



APPROVED

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

PLAISTOW HIGHWAY SAFETY COMMITTEE MINUTES

MEETING DATE- Friday, March 11, 2011

PRESENT- Chief Stephen Savage, *Chairman*; Chief John McArdle, *Vice Chairman*; Ernie Sheltry, *Citizens Representative*; Dan Garlington, *Highway Department Supervisor*; Lisa Withee, *Citizens Representative*; Sean Fitzgerald, *Town Manager*; Michael Dorman, *Building Inspector*, Richard Latham, *Citizens Representative*; Dave Walker, *Rockingham Planning Commission*; and Kevin Russell, *NH DOT*

EXCUSED- None

ABSENT- Dan Poliquin, *Selectmen Representative* and Leigh Komornick, *Town Planner*

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER- 9:35 a.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT- None.

MINUTES-

Chief Savage asks for motion to accept the minutes of the last meeting on 1/7/11. D. Garlington motions to accept, seconded by R. Latham. All in favor, none opposed.

NEW BUSINESS -

Discuss with Doug DePorter of NH DOT and Dave Walker of Rockingham Planning Commission the final traffic calming study report.

C. Savage turns the discussion over to Dave Walker of Rockingham Planning Commission to discuss the final draft of the Main Street Traffic Calming Study.

D. Walker indicates that the first part of the report only has minor changes in the graphics. Speed data was collected for Main Street. The data was taken by Pollard School and the Post Office for a week with speed ranges generally higher by the Post Office with most drivers traveling under 40 mph. Also, he noted that northbound traffic travels slightly faster than southbound traffic.

D. Walker comments that during weekdays there is large percentage of drivers going slower through the Pollard School area. However, on the weekend most drivers speed through the same area and travel by the Post Office doesn't change on the weekend compared to the weekday.

D. Garlington comments that it shows drivers using Main Street are familiar with where they are and are not just passing through. Believes people just passing through one time and are not regular commuters are mostly using Route 125.

D. Walker indicates that the most work on the study since the last meeting begins on page 17. The first part is making general recommendations about the type of approach that needs to happen on the corridor including roadway improvements, zoning, and regulatory changes to better define the village. A more critical decision the Town needs to make is whether to take Main Street from NH DOT. If the decision is made to take it then the Town will have full control of the road. However, if NH DOT maintains the road there will need to be give and take

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and negotiations between the Town and NH DOT for improvements. Mentions items such as raised crosswalks that would not be allowed on Main Street should NH DOT continues to maintain it.

C. Savage indicates that the upside to the Town taking Main Street would be that NH DOT would be compelled to get the road to a certain standard before turning it over to the Town, which might moot issues the Town may have concerns about.

D. Walker agrees that upgrades will have to be made prior to NH DOT turning the road over to the Town. Mentions that NH DOT and the City of Portsmouth agreed to turn Ocean Road over to the City and NH DOT agreed on millions of dollars in repairs before doing so. K. Russell of NH DOT comments how something similar would work for the Town of Plaistow.

S. Fitzgerald indicates that it could be helpful to meet with representatives from the Portsmouth Community Development Office to discuss how they began the process and how NH DOT transferred the road over to them. D. Walker stated that it started similar to how Plaistow is proceeding with a corridor study and looking at truck traffic they were having on Ocean Road.

S. Fitzgerald comments how taking control of Route 121A at first seems enormous including how much it would add to the Town's already existing responsibilities for roads. However, believes the benefits could be significant. He asks D. Garlington about the costs of the Town taking over the road. D. Garlington states that the costs go above and beyond the asphalt, the infrastructure and cost to maintain it including paving, plowing, and salting is quite a task. As a local town, Plaistow relies on outside contractors which can limit the ability to do it effectively.

C. Savage comments that there isn't much we generally could do to impact what our concerns are unless we took over the road. If the Town looks to install sidewalks it will need to think about a maintenance plan for all four seasons. Believes you can't continue to operate as in the past, ignoring maintenance of sidewalks after the first snow fall.

D. Garlington indicates that if the intention is to restrict the truck traffic on Main Street and the road is reclassified as no through trucking, the trucks will find another way to do it and will be hard to enforce. Believes you won't solve the issue of trucks traveling on Main Street.

S. Fitzgerald believes if you change Main Street to no through trucking, trucks going northbound will reroute to Route 125. However, southbound they find Main Street a better route to travel and that the Committee needs to come up with recommendations to help relocate all truck traffic to Route 125.

C. Savage agrees with D. Garlington, that if the Town takes over Main Street and trucks cut through Westville Road you will not have a no through trucking issue and it will be the same if they travel on Kingston Road.

D. Garlington comments that the object of restricting truck traffic should not be based on the truck but based on whether or not the road can handle the abuse of trucks to the roadway. Mentions how the Town has dead end streets you just don't drive trucks on. S. Fitzgerald questions D. Garlington on how many roads in Plaistow should be no through trucking. D. Garlington indicates that there are more roads posted as no through trucking than should be. Believes Old County Road should be no through trucking due to the grade of the road.

L. Withee questions if Forrest Street is safe for trucks? D. Garlington states that Forrest Street has many avenues for trucks to avoid going through Forrest Street. In order to enforce the no through trucking, a truck would have to start at Route 108 and proceed all the way through on Forrest Street onto Main Street. C. McArdle states that Forrest Street is not desirable for trucks but the way the road is constructed it's capable to handle trucks.

C. Savage believes the pivotal issue is the transfer of Main Street responsibility from the State of NH to the Town.

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D. Walker comments about the flexibility the Town will have if they take over the road and how it also won't be on the NH DOT's schedule.

C. Savage questions if Route 3 in Meredith is a State road where their roundabout is located. D. Walker confirms it is a State road. Mentions that the State is not against roundabouts but you have to go through their ten year process. If other money is available to offset State funding it could be done sooner.

D. Garlington feels the State has the right idea doing repairs on Route 125 to allow traffic in general to move more freely, which they are spending a lot of money on to make traffic flow more smoothly. However, until it's completed, drivers will find alternate routes to avoid Route 125.

D. Walker comments that the congestion in Haverhill will still cause many drivers to use Main Street in order to proceed down North Avenue to avoid Haverhill's Main Street. Believes the Town needs to decide whether or not to take Main Street from the State and then begin implementing ideas from the Traffic Calming Study Report.

S. Fitzgerald asks NH DOT if they have worked with other communities to implement the strategies suggested in the Traffic Calming Study. K. Russell of NH DOT mentioned that Newmarket had a lot of traffic calming devices implemented that they worked closely with. Mentions how the Town will need to hire a developer/engineer to assist with implementing strategies.

S. Fitzgerald suggests visiting Newmarket to look at what they've implemented to calm traffic. Explains that he doesn't believe the Town will take Main Street within the next 10 years. In the meantime, suggest looking at short-term implementations. Improvements included in the Traffic Calming Study should be supported by the State and Town and suggests making a short-term plan to begin implementation. A short-term plan will also help the Town compete for funding, as it needs to look at outside funding to help support the projects. S. Fitzgerald asks NH DOT if they help design.

K. Russell of NH DOT comments that Newmarket went through Municipal Highways, which is the quicker route instead of the NH DOT 10 year plan and also has soft matches. Some of the ideas he believes NH DOT would support and explains that the Town needs to hire a consultant to help design and implement their ideas.

S. Fitzgerald questions how the Town should apply for grants. D. Walker indicates that the next round of grant funding would be in another 2 years. Comments that the next step would be to choose what you want to implement and then hire an engineer to develop plans/designs and provide cost estimates.

S. Fitzgerald asks C. Savage what his thought is to do next. C. Savage believes a Public Hearing exclusively on this issue would be beneficial. Also comments about the Route 125 Impact Fee Funds. Mentions how NH DOT's rebuilding of upper Route 125 will open the area up to big box stores. Explains the inevitable impact it will have on Main Street once it occurs and questions if the Town can utilize Impact Fee Funds for Main Street. Questions if the Town can make the correlation to the growth of the upper Route 125 if match money is needed and explains the need to look into the steps and legality of this option. Comments how in 18 months the Route 125 project will be completed and before big box stores go before the Planning Board the Town should be thinking about his suggestion.

S. Fitzgerald comments the Town could get off site improvements associated with the projects. C. Savage believes if residents knew that a funding match was offered by a developer they would support these implementations.

D. Walker comments that there is a mechanism called, Transportations Development District. Believes the Town could potentially put more of the Route 125 Impact Fee funds into it, which will tie impact fee money to specific projects, which may not be directly on Route 125. Suggest expanding the Impact Fee Fund to Main Street and quantify the costs involved in upgrading Main Street. Since Route 125 is taken care of by the State, which will be

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completed in next couple of years, it's Main Street that will need to be maintained so you could direct the money to Main Street improvements.

C. McArdle comments about Route 125 at the Haverhill border. Questions if NH DOT has a relationship with MA DOT, as there appears to be a lack of coordination and synchronization of the lights. Explains how the road narrows down as you enter into Haverhill, which forces drivers to seek alternative routes. D. Garlington comments how this is why Wentworth Avenue can be a very busy street.

D. Walker suggests it's possible to do, but isn't sure if it is and is guessing it's not. K. Russell doesn't believe they are. D. Walker will try to find out. D. Garlington believes the light cycles by Market Basket have been changed. D. Walker comments that if you change one intersection you need to synch them all in order for them to work correctly and will check into with the traffic bureau.

K. Russell of NH DOT suggests if the State wanted to synchronize the lights on the border, a simple MOU signed by DOT Commissioners would be an idea.

S. Fitzgerald suggests inviting members from the City of Haverhill to discuss light synchronization. C. McArdle believes MA would be reluctant as they want to deter MA residents from coming to NH to shop tax free. C. Savage agrees it is partially political. S. Fitzgerald suggests inviting Merrimack Valley Planning Board to a meeting in order to discuss this issue.

S. Fitzgerald asks D. Walker if any costs are included in the Traffic Calming Study. D. Walker didn't include costs, as it will depend on right-of-ways. He has seen roundabouts costing as little as \$200,000 and as much as a million. Comments that roundabouts take more right-of-ways than lighted intersections so between those costs and constructions costs it is hard to provide an estimate. An engineer would be able to provide the Town with an estimate.

R. Latham asks where the radius started at Newmarket for improvements. K. Russell of NH DOT states that Newmarket didn't put in a roundabout but installed sidewalks, buried utilities, and are also completing an above the road crosswalk.

S. Fitzgerald mentions the meeting with EPA on 3/16/11, and provided members a copy of a letter dated 3/8/11 to the EPA from the Southeastern NH Hazardous Materials Mutual Aid District and asks C. McArdle to speak to the Committee about it.

C. McArdle comments that he asked the REPC Director and Board of Operations of the Southeastern NH Hazardous Materials Mutual Aid District to view the information the Town sent to the EPA and explains how they are in full support of the Town's position. James Stone of Southeastern NH Hazardous Materials Mutual Aid District will be attending the meeting on 3/16/11, to give their input. Chief McArdle explains that if an accident was to occur with one of the trucks it will be the District's resources that will be impacted.

S. Fitzgerald states that the Highway Safety Committee already is on record supporting the Town's position and would like a copy of the minutes showing the Committee's support for the meeting on 3/16/11. C. McArdle asks to take a second vote in case the previous minutes do not show the support on record.

C. McArdle motions that the Highway Safety Committee support the position the Town is taking regarding the access route onto the Beede Waste Site off of Old County Road and rejects the proposed access directly onto Main Street, access point D. Motion seconded by D. Garlington. All in favor. None opposed.

S. Fitzgerald comments that the Highway Safety Committee is recognized by State laws and is the most important transportation Committee the Town has.

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C. Savage excused from meeting at 10:20 a.m.

D. Walker discusses the conceptuals in the Traffic Calming Study and explains that included is general information about roundabouts and then speaks about particular locations along the route. He has included in the study the schematic for the Route 125 improvements starting this spring. Mentions NH DOT is including crosswalks. However, is concerned about the crosswalks on Route 125 being too long, estimating them to be about 140' crossing six lanes of traffic. Suggest NH DOT possibly placing a median between the directions of traffic and possibly placing a crosswalk signal in the median also.

D. Walker also suggests placing a crosswalk by the Town Hall and provides two options. First, a median splitter in the road forcing cars to angle to the side, which also provides a refuge area in the middle of the road for pedestrians that can be landscaped and would be approximately a 20' median.

M. Dorman comments that you have to make sure there is accessible parking outside the Town Hall. Also comments that there is more room for parking in the back of the Town Hall. S. Fitzgerald suggests possibilities of developing handicap parking in the half moon outside the Town Hall. Explains his concern about people stepping out onto Main Street when exiting their vehicles.

S. Fitzgerald questions if the preliminary plans provide access for fire apparatus. D. Walker comments that it would allow fire apparatus through, that it's just a slight curve to force people to slow down.

D. Walker speaks about the second option, which creates a narrowing of the road in front of the Town Hall and providing a textured or painted sidewalk to show it's a crosswalk and be more visible to drivers. This option has a reduced impact on parking but a few spaces would still be impacted. Comments that the second option is less expensive but also has the least calming effect.

K. Russell of NH DOT questions the distance between the curb lines as NH DOT plows have 11' wide plows and with the wing attached they are about 14' wide. D. Walker is not sure what the distance is but believes it can be worked out by narrowing the median, which will also cut down the curvature.

D. Walker discusses the options for the Elm Street intersection which include a T/Y intersection, which will slow down the movement from Main Street to Elm Street. Another option would be a roundabout that would cause drivers to slow down to about 20 mph. Explains how the Town can place a nice aesthetic in the roundabout by placing a park like area in it. S. Fitzgerald believes the roundabout would deter truck traffic.

D. Garlington mentions the need to think about utilities as some of the ideas will be very difficult to implement without changing the utilities. M. Dorman suggests it could be an opportunity to place the utilities underground.

D. Walker didn't address the utilities and explains how the ideal plan would be to place them underground but there is a cost to do it. Explains NH DOT's policy not to pay for underground utilities in their projects including the Federal funding they have. Further discusses the T/Y intersection, which would provide some traffic calming benefits and would be less expensive than the roundabout.

C. McArdle excused from meeting at 10:40 a.m.

R. Latham comments that the roundabout at Elm Street would also alleviate the speeding at Town Hall so there could be a possibility nothing might have to be done in front of Town Hall with the roundabout by Elm Street.

D. Walker explains that drivers should exit a roundabout at 20 mph and if drivers have another traffic calming device shortly after they don't have a chance to pick up too much speed.

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S. Fitzgerald comments that northbound you would want to have a few calming infrastructures, which can be done at minimal costs and would like to find funding for.

R. Latham asks if there is another access to the Ingalls Terrace Recreation Field. M. Dorman confirms that there is not.

D. Walker comments that these concepts can be placed in several places other than the locations indicated in the study at relatively inexpensive costs.

S. Fitzgerald speaks about how great it would be to have some of these ideas implemented to support pedestrian traffic and give them a sense of confidence while on the town roads.

D. Walker discusses placing curvature, similar to the one proposed by the Town Hall, by Pollard School which would narrow the roadway to slow driver's down. Comments that drivers already travel slower near the school. Indicates that the study shows almost 80% of drivers slow down by the school during school hours. Suggests to stay consistent you could place a median at the Town Hall, Pollard School, and Library.

D. Walker speaks about the options at the Library and comments that a roundabout is not warranted at the location. Narrowing the intersection down and shortening the crossing distance would help and suggests adding a welcome sign by the road showing drivers they are entering a Village District. S. Fitzgerald believes a sign would make a big difference and feels the neighborhood would support the concept.

D. Garlington mentions how the Library is used as a cut-through to avoid traffic built up at Pollard Road and Main Street. Also speaks about the elevation change on that area of Main Street, as there is a grade there where drivers pick up speed going northbound on Main Street.

D. Walker mentions Option B by the Library, a roll-over center circle, which causes the traffic to curve a little to go around it but states that trucks would be able to roll over it. It would only provide a visual queue.

D. Walker speaks about East/West Pine Street intersection, which is one of the worst congested intersections along Main Street. Suggests a roundabout and states that it wouldn't warrant a traffic signal. Discusses the high accident history at the intersection and how a roundabout would drop the accident rate by 40%-50% and drop the severe accident rate with severe injuries by 80%.

S. Fitzgerald asks if NH DOT does roundabouts. K. Russell of NH DOT confirms they do roundabouts and have installed quite a few. D. Walker comments that the NH DOT has changed their views about roundabouts over the past 5-10 years. NH DOT suggests that anytime you are considering a lighted intersection you should first consider a roundabout.

D. Garlington comments that there are more benefits to slowing down instead of stopping.

R. Latham asks what the maximum radius is from the center of a roundabout to the outside pavement. D. Walker believes the circle diameter is between 100' – 120' so roughly 50' – 60' but an engineer really needs to look at the intersection to see how tight you can go and still get a fire truck around it.

K. Russell of NH DOT comments that one of the biggest complaints about roundabouts is plowing around them.

S. Fitzgerald comments about how great the report is and is pleased with the concept and how it provides the Town a real direction on where to go. Believes the next step is to set up a game plan for how to get it accomplished. Would like the Town to work with NH DOT to come up with a strategy of how to look at funding sources and try to advance some of the recommendations. He will bring the study to the Board of Selectmen and believes they will want a Public Hearing.

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D. Walker comments that he is preparing to finalize the report so asks for any comments or input soon. S. Fitzgerald suggests putting the names of roads on the maps so when people look at it they will see what roads it's referencing. Believes the report will be useful and will help the Town receive grant funding for improvements.

K. Russell of NH DOT comments that the study is similar to Newmarkets. He believes some of the concepts will be more costly than Newmarkets and the Town will need to weigh them out as it begins looking at implementing the concepts and feels the impact fee was a great idea.

D. Walker suggests getting smaller less costly ideas implemented first and then start building in the bigger concepts.

OLD BUSINESS:

None discussed.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

None

ADJOURNMENT-

M. Dorman motions to adjourn, seconded by D. Garlington. None opposed, all in favor. Meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m.

NEXT MEETING DATE –date and time be determined.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah E. Gibbs, Recording Secretary



Southeastern New Hampshire Hazardous Materials Mutual Aid District

P. O. Box 514 Windham, NH 03087

March 8, 2011

Mr. Ira Leighton
Deputy Regional Administrator
United States Environmental Protection Agency
1 Congress Street, Suite 1100-RAA
Boston, MA 02114-202

Re: Proposed Access Route for the Beede Superfund Site, Plaistow NH

Dear Deputy Leighton,

The Operations Committee of the Southeastern New Hampshire Hazardous Materials Mutual Aid District (SENHHMAD) respectfully offers our support for the Town of Plaistow's recommendation for establishing the access point to the Beede Site via Old County Road, as outlined in their various communications from August through December of 2010. We have been provided the background material generated by the Town. We understand there was a very informative and productive meeting between all interested parties on February 15, 2011 at your offices. We have been presented with that information, as well as the letters written by Town and State Officials in support of the Old County Road Access and feel this is not only a reasonable request of the Town, but is also in the best interest of public health and safety. It is clear to us that they have weighed the various options presented by the Owner's Group in light of not only the safety of their personnel, but equally important, the safety and welfare of the general public.

The basis of this recommendation is founded in our belief that the safest route encompasses much more than traffic studies and empirical data. The nature of the alternative route onto Route 121A poses an undue risk to personnel working to control traffic (either police or non-uniformed flaggers). Along this same line, in the event of an accident involving trucked materials, the risk to those responsible for response and mitigation is also unacceptable given the viable route being recommended by the Town. The SENHHMAD has a direct interest in this aspect as those resources would be provided by our organization.

Additionally, the SENHHMAD constitutes the Regional Emergency Planning Committee for the area, which includes the Town of Plaistow. The REPC has not been consulted as part of any assessments for this project and we clearly have a stake in these proceedings. For the record, the REPC concurs with the Town of Plaistow relative to the location of the most appropriate access point for this project (i.e. Old County Road).

Respectfully,

Tom McPherson
Chairman, Board of Operations
SENHHMAD

James Stone
REPC Director
SENHHMAD

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