



# APPROVED

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

## PLAISTOW HIGHWAY SAFETY COMMITTEE MINUTES

**MEETING DATE** – Friday, March 7, 2014

**PRESENT** - Chief Stephen Savage, *Chairman*; Chief John McArdle, *Vice-Chairman*; Sean Fitzgerald, *Town Manager*; Michael Dorman, *Building Inspector*; Dan Garlington, *Highway Department Supervisor*; Leigh Komornick, *Town Planner*; Dan Poliquin, *Selectman Representative*; Lisa Withee, *Citizen's Representative*; Ernie Sheltry, *Citizen's Representative*; and Michelle Gaydos, *Pollard School Principal*

**EXCUSED** –Richard Latham, *Citizen's Representative*

**ABSENT** - None

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

**MINUTES** – D. Garlington motions to approve minutes of November 15, 2013 and January 31, 2014. Seconded by L. Withee – No discussion – None opposed – All in favor but M. Gaydos who abstained.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**- None

**NEW BUSINESS** – Discuss which side streets off of Main Street have a high volume of truck traffic and possibly pursuing efforts to prohibit trucks from them.

Chief Savage explains the concerns of the Board of Selectmen regarding truck traffic on some Town roads and the idea of posting some of them as “no thru trucking”. M. Dorman suggests closing Chandler Avenue to truck traffic. L. Withee suggests Forrest Street. M. Dorman explains how you can't limit truck traffic on Westville Road since it has traffic lights and the Town shouldn't close Forrest Street or Pollard Road either.

Chief Savage speaks about the Town Ordinance for “no thru trucking” and the weight restrictions. D. Garlington mentions that the “no thru trucking” is for trucks in excess of 12,000 gwvr.

D. Poliquin questions why the Town can't limit truck traffic on Forrest Street, Pollard Road, and Westville Road. M. Dorman comments how it would shut down too many roads. D. Poliquin explains the difference between closing truck traffic and “no thru trucking” and mentions other routes they can utilize throughout Town.

M. Dorman explains that Sweethill Road can't be closed since it's a State road and if Pollard Road is closed, it will push trucks onto Main Street.

Chief McArdle states that if Forrest Street is closed to truck traffic, it will force them on to Sweethill Road, which is an option but you can't close both streets. Further comments that the Town will push trucks on to Main Street and gave the example of a truck needing to make a delivery traveling from Route 108 to Main Street won't re-route to Route 495 to get there but will travel via Sweethill Road and Elm Street onto Main Street.

D. Poliquin explains that the Town is trying to eliminate the hazard to pedestrians and bicyclist and explains that Forrest Street and Pollard Road are not made for truck traffic. Chief McArdle explains that

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if you limit “thru trucking” on Forrest Street they will travel down Sweethill Road and onto Main Street where the Town is already trying to redirect truck traffic from.

D. Poliquin explains that the Town is trying to eliminate the cut-thrus. Chief McArdle comments how he’s not opposed to limiting Forrest Street and Pollard Road, but is concerned about complaints that might be received in the future.

S. Fitzgerald speaks about the need to better understand traffic flow and believes the Town needs traffic counts and should speak with Rockingham Planning Commission. Chief McArdle explains that traffic counts have already been completed. L. Komornick mentions that the counts might not include a break down for trucks.

S. Fitzgerald would like the Committee to understand how much truck traffic they would be directing to other roads before making decisions. States if the Town’s concern is pedestrian safety then other options are available other than “no thru trucking” that the Town may want to consider. Believes adding more no thru trucking roads will affect other roads and make them more challenging including wear and tear on them.

Chief Savage comments how members of the Committee have resided in Plaistow long enough to form their own analysis and opinions of roads that should be prohibited. Believes they can formulate an opinion as to which roads will have the impact and be mindful of any potential impacts on other roads. Mentions another option of posting, “trucks greater than 15,000 lbs, seek alternate route”.

D. Poliquin explains how signs are relatively inexpensive and suggests posting some roads as “no thru trucking” on a trial basis to observe the change in traffic patterns. Mentions how the Town already has traffic counts and studies completed and would like to start posting roads on a trial basis.

L. Withee speaks about pedestrian traffic on Forrest Street and how cars speeding go over the threshold where pedestrians are and suggests reducing the speed limit to 25 mph for safety reasons.

D. Poliquin understands her concerns but believes changing the speed limit will not address the issue.

*Chief McArdle makes a motion to discuss that we limit thru trucking over 15,000 lbs vehicles on Forrest Street and Pollard Road. Seconded by L. Withee.*

L. Komornick asks if there is an ordinance in place. D. Garlington confirms there is for 12,000 gvwr. Chief Savage questions if the limit should be 12,000 gvwr or 15,000 gvwr. D. Garlington suggests staying consistent at 12,000 gvwr. *Chief McArdle amends his motion to 12,000 gvwr.* L. Komornick confirms the motion is to recommend to the Board of Selectmen to post “no thru trucking” on a trial basis. Chief Savage suggests letting the Board of Selectmen determine the length of the trial period, agrees with a trial period, and explains there will be a need to enforce “no thru trucking”.

D. Poliquin questions doing a trial basis if it’s not enforceable. Chief Savage explains that during the trial basis they will know how enforceable it will be. D. Garlington suggests contacting GPS to inform them of the new “no thru trucking” roads. Explains how in the past they have called him to get updates on the roads. Chief Savage comments how this has been discussed at length for years and is in favor of the trial period and will do an educational piece on it through media.

M. Gaydos questions if there is a time frame on the trial period. Chief Savage confirms it will be up to the Board of Selectmen and suggests recommending to the Board of Selectmen posting warning signs prior to the road, “trucks in excessive of 12,000 gvwr please seek alternate route”.

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L. Komornick confirms the two roads that are being recommended. Confirmed Pollard Road and Forrest Street. D. Poliquin suggests adding Westville Road to the list. L. Komornick explains it would force trucks onto Chandler Avenue. M. Dorman disagrees and explaining about the light at Westville Road.

Chief Savage confirms there is a consensus to a trial period. Questions the Committee of what, if any, other streets to add to the motion made by Chief McArdle.

L. Komornick suggests Old Road instead of Westville Road, since Westville Road has the lights. D. Garlington suggests restricting the weight on the bridge on Westville Road, which would restrict some trucks, with the understanding that school buses would be exempt from the restriction.

D. Poliquin suggests Westville Road but also originally thought of Old Road as well but believes Westville Road is used more as a cut-thru. D. Garlington explains the traffic has increased on Old Road since the median on Route 125 was installed.

Chief Savage suggests since it's only a trial basis that they limit it only to the two roads mentioned in the motion and would like the trial period to be long enough to allow drivers to learn the roads are "no thru trucking".

S. Fitzgerald explains his concern that there's no data and speaks about the traffic enforcement spikes over the past years and how collecting data would help control traffic patterns. Agrees with a trial period to observe patterns but hopes it doesn't create risks to other roads and suggests looking at other dynamics to ease thru trucking.

D. Poliquin mentions that the motion doesn't include a time frame and recommends they add one in the motion of a period of no less than six months. *Chief McArdle amends his motion to include a six month trial period set to start at the pleasure of the Board of Selectmen.* S. Fitzgerald explains the need for a Public Hearing and a possible presentation to help support the trial period.

D. Garlington questions if the Committee can locate Board of Selectmen minutes when they voted to post other Town streets as "no thru trucking" to see what the criteria or basis was back then.

S. Fitzgerald explains how Forrest Street is a main carrier road and the next two arterial roads are Main Street and Sweethill Road and suggests creating a list of prioritized recommendations such as signage and infrastructure.

D. Garlington explains the profile of Forrest Street and driving a truck on it. S. Fitzgerald reiterates the need to rank and prioritize recommendations and to also complete more studies. D. Garlington comments about the longevity of the roadways when trucks travel on them. L. Komornick mentions how other Towns prohibit truck traffic on roads in order to preserve the longevity of the road surface. D. Garlington comments on the deterioration of the edge of the roadways since trash pick-up began.

L. Komornick mentions that back in 2010 truck traffic on Forrest Street (east of Route 121A) on a daily average was 1,600 and Pollard Road (east of Congressional Avenue) was 2,700 on a daily average. States how it'll be easy to figure out what percentage of trucks utilize the roads.

S. Fitzgerald comments that he'd like to see how many traffic violations are issued on Forrest Street along with citations. Briefly explains three things that effect safety which are education, enforcement, and infrastructure. Mentions how infrastructure can be as minor as a sign or as big as installing a new sidewalk and stresses his thoughts about studying the data.

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Chief McArdle would like to vote on the motion and confirms the motion on the floor was to post as amended for a six month time period no thru trucking the existing weight of 12,000 gvwr on Forrest Street and Pollard Road. *All in favor – no further discussion – motion approved.*

Chief Savage speaks about the comment made by D. Garlington concerning the bridge on Westville Road. M. Dorman suggests reposting it so it's highly visible on both ends of the bridge. S. Fitzgerald explains the condition of the bridge, which is just short of being red listed. D. Garlington agrees and states that it's currently posted as an E2. L. Komornick speaks about a project to replace it. *M. Dorman motions to post the bridge on Westville Road according to D. Garlington's recommendation for vehicles not to exceed 12,000 gvwr. Seconded by L. Withee. All in favor – no further discussion – motion approved.* Chief Savage will draft a letter to the Board of Selectmen.

**NEW BUSINESS –** Safe Routes to School Grant requires a purchasing plan be prepared, L. Komornick would like the Committee to review what those needs are and agree upon the items proposed in the purchasing plan.

S. Fitzgerald handed out a Safe Routes to School Grant updated Table #1 and explains it was submitted as a draft to NH DOT and mentions that it includes funding for enforcement, and would like the Committee to review the table for any recommendations/changes.

M. Gaydos mentions that she looked into the bike rodeo piece and mentions this year's National Safe Walk to School Day is May 7<sup>th</sup>. Comments about her contact for the bike rodeo but at this time doesn't have an estimate on the costs but expects it to come in around \$400. Mentions that the Lions Club has offered to help with bike helmets so they can be removed from the table. S. Fitzgerald explains that the table is only a draft.

M. Gaydos comments that it would probably be more beneficial to host the bike rodeo on a Saturday so kids can bring their bikes and mentions that she has provided paperwork to L. Komornick regarding the rodeo.

Chief McArdle questions how many storage bins are needed for the school. M. Gaydos doesn't believe the school needs any storage bins, since every child has their own helmets and places them in their bags or on the hooks and suggests removing the storage bins from the table and adding a second bicycle rack.

Chief Savage mentions possibly hosting a bike rodeo every spring. D. Garlington comments how they could find a bike vendor to donate their time to attend. M. Gaydos explains that part of the bike rodeo includes having the helmets checked to make sure they are still safe for the children to use and don't need replacing.

Chief McArdle questions if the bike rodeo location is limited only to the school because he could see this event being held at the recreation field. S. Fitzgerald comments that it's not, but should be this year since it's part of the Safe Routes to School Grant and focused around the school. Makes a suggestion to host a bike ride to the recreation field where they can have a separate event after the bike rodeo.

Chief McArdle explains that on the national perspective many of the summer recreation programs take place at a school and not at a separate location. M. Gaydos believes it should be held at the school this year since the funds are being used from the Safe Routes to School to host the rodeo.

Chief Savage confirms the table is not hard numbers or categories. S. Fitzgerald indicates it's only a draft and can be changed. Chief Savage questions where the signs will be funded from. S. Fitzgerald explains they will be funded under the enforcement portion of the table, which is marked to spend approximately \$5,000 towards enforcement costs.

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Chief Savage comments about the subcommittee's choice of three signs. S. Fitzgerald likes the signs but also would like a sign, "If You Drive Fast You'll Get Fined". L. Withee comments about how signs are posted in Town for fine violations of owners not picking up after their dogs. Questions how many people actually get fined for not picking up after their dogs and how she's not sure a sign regarding being fined would be effective. Believes that unless there is enforcement to ticket people after the sign it will not be effective.

M. Gaydos suggests using the top two signs which seem to focus on the school piece. L. Komornick believes the grant would more likely approve the top two signs.

Chief Savage comments how this topic has merged into the old business so will move forward to old business.

**OLD BUSINESS – Continue to review sign samples provided by L. Withee for the "Drive Like Your Child Lives Here" campaign.**

Chief Savage explains the samples were provided by Sign DeSigns and explains color options and that he'd like the Committee to decide on what signs they prefer.

D. Poliquin prefers the top left sign shown and comments that the fancier the writing and more text on the sign the less effective it is and suggests using big block letters with less text. S. Fitzgerald believes the signs are too small. Chief Savage suggests shrinking the font of the safe routes to school on the sign. D. Poliquin comments that it would minimize the important message if it's shrunk. L. Withee suggests having the Pollard School children create a logo. S. Fitzgerald likes the idea and agrees with D. Poliquin.

L. Komornick suggests running the signs by the Safe Routes to School project director, William Rose, to see if the proposed signs are allowable under the grant.

Chief Savage comments about using two signs to be placed on resident's property and others be permanent fixtures. S. Fitzgerald comments about using signs similar to election signs. Chief Savage explains that problem with those signs and how teepee signs would work better. S. Fitzgerald speaks about placement of the signs through-out the year and how it will be very effective.

Chief Savage asks if the Committee agrees to adding the sign suggested by S. Fitzgerald. S. Fitzgerald believes the signs should be bigger such as 24 x 32.

M. Gaydos confirms whether or not the Town wants a logo contest to be held at Pollard School and explains she would need at least a month to run the contests. Chief Savage questions if they are doing the logo or lettering for the contests. M. Gaydos suggest they do a logo for Safe Routes to School.

L. Withee suggests keeping the main lettering, "thank you for slowing down" and then have the safe routes to school logo with something that says, "this is a safe route to school".

Chief Savage will focus on the other three signs while M. Gaydos runs the logo contest over the next month. M. Gaydos will provide the Town with less than six finalists and suggests the final vote coming from them or the Board of Selectmen. Chief McArdle suggests the committee give the final vote.

M. Gaydos will make sure the logo as Safe Routes to School in it and questions if there will be a prize for the winner. D. Garlington suggests a gift card to Game Stop. M. Gaydos suggests something geared towards safe routes.

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L. Withee confirms the size of the signs. Chief Savage agrees to make the first sign on top left turned sideways and the other two be 18 x 24 and will look into the wire signs.

L. Withee states that the prize will be a \$25 gift card to Olympia Sports, which she and M. Gaydos just agreed on.

## **COMMENTS – Other Business.**

L. Withee expresses her concern about the trash barrels being tossed all over the road which causes a safety issue and suggests fining the trash company or not paying them.

D. Poliquin mentions that he spoke with S. Fitzgerald previously regarding JRM. S. Fitzgerald comments how JRM has always been responsive to the Town's concerns and would like to speak L. Withee in more detail after the meeting regarding her complaint.

Chief McArdle briefly comments on barrels left in the roadway on high speed roads such as Route 121A. D. Poliquin explains they are not throwing them out into the road, the barrels are just being blown around. Chief McArdle mentions how Waste Management use to place the barrels upside down when they were empty to help keep them from moving. D. Poliquin explains that this time of year trash gets stuck to the bottom of the barrels and has been receiving complaints about rubbish being on the ground and if the barrels are tipped upside down trash will left on the ground.

S. Fitzgerald suggests inviting JRM to the next meeting. Chief McArdle suggests inviting them to a Board of Selectmen meeting instead since they are the ones that can do something about it. M. Dorman agrees. S. Fitzgerald explains that they have attended Board of Selectmen meetings in the past and have been very responsive to concerns residents have and will address this one.

## **ADDITIONAL COMMENTS – None.**

**ADJOURNMENT-** Motion to adjourn by D. Garlington and seconded by Chief McArdle. None opposed – all in favor. Meeting adjourned at 10:50 a.m.

## **NEXT MEETING DATE – TBD**

Respectfully submitted,  
Sarah E. Gibbs  
Recording Secretary