



APPROVED

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

PLAISTOW HIGHWAY SAFETY COMMITTEE MINUTES

MEETING DATE- Wednesday, June 11, 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*; Dave Walker, *Rockingham Planning Commission* and Steve Ireland, *NH DOT*

EXCUSED- Lisa Withee, *Citizens Representative* and Dan Poliquin, *Selectmen Representative*

ABSENT- None

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER- 9:36 a.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT-
None.

MINUTES-

Chief Savage asks for motion to accept the minutes of the last meeting on 05/20/09. D. Garlington motions to accept the minutes and M. Dorman second the motion. All in favor and none opposed.

NEW BUSINESS -

Define scope of Route 121A Corridor Study

S. Fitzgerald comments that as the Committee begins framing the traffic study we need the technical support and assistance from Rockingham Planning Commission and NH DOT to help understand factors that will impact changes to the road for years to come. Also, to understand how people utilize cut-thru roadways that impact Main Street and look at all potential impacts such as a railroad stop. States that traffic moves too fast on Main Street and would like to see traffic calming efforts made. Feels there is a way to successfully balance the importance of moving traffic through Plaistow and keeping the residential community atmosphere on Main Street.

Chief Savage asks D. Walker if anyone has spoken to him regarding the scope of work yet. D. Walker states that it was discussed at the last meeting and since then he has prepared a very rough draft scope of work (attached), as a starting point. Mentions that an offer was made to do some signal analysis at Westville Road and the Pine Street intersection and recalls a question of budget availability.

S. Fitzgerald states that money was not set aside as significant cuts had to be made in the budget.

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D. Walker states that it is an option to shift some detailed work on those two intersections that are probably the two most likely to be eligible for a signal.

S. Fitzgerald comments that the draft is very helpful to frame, schedule, and scope the study and comments how the Committee hasn't looked at best practices yet and it would be helpful to view some in order to help lead our colleagues on the study.

Chief Savage states that even though the discussion is for a corridor study, that what is taking place on Route 125 with changes in intersections and potential commercial development has a huge impact on Main Street. In the corridor study it should be clear that there is a significant relationship of the two roadways. States that you can't do the study and ignore what is happening on Route 125 as it will have a huge impact on Main Street. Further, asks L. Komornick where the Committee stands on the corridor study.

L. Komornick states that she is just viewing the draft scope today and wants to make sure that NH DOT is aware of what is going on and to make sure the Town incorporates items that NH DOT will support. Recommends viewing the draft to see if it is sufficient. Also states that discussions have occurred about doing an interim measure by Elm Street and Main Street by placing jersey barriers there and would like to talk to NH DOT about it.

D. Garlington agrees that at the last meeting it was discussed that the Committee would talk to NH DOT about temporary placement of islands.

L. Komornick comments it would block off the slip lane so that driver's had to take a right turn instead of going through the slip lane on Main Street and Elm Street.

M. Dorman states it was done a few years ago and worked well. Chief Savage believes the existing Board of Selectmen at the time decided to take it out. L. Komornick questions who put out the jersey barriers or orange barrels. D. Garlington states they were orange barrels in place at Elm Street and Main Street and believes they were the State's barrels.

L. Komornick asks if the Committee should discuss this and decide if a letter should be sent to NH DOT requesting the placement of barrels.

S. Ireland recalls the road area and said it seemed like a good idea to close the slip lane but it was going to make it difficult for truck traffic to take the right turn.

Chief Savage questions that there might be limitations on truck traffic. S. Ireland states that on State roads you cannot restrict truck traffic and you can have any legal load in general utilize the road.

S. Fitzgerald asks if the Committee can have a conversation with NH DOT about how fast the trucks use the road. S. Irelands asks about the speed limit and believes it is 30 mph.

S. Fitzgerald states that with the school certain times of the day it is less. Also, discusses his hope of doing some things that will be much more conducive to redirecting traffic to Route 125. Realizes the slip lane on Elm Street is important and there are a number of intersections we need to get a handle on. If we can con-currently devise a broader strategy on how we look at Route 121A and help it become what it once was, which was a Main Street through the heart of a small New England

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community, it will help us meet the goals of the Town's master plan. Comments that the Town needs help from its colleagues at NH DOT to make it happen and ultimately it's NH DOT who maintains the roads.

Chief Savage comments that some of the short term items might be a series of barrels or jersey barriers but finds it very frustrating because it's already been done. Thinks any letters should come from Board of Selectmen and if we use one of these short term solutions we can't lose sight of the fact that in a broad sense it is a corridor study.

S. Fitzgerald states the need to look at the scope and how making some changes goes back to technical understandings and appreciations for the traffic and how it impacts public safety. Should put in a couple key intersections in the study and suggests speaking with colleagues at NH DOT to discuss some of the intersections.

S. Ireland states it is his first time looking at the draft of the corridor study but it's not uncommon for Rockingham Planning Commission to work on these studies. NH DOT does participate but there is a process for NH DOT in terms of major projects and funding. Funding small items can be done at a local level but major projects are a 10 year plan. NH DOT will provide input, listen, and provide feedback but funding is an issue.

S. Fitzgerald states that important work can be done and we should have a broader conversation with Commissioner Campbell and with Legislatures about what is happening in Plaistow, with regard to regional transportation, MBTA, and how we dove tail it all together so we can protect and manage the community. Is sure that there are unique opportunities out there.

D. Walker discusses the draft scope of work and goes through the three components of data collection, analysis, and recommended measures. Suggest getting a true signal analysis which would be a full 12 hour count.

L. Komornick asks if the draft scope of work is in any particular order and suggest moving issues and opportunities under analysis towards the start of the project.

D. Walker states it will be done early on to identify problem spots that they can focus on. Further discusses the draft scope of work and discusses the analysis and suggests when looking at accidents records they look at the types of accidents and locations. Further states the most time consuming part will be the creation of a model of the corridor that will include Route 125. The model, which is created from data input, will help assist looking at the traffic patterns and potential changes. Under the third component it looks at short and long term improvements and any potential design changes. The final outcome of the study will be a detailed report with supporting maps.

L. Komornick feels the first paragraph of the study should have a definition of the study area and confirms that the study starts at Sanborn's Candies and ends at Haseltine Avenue.

M. Dorman suggests going up to Danville Road. Chief Savage agrees and states there are several complaints in that area.

Chief McArdle states that we are focusing on one aspect of how people travel along Route 121A and go over to Route 125 but there are an equal amount of people who come from that direction who go

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up Greenville Road and impact at Pine Street and we are starting to see the impact on that road as people find ways around Route 125 to get to the school. However, you wouldn't see it until next fall when school is in session again. It is something that should be discussed because of the number of people who come from out of town from that side of the roadway.

Chief Savage asks if it is hard to build it in the plan. D. Walker states it is another intersection and seems like a separate issue and related to the school and access to it.

S. Fitzgerald suggests qualifying it as it could help evolve a strategy for it and feels it is worth mentioning and using it as part of the background to help drive some broader improvements to that intersection.

L. Komornick states it was already studied in 2008 and an analysis was done. It speaks about the possibility of Bureau of Planning and Community Assistance may be contacted to receive further assistance to determine what steps the Town can take to evaluate the type of improvements needed at the intersection. Feels it would be good to include it in the corridor study.

D. Walker states that Greenough Road was studied several years ago and would have to view it again to refresh his memory of the study.

S. Fitzgerald would like to take a hard look at the scope to see if anything needs to be modified, qualified, and scheduled. Part of the schedule should include review at 30/60/90 percent design so the Committee can help shape and qualify the work as it goes forward. A number of things are happening in the community that will shape traffic such as the potential of a rail facility and the Westville home site.

D. Walker states there is no time frame in the draft but would start after the first of fiscal year, which is July 1st and should take approximately 6 months to complete.

S. Fitzgerald asks if there is a fee. D. Walker states the budget for is \$10,000 with Rockingham Planning Commission paying \$8,000 and the Town paying \$2,000. States it is a planning study and Rockingham Planning Commission won't be designing anything as that would require an engineer.

M. Dorman questions that construction is going to take place late fall early spring at Cumberland Farms and questions how it will impact what Rockingham Planning Commission is doing.

S. Ireland says it will change the traffic flow a little but you just need to show past experience and it is important to know what is coming for changes also.

S. Fitzgerald asks as NH DOT looks at the scope is there anything in particular that would be useful to them that the Town could look at that would help the Town at some future point sit down and talk about how to implement some of the recommendations we are looking to achieve.

S. Ireland notes that in past experience when looking at something like this, accident reports might not have enough information on them such as information regarding which direction the cars are coming from at an intersection. Also, Plaistow and NH DOT are already doing this and it is just not formalized. NH DOT has done an MOU in terms of access management in terms of driveways with other communities and it might be good to formalize an MOU.

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M. Dorman questions if an MOU has already been done. L. Komornick states it was done for Route 125. S. Ireland believes it is Route 125 exclusively. The MOU gives the Planning and Zoning Boards more confidence in the fact that when there is a development coming up on a State road NH DOT is looking at it and that they have some set time frames and receive notices from NH DOT for items such as permits they have issued. These issues might not be specific to the corridor study but are good things for the Town to have.

Chief Savage asks S. Fitzgerald to present the draft to the Board of Selectmen as they might have an opinion that the Committee has not thought of.

S. Fitzgerald states he will bring it the Board of Selectmen and states that they have supported this and are hopeful that the Committee will move forward. States he would like to take a week and would like S. Ireland to show the draft to Doug DePorter and get some thoughts about anything technically we might be missing or anything we can qualify to help produce the recommendations we are looking to utilize to help us ultimately work with the NH DOT in regard to Route 121A, as we don't want to miss something that would help us advance projects that would be helpful to the Town.

S. Ireland states he hasn't recently seen the overall plan for Route 125 and Danville Road but has spoken in his office about the possibility of Danville Road not having access to Route 125, which could solve many issues and can't recall where the plan is at.

L. Komornick states it is a signalized intersection plan.

S. Ireland states a lot of issues of Danville Road and Route 121A are the amount of traffic taking Danville Road who are trying to skip the Route 121A lights. Realizes the Route 121A lights may not be an easy movement for trucks but it was something the Town was very much in favor for and it is something he can help push through NH DOT. Is not sure if the plan can be changed at this point but it hasn't gone out to bid so it is possible.

S. Fitzgerald would like to invite S. Ireland back to discuss this as it may be issue to sidebar and discuss exclusively.

S. Ireland suggest it might be easier to deal with Danville Road and Route 121A separately that you can note you looked at in the corridor study but you may want to deal with it separately.

S. Fitzgerald looked at Danville Road about a week ago and saw the conduit for the lights there.

S. Ireland states that NH DOT for about four years put conduits in the ground at intersections that could possibly some day have a lighted intersection, which they have since stopped doing, and that intersection is one that they did this to.

S. Fitzgerald says it is something to help remind us it is an intersection, you have the regional school district close by, lots of drivers, and young drivers which may be dynamics that are not quite outlined in the analysis but that are happening and with a reasonable conversation we can try to evolve strategies.

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Chief Savage agrees about mentioning it in the corridor study without diverting a huge amount of energy and time on the intersection as incorporating it in is noteworthy and important.

S. Fitzgerald states the purpose for that would be in the event we would not be able to take that intersection and perhaps there would be other strategies and efforts that we could pursue given the fact that it is mentioned in a major corridor study that the Town completed.

D. Garlington states that somewhere through the process the road swap issue will be brought up and feels a lot of time should not be spent on Danville Road as a road swap would not go that far north.

S. Ireland states there are advantages and disadvantages of the Town having control of Route 121A. If you have control of Route 121A you have control of truck traffic whereas the State having control they will not close off the road to truck traffic. With NH DOT controlling Route 121A there are things that can happen with regard to traffic calming to make the road less desirable for people to travel on. None of that is necessarily cheap but confirms D. Garlington is correct in that the road swap discussion will come up. Questions if the downtown area population in Plaistow may be enough to trip an urban compact area in the 2010 census, which is looked at every 10 years.

L. Komornick asks if it is determined to be an urban compact area can the Town restrict truck traffic. S. Ireland states if that is the case improvements would need to be made to the road then it becomes a class four road and the Town takes control of it.

D. Garlington sees the corridor study being completed and sees the concept if the State agrees to do some of the measures the Town will accept the road.

S. Fitzgerald doesn't believe the Town can afford to accept a road. Questions if local and State officials can find a balance where the responsibilities can be shared. The Town is going to study the corridor and come up with a tool to help make improvements to Route 121A. Wants to hear NH DOT's suggestions as to what the Town may be able to do for traffic calming and even specifying some of them that will give us some hope that at some future point we can remediate some of the public safety concerns.

S. Ireland states the road swap conversation will come up but right now the State is in control of the road and the State can't give you the road without the Town wanting the road.

S. Fitzgerald states we want a road that works for us but not sure people want the road. Residents are concerned about the traffic patterns and have safety concerns.

L. Komornick comments about funding options for improvements and asks Rockingham Planning Commission if funding options will be included in the report. D. Walker states that funding options will be included in the report.

L. Komornick comments that she and D. Walker looked into possibly adding the services of an engineer to do the study of intersections such as Elm Street and Main Street but the cost was \$6,800.

Chief Savage asks if it is possible to add that piece to the scope should money become available. D. Walker states if the money becomes available it would not be a problem and suggests subcontracting through Rockingham Planning Commission to do the analysis of the intersections.

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Chief Savage confirms it was \$6,800 for one intersection. D. Walker states it was two intersections that were Westville Road and Pine Street.

S. Fitzgerald states that as the scope is put together the Town is most likely not going to make those improvements, we can work with NH DOT on them and if it is part of our shared relationship were we fund preliminary or perhaps final designs of roadway improvements it would need to be consistent with NH DOT standards.

Chief Savage confirms the timeline that S. Fitzgerald will present it to the Board of Selectmen and then shortly thereafter we will get a formal scope from Rockingham Planning Commission.

S. Fitzgerald asks about a contract. D. Walker states the need for a contract since there is a Town component for the study.

S. Fitzgerald states he will present it to the Board of Selectmen on Monday night and set up a contract for schedule, scope, and fee to help move it forward. Thinks an outline would be helpful with deliverable dates and 30/60/90 reviews would help qualify and support the study as it revolves and would like S. Ireland to be part of the reviews.

Chief Savage asks if it is necessary to mention in the formalized scope about any additional funding studies that may become available.

D. Walker confirms it can be done. Also comments that additional funding may be possible through Rockingham Planning Commission with an 80/20 match.

S. Fitzgerald states before the Committee zeroes in on any one priority there are dynamics in the community that are going to be explosive and gives the example of the Massachusetts sales tax change. As we start to look at the study we may want to qualify certain features in the study to capture some of these things in the Town's interest.

Chief Savage asks S. Fitzgerald to comment on the tax advantage piece he is speaking with Board of Selectmen about.

S. Fitzgerald not sure if it will have a material impact. He's met with the Department of Resources and Economical Development and the Town is considering the overlay district for Route 125 a number of properties to help better define the commercial and retail potential of certain properties. Essentially it makes a number of the properties eligible for a tax credit for businesses that will locate to NH or expand along Route 125. It is a modest tax credit but may be significant to some enterprises or some commercial businesses, they can receive up to \$200,000 over five years in employment tax credits. It is not zoning it is just a program that sits on top of identified properties. There is no cost to the Town but is another program that will make Plaistow more competitive in a very busy regional economy.

S. Ireland asks if the intent is to encourage people to build on Route 125 and not on other Town roads. S. Fitzgerald confirms it is the intent. Further comments he is not sure how successful it will be but thinks it will help.

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Chief Savage comments that based on the Massachusetts sales tax change it could have more of an impact for us versus some of the more northern communities.

S. Fitzgerald states the program is a piece to a broader strategy to help maximize the potential of land use as zoned. Mentions that the Town's master plan should be mentioned in the study and part of what the Town's colleagues at NH DOT and Rockingham Planning Commission use to help identify what transportation strategies and programs would be most beneficial for the Town.

Chief Savage asks for further comment. No further comments were provided.

Chief Savage discusses the scheduling of the Committee's meetings and moving them from Wednesday to Friday to help accommodate the citizen representatives on the Committee. S. Fitzgerald states Friday in the summer could be difficult but otherwise would be good. Chief Savage comments he can call for summer meetings as necessary. Confirms meetings will change from Wednesdays to Fridays at 10:00 a.m.

ADJOURNMENT-

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

NEXT MEETING DATE –date and time be determined.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah E. Gibbs
Recording Secretary