



APPROVED

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

PLAISTOW HIGHWAY SAFETY COMMITTEE MINUTES

MEETING DATE- Friday, January 8, 2010

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

EXCUSED- None

ABSENT- None

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER- 9:40 a.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT- None.

MINUTES-

Chief Savage asks for motion to accept the minutes of the last meeting on 09/25/09. R. Latham motions to accept and M. Dorman seconds. All in favor, none opposed.

NEW BUSINESS -

Leigh Komornick to provide an update from Rockingham Planning Commission on Plaistow Main Street Traffic Calming Study.

L. Komornick states that D. Walker from Rockingham Planning Commission sent an update by email. S. Fitzgerald says the email indicated there would be a delay of another 6-8 weeks to complete the study and the counts are completed.

Haseltine Avenue swap and signage on site.

M. Dorman states that Rep. Major went in front of the Board of Selectmen on 01/04/10 and they agreed to request the swap of the State so the Town's moving forward.

S. Fitzgerald suggests discussing what the Town might want to do with the road if it takes ownership with suggestions such as making it a one-way or closing that portion of Main Street. Believes there would be significant traffic calming benefits and suggest the Committee invite representatives from the City of Haverhill to discuss how it would impact traffic on both sides of the border.

M. Dorman states he has spoken with the City of Haverhill Engineer who is onboard but it hasn't gone beyond him yet. Chief Savage will invite the City of Haverhill Engineer to the next meeting. S. Fitzgerald states that even though it still needs to go through Legislation, it would be good to have Haverhill on board early for discussions.

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C. Savage asks the Committee members if they any comments about the road going one-way or closing and also, to think about signage for the road.

R. Latham asks if Haseltine Avenue will be renamed to Route 121A. M. Dorman states it will become Main Street and everything is currently on Main Street with Main Street addresses.

R. Latham asks what impact it will have on trucks. M. Dorman states they should stay on Route 125. They can go on Main Street if they want to take a right onto it but it will be difficult to take. C. Savage states it would be very unattractive for the trucks to take the right which should have a positive impact on Main Street for truck traffic.

D. Latham is concerned what the State would say if you can't turn from one State road from another State road. M. Dorman states it's the State's road and they already agreed to it, are satisfied with the construction, and it's built to State specifications. Trucks can turn right, if there is no traffic.

S. Fitzgerald believes it would be helpful to Rep. Major if the Committee took a vote accepting the swap to present as an amendment. M. Dorman motions to support the swap, seconded by D. Poliquin. Comments by Chief McArdle to confirm that the vote is only on the swap and not on the one-way issue. Chief Savage confirms the vote is just for endorsing the swap. All in favor. None opposed. Chief Savage will do a letter from the Committee to Rep. Major.

Chief Savage asks for any comments on what option is favored over the other with a one-way or a road closure. S. Fitzgerald states it is important to get the opinion from both the Police and Fire Chiefs. The Town needs to do something to help calm and move traffic while limiting commercial traffic on Main Street. C. Savage states closing the road might be a good option if you can get the City of Haverhill to agree. D. Poliquin states you don't need an agreement from the City of Haverhill. Believes the Town should continue to maintain northbound flow to avoid more problems at the light and should restrict the road by closing it off to commercial traffic over 2 - 2 ½ tons.

C. McArdle states that there are properties on that portion of road that might be a problem to get to if they have to go out to Route 125 through the light and turn around. M. Dorman states that if they closed the road the Town would have to give those residents a common driveway.

C. Savage states another issue is police and fire vehicles trying to get out if traffic is stacking up. S. Fitzgerald suggest Rockingham Planning Commission look at traffic counts at these areas and make an initial evaluation on what kind of impact it would have. Believes it would be a significant change with significant benefits to Main Street. Commercial traffic on Route 121A is significantly enhanced by that access to Route 125 but Route 125 is the main commercial roadway where the Town should keep commercial traffic on. Suggests making any changes only temporary for 3 to 6 months to see how they work.

D. Poliquin states you have to look at weight restrictions and no thru trucking restrictions on Westville Road because they will start utilizing Westville Road as another option. M. Dorman states that Rockingham Planning Commission can look at these issues to assist us.

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C. Savage states if the old Pizza Hut location gets developed that area may close down entirely and the Town may have no choice but to do something different. Also, the exit/entrance on Haseltine Avenue has been changed to one-way inbound with driver's still using it for outbound.

M. Dorman comments that another sign is needed on the Haseltine side of the street at the driveway because you don't see the sign on the right hand side if you are going northbound on Route 125. There is a need for a "Do Not Enter" sign across the street on the lower side of the driveway on that side of the street.

C. Savage would like to take a look at the site plan when it comes. Would like everyone to think about options to discuss at the next meeting when the Committee invites the City of Haverhill Engineer.

Discuss shutting off street lights.

M. Dorman says he is concerned about how much the Town pays for street lights, if they are all necessary and that the Town should look into them when subdivisions are being put in place. E. Sheltry asks if you can alternate every other light out. S. Fitzgerald states you can look at strategic placing of lights and that some in neighborhoods it might work and other might need to keep the lights on for safety. He would like to see recommendations from the Police Department on where they suggest the Town could minimize the use of electricity for the lights.

C. Savage discusses how this topic came up 8-10 years ago with a large amount of resistance. It is a Police and Fire issue and back then he recommended no, which probably won't change. Comments that the Town should still have discussions about this, since things could have changed. M. Dorman asks beyond lighting the intersections what are the rest of them for.

D. Poliquin asks if there are current Ordinances that require developments to have street lights and if so, when the Town accepts the road do we accept the lights as well. M. Dorman confirms, the Town accepts the lights. L. Withee comments that they have been recently changing the lights. M. Dorman states they are currently upgrading them.

C. Savage comments that L. Withee would have an opinion on this as somebody who is out walking in the early morning. There are a lot of people out walking early morning and early evening. This is probably worth a discussion, however, intersections need to stay on. M. Dorman states intersections are a priority but not sure about the other street lights. R. Latham comments that if the sidewalk goes in on Greenough Road that street lights will be needed on it.

C. Savage asks what Committee thinks about having a public comment meeting. D. Poliquin thinks having a public hearing would be useful to get opinions from both sides. Also, the Town will need to speak with the electric company for how to manage the lights, if some can be shut off and some left on for certain amount of times and also to see if there a way to see what our savings would be.

S. Fitzgerald states we can start looking at modeling some numbers and having the public safety comments in writing as to where and how lights could be modified if that were part of their recommendation. These opinions would be helpful. Comments that some residents will want street lights on for security. Need to look at other conservation and energy efficiencies that the Town can achieve while keeping the streets lit.

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R. Latham asks if the Town has anything in the rules and regulations concerning developments that there should be a street light placed every so many feet. L. Komornick states no. M. Dorman states the developer puts what he wants on the plan the Town is only concerned about the type of lighting but should start looking at it closer. L. Komornick asks if developers do a lighting plan. M. Dorman states that is only for site plans for plazas. R. Latham states it establishes the need for the lights in those locations. M. Dorman confirms and states it's done for site plans. Comments about Timberlane Road, where there are only lights at each intersection.

C. Savage states he will have conversation with C. McArdle to determine their recommendations. Asks D. Poliquin if this can be discussed as a concept with the Board of Selectmen. D. Poliquin confirms it can.

Posting a "No Parking" sign on Sunrise Terrace.

C. Savage states he received an inquiry from a resident on Sunrise Terrace about kids parking on Sunrise Terrace to go to school. The day shift monitored it for at least 4 days and each time the day shift went out only one car was seen. Originally, he thought about Cottonwood Road and the parking issues it had a couple years ago where kids were parking on it. An Ordinance was drafted to prohibit parking on that street during school hours, which solved the problem. Thought this might be similar situation but he didn't see any evidence of it.

D. Garlington asks where on Sunrise Terrace the concern was. C. Savage couldn't recall. S. Fitzgerald provided the residents name. D. Garlington confirms his house location on the street and that it's not on the cul-de-sac. If the parking issue was at the cul-de-sac than it would be a problem because you wouldn't be able to turn around a large truck such as a fire truck.

C. Savage states that the day shift did not see any issues, but if a residence calls again the department will revisit. S. Fitzgerald states he advised the resident about the outcome and told him if he had more concerns to call the Police Department.

OLD BUSINESS:

None

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

S. Fitzgerald states that he is looking at the Master Plan and preparing significant revisions to it. He would like the Committee to look at it to come up with some ideas and recommendations for how the Master Plan can reflect better traffic management and public safety, which maybe helpful in generating State or Federal funding for projects. C. Savage asks if L. Komornick could get to the Committee a summary of the Master Plan and that he and C. McArdle will also look at it from police and fire points of view.

L. Withee questions if it is a law in NH that driver's have to stop. Chief Savage states it is the law.

S. Fitzgerald excuses himself from the meeting.

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L. Withee asks if there are signs at every crosswalk for drivers to yield. D. Garlington states there should be. L. Withee comments that no cars would stop for her trying to cross by the corner store and that drivers don't care if somebody is trying to cross. C. Savage asks D. Garlington if there are signs in both directions at each crosswalk. D. Garlington states as far as he knows. If you look in a school zone you will see the bright green signage, which is required by the school. Outside the school zone is the standard yellow/black sign. He is currently in the process of upgrading the signs in front of the High School.

D. Poliquin notices also that people don't stop for pedestrians in crosswalks. He did see a difference when they put the little man sign in the crosswalk, which slowed people down from both directions. It was put there because people weren't slowing down when they crossed the railroad tracks. L. Withee comments that having parking on both sides of the road in front of Town Hall is problematic because there is not a lot of room, especially when there is snow. Feels people should slow down but they don't. D. Poliquin comments that placing the little man sign is the only thing he's seen that has made a difference. E. Sheltry states people don't slow down and are also going 10-15 mph over the speed limit.

C. McArdle states it is an enforcement issue. You would have to put a cruiser out to wait for somebody to come by and use the crosswalk, which would use a lot of man power. He sees the same problem with emergency vehicles with drivers pulling over but still going the same speed and not slowing down. People are not aware of all the rules of the road.

C. Savage states the area in front of Pollard School has always been a problem. This year seems to be better with the two signs that were purchased for the Crossing Guard to use along with an Officer standing with the Crossing Guard. Says he has also purchased two more signs for the new Crossing Guard at the High School.

L. Withee states it is slower but it is going to take time. Says she would like to see the kids cross somewhere different. D. Garlington doesn't believe there is a crosswalk on campus. L. Withee says there isn't, they cross from where their parking spots are, which slows things down. D. Garlington comments that they don't all use the crosswalk that is on Greenough Road at Cottonwood Road. They cross in between the baseball field and Cottonwood Road. You stop for them, then you stop for the people using the crosswalk, and then stop for the buses.

C. Savage states that new signs will work well. Plus, in the summer the Department can use them for Old Home Day and other functions. You are not able to use them without somebody out there with them or you risk them being vandalizing. D. Poliquin says the only downside to them is they only work when they are out there. D. Garlington comments that's good, so when people see them they should be thinking to themselves that they should expect to see children. C. Savage would be interested in any feedback on how they think the new signs and new Crossing Guard are working out.

D. Latham asks what the approximate time frame is for the swap with Main Street and Haseltine Avenue. M. Dorman states the hope is it to happen in this Legislative Session. If it doesn't get in time it could be next year.

D. Garlington apologizes for arriving late today and asks what it is being reclassified as. M. Dorman states lower Main Street will be a Class V and Haseltine Avenue will be a Class II. D. Garlington

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comments that they can classify it as no through trucking then. M. Dorman states that the state line is so far up that the trucks won't see it in time so Haverhill will need to get involved.

C. Savage states at the next Highway Safety Committee he will invite the Haverhill City Engineer and Planner. M. Dorman will provide the name and address to S. Gibbs and C. Savage will send them a letter inviting them to the meeting.

L. Withee asks if trucks are restricted to Route 125 if it will cause them to start using other roads like Forrest Street and Sweethill Road. D. Garlington comments that every once in a while you get a NH DOT Enforcement Officer on Main Street stopping trucks. Eventually you will see the trucks avoiding Main Street because of this. You will always have enforcement issues and trucks using the roads to deliver goods to residential homes and that no through trucking is based on weight and not size. The Town needs to keep the trucks that are just passing through Town on Route 125 and feels a NH DOT Enforcement Officer will help keep them on Route 125.

ADJOURNMENT-

D. Garlington makes a motion to adjourn, seconded by M. Dorman, none opposed all in favor. Meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m.

NEXT MEETING DATE –date and time be determined.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah E. Gibbs
Recording Secretary