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

PLAISTOW HIGHWAY SAFETY COMMITTEE MINUTES

MEETING DATE – Friday, July 26, 2013

PRESENT - Chief Stephen Savage, Chairman; Michael Dorman, Building Inspector; Dan Garlington, Highway Department Supervisor; Sean Fitzgerald, Town Manager; Dan Poliquin, Selectman Representative; Lisa Withee, Citizen's Representative; and Richard Latham, Citizen's Representative

EXCUSED – Chief John McArdle, Vice-Chairman; Leigh Komornick, Town Planner; and Ernie Sheltry, Citizen's Representative

ABSENT - None

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

MINUTES - M. Dorman motions to accept the minutes of 3/1/13. Seconded by D. Garlington - No discussion – None opposed – All in favor but R. Latham who abstained.

PUBLIC COMMENT- None

NEW BUSINESS – Discussion on the Safe Routes to School 2013 Grant.

Chief Savage begins the discussion stating that the Town applied for a \$250,000 Safe Routes to School Grant which was submitted on Wednesday, July 24, 2013, and how the Board of Selectmen voted on Monday, July 22, 2013, to match the Grant with \$100,000.

S. Fitzgerald presented a brief PowerPoint of the Safe Routes to School Grant application for round 6 funding that he presented to the Board of Selectmen previously. Topics included:

- Sidewalks,
- Explanation of Phase I – including raised granite curbs, asphalt sidewalks, and crosswalks,
- Estimated cost of Phase I originally \$253,508 but increased to approximately \$350,000 after the Board of Selectmen voted on a match,
- Anticipates non infrastructure costs at approximately \$10,732,
- Phase II is estimated to cost \$198,000, and
- Mentions work completed to date including a Traffic Calming Study, handicap parking improvements, and the closure of the Elm Street slip lane.

S. Fitzgerald mentions that a decision is expected within 4-6 weeks. Chief Savage asks about the timetable on completing the grant. S. Fitzgerald states that if the Town is awarded the Grant, they could start Phase I in October. Chief Savage confirms that Phase II would not start until 2014.

S. Fitzgerald comments about the need to wait to see if the Town is approved for the grant and spoke also about the high ratings the Town received in regards to road surface, which puts the Town in a good position to possibly utilize some of the funds for road surfacing to help fund sidewalks.

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L. Withee questions whether or not the crosswalks will be clearly defined since drivers don't recognize them as they are currently are. Also, comments about the dangers of the side roads the children walk from to get to Pollard School.

S. Fitzgerald explains how he understands the concerns, and how the Town will begin with the Safe Routes to School program, which starts in the Village District on Main Street. Hopes this will only be a start to many future phases beyond the current grant.

D. Garlington asks if any discussions have occurred about Main Street being turned over to the Town from the State. S. Fitzgerald confirms no, and explains the costs involved if it was passed on to the Town, which would raise the property taxes. Reiterated how Main Street is not pedestrian safe and believes additional signage could help make crosswalks more noticeable. L. Withee would like the crosswalks placed in more strategic locations.

S. Fitzgerald would like Chief Savage to discuss the potential placement of rumble strips along Route 121A as they have been proven to work in other areas. Believes they could be helpful along Route 121A north of the intersection at Sanborn's Candies. Mentions an upcoming meeting with NH DOT on August 28, 2013, at 7:00 pm at the Town Hall to discuss rumble strips. The focus of the meeting is about placing rumble strips along Route 125, but would like to include a discussion about rumble strips on Route 121A.

D. Garlington comments that NH DOT has been eliminating them throughout the State so he's unsure why they are looking at implementing them along Route 125. S. Fitzgerald comments that it's actually the U.S. DOT looking to install the rumble strips.

Chief Savage believes north Route 121A should have rumble strips in the center of the road to help avoid head-on collisions. S. Fitzgerald comments about placing rumble strips on the fog lines. Chief Savage believes the center-line on Route 121A is more problematic with head-on collisions.

S. Fitzgerald explains that he would like further discussion on rumble strips and believes the Board of Selectmen would like a recommendation from the Committee on them. Chief Savage confirms the Committee will have further discussion on them at a later date. R. Latham speaks about his preference to put rumble strips in the center lane.

NEW BUSINESS – Discussion on the removal of handicap parking.

S. Fitzgerald explains this issue was brought up by the Elder Affairs Committee for him to bring to the attention of the Highway Safety Committee about the handicap parking spaces outside of Town Hall. Explains how the Town added three additional handicap parking spaces in front of Town Hall. States how it's unusual to have all the handicap spaces filled and mentions the two additional spaces over on the side of the Town Hall. Suggests removing two of the handicap parking spaces and the Elder Affairs Committee has made a recommendation on this. Would like to schedule members of the Elder Affairs Committee to meet with the Highway Safety Committee.

Chief Savage confirms that they are suggesting removing the two older handicap parking spaces over in the corner and keep the three new spaces in front of Town Hall. S. Fitzgerald confirms it is and also comments about possibly getting temporary handicap parking signs, if they are allowed, that can be placed out at events that the Town might need additional handicap spaces for. Chief Savage believes the Board of Selectmen can allow them but in order to enforce them it has to be a documented decision by the Board of Selectmen. Sean Fitzgerald asks Chief Savage to look into it and to invite a couple members from the Elder Affairs Committee to attend the next meeting.

L. Withee comments that Town employees should park in the back of Town Hall and not in the front or side to leave spaces open to the public. Chief Savage comments about a previous order from the Board

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of Selectmen about employees not parking in front of Town Hall. D. Poliquin confirms there was an order previously for no employee parking in front of Town Hall. M. Dorman confirms it also and mentions it included both sides of the street.

D. Garlington questions how long until a decision is made on the handicap parking, as the Highway Department is due to restripe the parking spaces. S. Fitzgerald suggests scheduling the next meeting for possibly the 2nd or 3rd week in August. D. Poliquin suggests a vote occur today on whether or not to send a memo to the Board of Selectmen. Explains that he's been hearing about this matter for several months and would like to bring it to the Board of Selectmen for a decision at their next meeting. Chief Savage explains that as a Police Chief, he has no concerns with eliminating the two side handicap parking spaces leaving the three in the front for handicap parking.

D. Garlington makes a motion that the Committee support the elimination of the two handicap parking spaces, one on the corner of Main Street and the second on Park Avenue. Motion seconded by M. Dorman. No further discussion. All in Favor. None opposed.

NEW BUSINESS – Discussion of residents concern of traffic/speeding on Brentwood Street and the safety of young children playing. Resident has inquired about placing signs similar to ones at school crossings to alert drivers that children are at play and to drive slowly.

Chief Savage explains the concern brought forward by a resident and how Brentwood Street isn't very well traveled but there's a heavy amount of children in the neighborhood from housing in the area.

L. Withee comments how she observed a sign on her way to work, which was red with white lettering that stated, "drive like your children live here", feels that the community should do more to put signs like that out in the neighborhoods.

D. Garlington explains that in this particular area there's a "Children at Play" sign placed at the other end by Upper Road. L. Withee explains how it's not a regular sign but more of a sign you'd put on the lawn advertising for Old Home Day. Shows the Committee a picture she took of the sign and emailed it to Chief Savage. Chief Savage comments that the sign L. Withee speaks about is similar to political signs made with wire. Explains how this type of sign is not recognizable by the State of New Hampshire.

S. Fitzgerald comments how he's seen similar signs in busy neighborhoods to help heighten awareness and how they are only temporary signs and suggest looking into them. L. Withee isn't concerned about the form of the sign but the message. D. Garlington comments about the possibility of using the new message board unit at busy neighborhood locations posting the message L. Withee found. Chief Savage comments that he'll put the message board unit out with a message and take a look at the signs also.

D. Poliquin suggests showing the residents the photo of the sign L. Withee found as an idea the residents can do. D. Garlington comments how the road is not a cut-thru and most of the drivers are people who live there, family, or friends visiting. Chief Savage questions if there is any Safe Routes to School grant funding for temporary signs. S. Fitzgerald explains that there is a possibility.

NEW BUSINESS – Discussion of radar panel placements.

Chief Savage comments about how he's heard from many people about the placement of the signs which have been both favorable and unfavorable. Mentions his doubt about the distance between the radar signs. S. Fitzgerald questions the brightness of the sign board. Chief Savage asks the Committee to think about the placement of the permanent signs and suggest possibly pulling them in closer together.

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S. Fitzgerald thinks north of Westville Road would be better for the northbound unit. L. Withee suggest by Community Bank. Chief Savage comments that the telephone pole sits too far back to use for the unit. S. Fitzgerald suggests purchasing a third unit. Chief Savage asks everyone to think about the location.

COMMENTS –

➤ Chief Savage mentions the new message radar board, which is currently placed on Old County Road for the upcoming fireworks. Explains the notice that went out to Department Heads for any department to inform him if they would like to place any special alerts out for projects or Town functions.

D. Garlington questions the final cost of the message board. Chief Savage confirms it was approximately \$16,000 and the grant partially funded it because it has a radar in the unit. S. Fitzgerald explains how he spoke with Lt. Baldwin about purchasing a second unit for the Town.

➤ R. Latham speaks about truck traffic on Sweethill Road and the amount of kids skateboarding, rollerblading, as well as races for bicyclists which travel down Sweethill Road at great speed. Explains the trucks he's seen traveling on the road and feels there is a potential for a real disaster between vehicles and pedestrians.

Chief Savage agrees and suggests the idea to "T" up the lower end of Sweethill Road to cause drivers to have to stop before going left or right. Comments that Hale Spring is posted, "no thru trucking", which is partly why they use Sweethill Road.

S. Fitzgerald understands these concerns and has heard them over the past few years and suggests creating a list of the top ten public safety challenges and concerns of intersections listing the most dangerous ones. S. Fitzgerald would like either Chief Savage or Lt. Baldwin to make a top ten list of most critical public safety intersection hazards. Chief Savage comments that some of the major ones currently would be Westville Road, Sweethill Road, and Harriman Road.

Chief Savage speaks about Palmer Avenue, which might tie into the safe routes to school plan. Explains how the sidewalks on Palmer Avenue were never completed and how it might be eligible as a continuation of the current project.

D. Poliquin questions R. Latham if his concern is truck traffic, bike races, or general speed of traffic. R. Latham states all of them and explains also how kids on the road on skate boards and other means of transportation don't pay close attention to vehicle traffic.

Chief Savage asks if the State would allow the Town to pick certain roads they choose. D. Garlington states no, explaining how the State wants to make sure they keep their plow routes fluid.

D. Poliquin explains how bicycle races have pace cars to block intersections along the route as they travel. Also mentions that the skateboard park will reopen eventually, once a new location is found for it.

ADJOURNMENT- Motion to adjourn by D. Garlington and seconded by M. Dorman. None opposed. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 10:35 a.m.

NEXT MEETING DATE – TBD

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah E. Gibbs,
Recording Secretary