study is successful in identifying improvements, that next step is how to get it funded so if we can tie it all together. If we can tie them all in together and indicate that even though it will be tough to do because RPC likes to do intersections individually but in this case we could say it is one uniform project.

Chief Savage agrees that you can't just do one because it will adversely affect the others. Whatever we decide the Board of Selectmen should first say it is compelling evidence and there is a need to do it as a corridor study and have the Committee be a point group initially and then from there it is a Board of Selectmen issue. We could be talking match funding.

D. Poliquin states that the Board of Selectmen in some respects has already said this and knows it is their issue. When the group came down regarding the intersection of Main Street and Elm Street it brought all the intersections back in the lime light and so the tour of the intersections occurred. The Board of Selectmen is not in favor of 3 or 4 way stops, especially with the amount of traffic through the Town. The Board is looking at ways to curb speeding and looking at other options such as bump-outs or islands.

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L. Komornick states when they do the study they will produce recommendations, which will be when they come in to make a presentation to the Board of Selectmen.

S. Fitzgerald states that it would be good that they meet with the Committee first to view the recommendations they have and then forward it on to the Board of Selectmen. If we can forward on to the Board the due diligence and give them the imperial data that backs up priorities and we can lead and define what would be in this Boards estimation most important in terms of priority.

Chief Savage feels the RPC would like to speak with the Committee prior to the Board of Selectmen.

S. Fitzgerald would like to see 60% of design development of the study. RPC is a great organization would like to get them here at 30-60% of the design development so we can help shape the design and be active participants to help focus their technical review in order to get a study that we feel will best help us move traffic safety and Main Street village concepts forward.

Chief Savage comments that he feels everyone agrees that you need to do the entire corridor and not just one intersection.

L. Komornick states she doesn't want to wait until the corridor study is done before getting a place holder for this corridor wide improvement project on the long range plan with RPC.

Chief Savage questions how you get a place holder if you are not certain what you are holding.

S. Fitzgerald agrees we need a place holder with RPC and can call it possibly, "Main Street Corridor Wide Improvement". As soon as we appear on their long range plan the sooner we will be on their short term plan. Then we need to discuss how we manage it, when we look at this study we want to know how traffic moves through the community, if we rip up an intersection we need to know traffic patterns and how it will send traffic through the community. It can help us strategically manage some of the improvements.

Chief Savage states the letter should come from the Board of Selectmen.

L. Komornick asks if the Committee can write a letter to the Board of Selectmen indicating we held a meeting and endorse providing the RPC with a recommendation of a Main Street Corridor Wide Improvement program to act as a place holder.

S. Fitzgerald states it would be consistent with master plan goals regarding a village concept development and public safety.

D. Poliquin states you need to keep public safety in it.

S. Fitzgerald states Dave Walker came down and brought a sample of a traffic study that they worked on previously. Also, we can obtain samples for other communities.

Chief McArdle states one variable that has not taken into account yet is Wal-Mart. You can have any number of traffic studies or intersection changes but if Wal-Mart or another box store

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moves on to Route 125, it will change whatever the studies are with regard to traffic counts. This happened before with Home Depot.

S. Fitzgerald states you can add those possible changes into the study. Prior to any start of the study we should invite Cliff Sinott at RPC to a meeting to review the scope of the study and benefits because hopefully the study will better define what we do and use it to help us properly schedule CIP projects, intersection improvements, or traffic calming improvements.

Chief Savage asked if Cliff from RPC can attend the next meeting and in the meantime should a letter go to the Board of Selectmen asking them or is it premature.

S. Fitzgerald states if Board of Selectmen are looking for a recommendation to support Main Street Corridor Wide Improvement program that would include a number of intersections, should we prioritize the intersections.

L. Komornick states that Seabrook didn't prioritize their intersections when they did it.

S. Fitzgerald states there is a need to let RPC know we are ready to proceed and we should send a letter every year asking them to fund it.

Chief Savage states he will wait till after the next meeting to write a letter to the Board of Selectmen asking them to support sending a letter.

D. Garlington states that if the Town can get as many of the improvements finished on Route 125 it will help the traffic problems on Main Street. If it is friendlier for the trucks and cars to migrate from one side of Town to the other and can do it more efficiently then they will use it instead of Main Street.

L. Komornick says if we add traffic calming on Main Street it will move trucks off Main Street.

M. Dorman comments that by adding sidewalks it will also make the road narrower.

D. Garlington states that if the Town population grows to 10,000 we could take be taking Main Street a lot sooner than later.

S. Fitzgerald asks if the radar trailer is out yet.

Chief Savage states it is already placed on Main Street.

L. Withee questions who is responsible for picking up the broken glass on the side of the road, which is a huge issue and also all the trash in the Town.

D. Poliquin comments that trash was brought up in a meeting.

M. Dorman states that it has been a few years since they had Plaistow Pride Day.

S. Fitzgerald asks if trustees are available to clean the streets.

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Chief Savage states they won't do any State roads only Town roads, they would need to be closely supervised, and the Town would need to provide the County a certificate of insurance. Quickly explained the injury a trustee received at the Safety Complex and the issue surrounding whether the Town or County was responsible for the medical expenses.

S. Fitzgerald will ask the Board of Selectmen if they are in favor of trustees cleaning the streets.

D. Poliquin states it has never been a topic of discussion with the Board of Selectmen.

S. Fitzgerald questions if there is a Plaistow Pride Day where organizations show up and clean the Town.

Chief Savage states it hasn't been around for the past 3 or 4 years but believes it ran into funding issues and lack of volunteers. States a point person is needed to run such a project.

Chief Savage confirms that the Committee will ask Cliff Sinott from RPC to come down to the next meeting with possibly David.

S. Fitzgerald states that the Great Hall would be a good place to meet at the next meeting with them. If we can pull them in at preliminary design, kick off, then at 30-60% development, and again at 90% design we can work with them to create a study that will fit the Town.

L. Komornick will contact Cliff Sinott to invite him down to the next meeting.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

Chief Savage comments that he spoke with Bill Lambert at the NH DOT who is receiving citizen complaints about cars going northbound trying to get into the Kohl's Plaza are either 25-30 cars back at the light or are trying to cut through the Great Elm Plaza. Chief told DOT that it has gotten worse since the NH State Liquor Store moved into the Kohl's Plaza. If another vendor goes into the other portion of where Craft Mania was it will be worse. The DOT is aware of this problem and is looking into it.

Chief McArdle speaks about the problem it is causing at Great Elm Plaza because people are trying to cut thru using that light, which prevents other people from actually getting into the plaza for business.

D. Garlington, D. Poliquin, and L. Komornick discuss how the traffic lights are not in synch on Route 125.

Chief McArdle comments that there is problem where the road connects at the Haverhill line, which causes people to avoid it and puts traffic onto North Avenue and Main Street.

D. Garlington states that traffic has increased on Wentworth Avenue. Drivers go down Wentworth Avenue and then cut down Hilldale Avenue.

Chief McArdle comments that it is due to the same reason he mentioned.

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M. Dorman states that some people have asked him about the stop sign that is suppose to go in on Main Street by Haseltine Avenue. He spoke with L. Komornick and Steve at District 6 and asked about the possibility of putting the second sign up and have two signs up to get people use to the new stop sign on Main Street. Steve indicated he would talk to the proper people but didn't think they would go along with it. It will either be Haseltine Avenue or Main Street and will probably stay Haseltine Avenue until it is constructed or widened and that stop sign will then go on Main Street and Haseltine Avenue will be the thru road.

L. Komornick states if you are going northbound on Main Street you'd have to stop on Haseltine.

M. Dorman states that once the road is built you will be stopping on Main Street instead of Haseltine Avenue.

D. Poliquin comments that part of the problem now is people cut thru the Shaw's shopping center to get to Main Street.

S. Fitzgerald asks about the mortgage company's sign in Haverhill on Route 125. Understands in Massachusetts you can't have signs that are distracting to motor vehicles.

L. Komornick states that the mortgage company went to Court over it and they won. In Haverhill the road is a city road and not a state road.

Chief Savage states that the Police Department did not take a position with regard to the sign because the department did not have jurisdiction.

M. Dorman states those signs are not permitted in Plaistow.

D. Poliquin comments that the company has put those signs in 13 locations.

D. Garlington states that he is in the processing of upgrading the size of the street signs. Streets that are 30 mph or greater have to have a 9" street sign so we are in the process of upgrading them, which will take about 10 years to complete.

S. Fitzgerald asks if we put out a request for bid or if we have a vendor already.

D. Garlington states he is using New England Barricade. He will speak with them tomorrow because there is possibly a grant out there to assist paying for some items. Unfortunately, there are not many vendors around locally, so other vendor options you would be looking at shipping costs.

D. Poliquin asks about the cones that were placed out front of the Town Hall to block the parking space at the corner, if it has helped people pulling out onto Main Street or not. If so, might want to stripe that parking spot.

D. Garlington states it is the year that we paint the parking lot. The biggest issue was that we were trying to get an answer from the State on whether or not you can put a crosswalk there and think the answer will be no.

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S. Fitzgerald suggests putting a no parking zone sign there.

Chief Savage asked if the flashing caution sign is up across from the Town Hall.

M. Dorman states it is gone.

Chief Savage states that the only item on the Agenda for the next meeting will be the meeting with Cliff from RPC. In the meantime asks everyone to review Chapter 205 and let S. Gibbs know if you have any changes.

## **ADJOURNMENT-**

D. Poliquin makes a motion to adjourn, seconded by M. Dorman, none opposed all in favor.

**NEXT MEETING DATE –date and time be determined.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Sarah E. Gibbs  
Recording Secretary