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

PLAISTOW HIGHWAY SAFETY COMMITTEE MINUTES

MEETING DATE- Friday, March 26, 2010

PRESENT- Chief Stephen Savage, *Chairman*; Chief John McArdle, *Vice Chairman (Arrived Late)*; Dan Garlington, *Highway Department Supervisor*; Michael Dorman, *Building Inspector*; Dan Poliquin, *Selectmen Representative (Arrived Late)*; Ernie Sheltry, *Citizens Representative*; Richard Latham, *Citizens Representative*; Lisa Withee, *Citizens Representative*; Dave Walker, *Rockingham Planning Commission*; Officer Watson, *Haverhill Police Department*; and John Pettis, *City of Haverhill Engineer*

EXCUSED- Sean Fitzgerald, *Town Manager*; and Leigh Komornick, *Town Planner*

ABSENT- None

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 01/8/10. M. Dorman motions to accept and D. Garlington seconds. All in favor, none opposed.

NEW BUSINESS -

Discuss with City of Haverhill's Engineer and Planner traffic impacts on both sides of the border with Haseltine Avenue swap.

C. Savage begins discussion of Haseltine Avenue swap and invited members from City of Haverhill to attend to discuss the topic.

M. Dorman comments the intersection is working well and the next step is that the State Representative is going to the State to complete the swap so the Town will have lower Main Street and the State will take Haseltine Avenue. Haverhill and Plaistow have spoken about plans and based on what they have both done already at the intersection, Plaistow is thinking about possibly shutting down the lower part of Main Street. There is property located on lower Main Street that can be developed which could change plans concerning the intersection.

Officer Watson comments that what has been done so far works and the only problem they are having is Cushing Avenue.

M. Dorman states that the swap is a done deal and will occur this fall.

J. Pettis states the owner of the property on lower Main Street came in with a plan a few months ago but seems to be stalled. Haverhill is waiting for the developer of the property before doing anything to make sure it will work for the developer. Haverhill informed the developer months ago that they would work

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with him to make the location work. M. Dorman states the developer owns both pieces of land on lower Main Street.

D. Garlington questions if the Town reclassifies the road so it's not a road, would it open up development possibilities on the properties, including frontage opportunities, to give greater opportunity for something to develop on the land. Provided the example of Sickel Drive as a similar situation. R. Latham likes the idea. M. Dorman states it would not work unless Haverhill is on board. J. Pettis indicates Haverhill would be on hold about it right now while waiting to see what would work for the developer. The set up now is working well now in the interim.

C. Savage questions if in the short term, assuming the land swap takes place, if it's possible to make it one-way north bound. J. Pettis thinks it would and it wouldn't affect too many people. M. Dorman indicates that they can't do anything until the swap occurs, which won't be until fall. J. Pettis would bring the short term suggestion to the City's Traffic and Safety Committee but believes they would be on board. M. Dorman suggests moving in that direction and would want Haverhill on board. C. Savage comments about the need to look at a short term resolutions as it could take years for the property to be developed.

D. Garlington asks when the corridor study will be completed. M. Dorman asks how this short term suggestion fits in the study.

D. Walker notes in the study that the Town has more north bound traffic than south bound and closing it off would probably equalize it. However, a lot of traffic north bound comes from North Avenue so it would be a minor impact. Long term, if the Town is looking at turning Main Street into a Main Street it would be better to close it completely forcing people to go through the light to moderate the flow of traffic.

D. Garlington states that could impact other streets based on truck traffic with the difficulty of turning onto Haseltine from Route 125. D. Walker states trucks could use other streets, but it's hard to say how much truck traffic is for Main Street and not just passing through.

D. Garlington is concerned about the transition and if blocking it off would effect Chandler Avenue and Westville Road while people get use to it. D. Walker suggests testing it for 3 months to see what happens and what impacts might occur before making it permanent. There is heavier north bound truck traffic at 15% verses south bound traffic which is only 2% and a need to see where they are going and coming from such as Kingston Road.

D. Garlington suggests possibly posting no-trucking signs to help. C. Savage states the signs will become an enforcement issue and would resist enforcement issues. That the least violations issued are for no-thru trucking. With a one-way nobody risks an accident and suggest putting in a one-way.

D. Garlington asks if the goal is to reduce traffic or the type of traffic on Main Street. C. Savage states it's traffic. D. Walker states the volume now is approximately 15,000 cars a day traveling on Main Street. Asks if the Town wants to reduce the number of trucks and speed on the road and would still like a better idea of what the Town is looking for and senses it is reducing speed and truck traffic.

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J. Pettis discusses coming up with a plan and then discuss closing their portion of the road and will speak with the developer. M. Dorman comments that shutting down that portion of the road might help the developer.

J. Pettis thinks they will want to keep it at least one-way until Haverhill knows who is developing the property.

C. Savage comments about the need to do something short term. M. Dorman states that the swap with the State needs to occur first. C. Savage thinks both sides would agree to a one-way for now. M. Dorman understands Haverhill's point of view because traffic could stack up more if the road is completely shut down. Officer Watson agrees a one-way would work and also comments about making Cushing Avenue a right turn only. J. Pettis states it shouldn't be difficult to do either and speaks about the lights currently not working on Route 121 due to current litigation issues.

C. Savage indicates that the Committee will make a recommendation to the Board of Selectmen for a one-way. The Board of Selectmen can decide whether to accept the recommendation or not and speak with Haverhill.

D. Poliquin comments that it would be at least one year before the swap occurs. Chief Savage confirms with D. Poliquin that the Board of Selectmen want a recommendation. D. Poliquin agrees.

D. Garlington asks if the traffic study will be completed this year. D. Walker states it will and can include potential impacts of closing the road. C. Savage confirms that the Committee will wait and watch the area understanding potential short term possibilities while they wait to hear from Rockingham Planning Commission and Haverhill. D. Poliquin suggest the Committee provide the Board of Selectmen with a quick memo providing an update.

Officer Watson will bring this matter up at Haverhill's next Traffic and Safety Committee meeting.

J. Pettis questions if more work will be done on Haseltine Avenue. M. Dorman says the owner of the house on corner has agreed with softening the curve and relocating the driveway after the swap.

Review of Master Plan

C. Savage states that L. Komornick was going to provide the Committee with a summary of the Master Plan. That S. Fitzgerald asked the Committee to review the Master Plan but L. Komornick is absent so it will go back on the Agenda for the next meeting.

D. Garlington asks if the Master Plan mentions the Charter of the Highway Safety Committee. C. Savage doesn't believe it does, which might be because it is only an advisory Committee to the Board of Selectmen. D. Poliquin states the Committee can make a recommendation to the Board of Selectmen regarding adding it. All Committees are reviewing it for any changes that should be made.

Update of 2009 Grants Awarded by NH Highway Safety Agency

C. Savage comments the 2009 NH Highway Safety Grants (Red Light Running Grant, Speed Enforcement Patrol Grant, and DWI Patrol Grant), which totaled about \$10,000 - \$15,000 in revenue are completed. Further, that they are ongoing grants and the Police Department plans to re-apply in 2010.

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Discuss Rockingham Planning Commission's Draft Scope of Work Suggestions including installing a welcome sign.

C. Savage comments that Rockingham Planning Commission suggested placing welcome signs and asks if it will be in their recommendation. D. Walker states it will discuss gateway signs and how they can be helpful. They will provide the Town samples of gateway scenarios to show the variety of choices available and what impacts they would bring. C. Savage indicates the placement of a sign might be an issue because there are not many locations to place it without impacting private property on lower Main Street. D. Walker suggests looking at a sub area on Main Street to put a sign like the start of the village. C. Savage suggests by the Post Office.

D. Poliquin comments the owner of Sign DeSigns offered a donation of material and labor for such signs, and has given S. Fitzgerald copies of color proofs she put together. The business owner came up with this on her own and the Town did not request it. Believes it helps traffic calming and wants people to know when they enter Plaistow. When areas such as Route 108 and Route 121 are developed additional signs would be helpful in those areas also. Further, his company would donate the install of the signs.

C. Savage comments the need to make the signs eye catching. D. Walker states you want the signs to look nice for people to look at and catch their attention, to slow them down. The Town is going in the right direction and suggests landscaping around the signs. Provide the example of Exeter and how businesses sponsor the landscaping portion.

C. Savage asks M. Dorman if he met with the owner of Amici Hair Salon on Main Street. M. Dorman states NH DOT came down regarding the salon and it appears parking out front of it will have to be parallel parking, which will be confirmed once NH DOT sends down their letter.

D. Walker suggests getting double use from the building's rear parking lot with the customers parking out back while the residents are out during the day. He has seen this similar situation in Exeter.

M. Dorman states that NH DOT requires the green area to be out front of the property. C. Savage suggests angle parking. M. Dorman comments that the owner of the salon wanted to pave over the green area for parking but NH DOT will not allow it.

D. Poliquin comments that pulling straight in should still give room on the shoulder of the road. M. Dorman indicates that when backing out the cars cross the line into the driving lane. Once he gets NH DOT's letter regarding this, he will copy the Committee.

D. Garlington comments that NH DOT is asking them to parallel park but it will make the driver's open their doors into traffic. M. Dorman states that there is plenty of room to park and open the door. D. Garlington asks if should could gravel over the green area. M. Dorman doesn't believe so and explains that the property is not Town property so she has to speak with NH DOT.

OLD BUSINESS:

Discussion regarding shutting off streets lights.

D. Poliquin states that the Board of Selectmen do not want to shut off street lights as it would create too many issues with the public and is not that big of a savings.

APPROVED

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

D. Garlington would like to remind everyone that the construction on the Garden Road bridge will begin in the next month. The bridge will be closed and has an approved detour plan provided by NH DOT. Suggested that the bank pass on the detour information to its customers.

M. Dorman asks if the study will include anything in regard to shutting down northbound traffic on lower Main Street. D. Walker confirms it will.

R. Latham states the truck traffic would go north on Route 125 and asks how the trucks are going to get onto Main Street. D. Walker states the traffic count shows that trucks are 2% of the traffic in that direction. It's something to consider regarding how the Town will deal with trucks. That it will be the next step after the study when the engineer gets on board. The Town needs to make sure trucks can get into Town and on Main Street. R. Latham states that is what he is speaking about, delivery trucks have to be able to access the Town.

D. Poliquin comments that you don't need to configure intersections to eliminate truck traffic other than lower Main Street. Might need to put weight limits on side roads like Westville Road, or install no-thru trucking signs. Prior to the study beginning, Main Street appeared to have more truck traffic than it does currently.

D. Garlington comments that no-thru trucking will become an enforcement issue. D. Walker says putting signs up directing trucks on where to go to get to Main Street can help. D. Garlington indicates that the Committee should build a relationship with NH DOT to work on this because they don't like Town signs on their State roads.

C. Savage comments that Jason Hoch gave an observation about possibly placing a stop sign south bound just before Haseltine Avenue to create a three-way stop. M. Dorman says that people are already speeding through the intersection. C. Savage states a three-way stop sign might reduce the problem. D. Garlington states you need NH DOT to be on board. D. Poliquin feels a three-way stop sign might create a stacking issue. C. Savage asks M. Dorman to ask NH DOT about the three-way stop sign and get back to him. M. Dorman will ask, but believes they will say no.

E. Sheltry would like to know if anything can be done about the 8 potholes next to Casey's Diner exiting towards Westville Road. M. Dorman states that property is owned by Rite Aid and will speak with them.

ADJOURNMENT-

M. Dorman motions to adjourn, seconded by E. Sheltry, none opposed all in favor. Meeting adjourned at 10:40 a.m.

NEXT MEETING DATE –date and time be determined.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah E. Gibbs
Recording Secretary