

# (APPROVED)



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

### PLAISTOW HIGHWAY SAFETY COMMITTEE MINUTES

**MEETING DATE** – Thursday, July 16, 2015

**PRESENT** – Police Chief Kathleen Jones, *Chairman*; Sean Fitzgerald, *Town Manager*; Dan Garlington, *Highway Department Supervisor*; John Sherman, *Selectman Representative*; Lisa Withee, *Citizen's Representative*; Michelle Auger, *Pollard School Principal*; Richard Latham, *Citizen's Representative*; Ernie Sheltry, *Citizen's Representative*; Dave Walker, *Rockingham Planning Commission*; and Kevin Russell, *NH DOT*

**EXCUSED** – Fire Chief John McArdle, *Vice-Chairman* and Michael Dorman, *Building Inspector*

**ABSENT** – Town Planner

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

**MINUTES** – J. Sherman motions to approve the minutes of 05/15/2015, seconded by L. Withee. No discussion. None opposed. All in favor except E. Sheltry and R. Latham, who abstained.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**- None

**NEW BUSINESS** – Discuss viable options for the slip lane on South Main St with D. Walker from RPC and K. Russell of NH DOT.

S. Fitzgerald speaks briefly about the truck traffic on Main St and the interest in minimizing access onto Main St from Rte 125. Explains no decisions have been made on what to do with the slip lane, now called Border Ave and understands changes could potentially impact other areas.

K. Russell mentions the turning movement template utilized by NH DOT and the limited turning ability turning right onto Haseltine Ave from Rte 125 for trucks and buses. Suggests the Town provide N. Mayville at NH DOT with what they are proposing to do. Mentions there could be safety issues if the slip lane is closed.

S. Fitzgerald questions if they moved forward and made the slip lane 1-way southbound, would it trigger NH DOT to examine Haseltine Ave. K. Russell explains that they should speak with N. Mayville.

S. Fitzgerald continues to speak about concerns with truck traffic on Main St and mentions the upcoming Rte 125 construction which will increase traffic on Main St and offers a suggestion of posting a weight limit for the slip lane or closing it to commercial traffic. Explains how he wants to avoid creating any hazards on Haseltine Ave. K. Russell indicates how the Town should submit a plan to NH DOT for review. S. Fitzgerald speaks about creating a plan and talking with Haverhill to get their support.

J. Sherman confirms everyone is in agreement with the need to minimize truck traffic on Main St and asks K. Russell what they need to do to make this happen and how NH DOT can help. Also questions if the weight restrictions posted on Forrest St and Pollard Rd have helped reduce truck traffic on Main St. K. Jones mentions that she has not received many complaints.

J. Sherman questions what other options are available and if posting a weight restriction on Westville Rd would help. D. Garlington explains the difficulty in enforcing a weight restriction on Westville Rd.

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D. Walker briefly mentions the traffic counts completed a few years ago, which showed heavier traffic traveling northbound on Main St. K. Jones mentions the increased enforcement patrols by the NH State Truck Team and that they've seen a good volume of trucks with minimal speed issues.

J. Sherman questions whether or not closing the slip lane on Elm St has decreased truck traffic. S. Fitzgerald believes it has slowed them down. D. Garlington mentions how he recently observed a high volume of truck traffic entering Elm St in a short period of time.

J. Sherman asks D. Walker and K. Russell what the best way to reduce the truck traffic is. D. Walker explains that the Town needs to take a real comprehensive look at Main St. That while closing the slip lane could be a start, it will create issues in other areas such as Haseltine Ave. Mentions the need to look at the Rte 125 corridor and options like roundabouts and enforcement to deter trucks from Main St. J. Sherman mentions a weigh station. D. Walker explains that they only work for a short period of time and suggests synching the signals on Rte 125 with longer green times for Rte 125. J. Sherman agrees and asks what needs to be done to make it happen. K. Russell explains that they need to send a letter to NH DOT and speak with Peter Crouch who works with the signals and can offer suggestions.

J. Sherman asks K. Russell for suggestions on the slip lane. K. Russell explains that NH DOT does not restrict vehicles and mentions that the Town could take over Main St as an option. S. Fitzgerald mentions several deficiencies along Main St. K. Russell briefly explains that the Town would have to be placed on NH DOT's 10 year plan if looking to them to fund a project.

S. Fitzgerald mentions his interest in having the support of NH DOT to calm traffic and increase pedestrian safety on Main St. K. Russell speaks about a funding option through TAP (Transportation Alternatives Plan) and how there's a limited amount of funds available at both State and Federal levels. Again, mentions that they should send up their proposals to N. Mayville to review and offer comments on any safety or legal issues.

R. Latham mentions the increased truck traffic on Sweethill Rd as well as the maneuvering difficulties trucks have when turning onto Palmer Ave from Elm St which should be looked at.

K. Russell believes the Town can install blinking lights for crosswalks that are allowed by NH DOT and mentions how anything to slow down traffic will help move trucks onto Rte 125. J. Sherman questions if the goal is to move trucks back on to Rte 125 and if so they need to make it easier to travel on.

D. Garlington comments on the truck issues on Sweethill Rd and Rte 125 and feels they are unrelated. J. Sherman believes they are and has observed them traveling from Rte 110 to Sweethill Rd and then proceeding on Kingston Rd to Rte 125.

S. Fitzgerald confirms the Town's letter should go to N. Mayville and will request in the letter a meeting to evaluate options. K. Russell explains that they are looking for a scoping meeting.

K. Russell mentions if the Town wants to work on the signals on Rte 125 they should speak with the Bureau of Traffic who can provide recommendations. Reminds everyone about costs on some projects and mentions a new hybrid beacon, one of which recently installed in Epping.

D. Walker suggests the Town close the slip lane for one week as a test. J. Sherman comments on how it would affect Jimmy K's. K. Jones mentions her concerns about closing the slip lane, which would increase right turns onto Haseltine Ave, and cause traffic to back up on Rte 125 into Haverhill and increase motor vehicle accidents.

S. Fitzgerald excuses himself from the meeting but first gives the Committee a hand out which lists all the roads speeds and explains that he'll have the road map with posted speeds at the next meeting.

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Provides a quick update on the Safe Routes to School Grant which continues to move forward. J. Sherman questions if there is a map that shows all the sidewalks in Town. S. Fitzgerald confirms yes.

E. Sheltry briefly questions the speed limit on Captain Cook and it's explained to him that it's a private road.

## **ACTION ITEM REVIEW.**

### #1. Schedule joint RSMS presentation for 9/15/15 with Budget Committee and Board of Selectmen.

D. Garlington mentions an upcoming meeting he will be having. J. Sherman indicates the meeting is planned for 9/15/15.

### #2. Coordinate effort to close lower Main Street slip lane.

S. Fitzgerald to send letter to N. Mayville at NH DOT to schedule a scoping meeting.

### #3. Schedule Rte 125 widening presentation for the Board of Selectmen this fall.

J. Sherman indicates this hasn't been done yet. D. Garlington explains that it needs to wait until after the final design is complete. J. Sherman explains that he would like them to go before the Board sooner since there are new Selectmen.

### #4. Create map of Plaistow streets w/color coding showing speed limits on roads.

K. Jones indicates that S. Fitzgerald will have this at the next meeting.

### #5. Provide Committee with a list of Town roads posted at 30 mph.

K. Jones distributes a list showing the speed limits titled, "Main Street Speed Limits", and asks everyone to review it so they can discuss this and provide recommendations at the next meeting.

### #6. Speak with Haverhill's Chief of Police about Main St slip lane and invite D. Walker and K. Russell to upcoming meeting to discuss options for the slip lane.

K. Jones mentions how the Committee has met with D. Walker and K. Russell and the difficulty she's had reaching out to the Chief due to vacation schedules. Will continue to reach out to the Chief and also suggests reaching out to the owner of Jimmy K's.

J. Sherman questions the status of North Ave as he understands it's a state road. D. Garlington explains how he needs to discuss with the Board of Selectmen taking over its winter maintenance. J. Sherman questions if the Town should accept the maintenance. D. Garlington believes they should and explains the minimal costs to the Town to plow. Mentions how it's in good condition to take over since it's been paved.

### #7. Run quarterly traffic statistics for Main St, Elm St, and Forrest St.

K. Jones explains that this action item will be ongoing and distributed the stats from April – June. Explains how it's the discretion of the Officer if they want to issue a summons or warning as well as what speed to stop a vehicle going over the speed limit. Mentions that directed patrols continue on Forrest and Main Streets.

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## **NEW BUSINESS – Electronically distribute monthly Main Street radar panel reports for January through June 2015.**

K. Jones mentions reports were sent electronically yesterday and moving forward will distribute them monthly. Reminds everyone that the panels report any vehicle traveling 31 mph or more as a violator. Believes northbound is more of a concern and suggests everyone review the reports and if there are any questions to contact her.

J. Sherman questions if the permanent Safe Route to School signs have made any impact on speed and would like to see the traffic stats pre and post of installing the signs.

## **OLD BUSINESS – Update on Safe Routes to School Grant.**

K. Jones mentions that S. Fitzgerald briefly updated the Committee before excusing himself. Also mentions a meeting held yesterday with S. Fitzgerald and M. Auger about spending funds that are left in the grant to possibly purchase additional helmets, signs, or hold a bike rodeo.

## **OLD BUSINESS – Update on status of traffic counts on Pollard Rd and Forrest St and posting 6 month trial period on same roads for “No Thru Trucking” GVW 12000 once count is completed.**

K. Jones understands that the data is not available yet and will follow up with S. Fitzgerald on this.

## **OTHER BUSINESS –**

E. Sheltry questions a speed limit listed on the sheet provided earlier. D. Garlington explains the actual posting is 35 mph but was inaccurately listed as 30 mph on the document.

## **OTHER BUSINESS –**

D. Latham mentions concerns he has with JRM still crossing roads to pick-up trash on both sides at once. Also noticed them sliding recycling bins across the road. K. Jones will contact S. Fitzgerald about this. L. Withee mentions how she hasn't noticed any changes with JRM since they met with the Board of Selectmen. J. Sherman comments how they've improved but are still an issue. Questions if there are any traffic violations with what they are doing. K. Jones confirms no. D. Garlington comments that what they are doing is fine on smaller side roads but not roads like Forrest St or Sweethill Rd. K. Jones will ask S. Fitzgerald to send them a letter.

## **OTHER BUSINESS –**

J. Sherman speaks about the upcoming Rte 125 expansion and whether or not the State needs to meet with the Committee. D. Garlington understands it's at the discretion of the Committee. J. Sherman suggests inviting the members when the State comes before the Board of Selectmen regarding the expansion.

**ADJOURNMENT-** Motion to adjourn by D. Garlington and seconded by L. Withee. Meeting adjourned None opposed – all in favor.

## **NEXT MEETING DATE – TBD**

Respectfully submitted,  
Sarah Gibbs, Recording Secretary