

(APPROVED)



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

PLAISTOW HIGHWAY SAFETY COMMITTEE MINUTES

MEETING DATE – Friday, June 6, 2014

PRESENT - Chief Stephen Savage, *Chairman*; Chief John McArdle, *Vice-Chairman*; Sean Fitzgerald, *Town Manager*; Michael Dorman, *Building Inspector*; Dan Poliquin, *Selectman Representative*; Richard Latham, *Citizen's Representative* and Ernie Sheltry, *Citizen's Representative*

EXCUSED – Lisa Withee, *Citizen's Representative* and Leigh Komornick, *Town Planner*

ABSENT – Dan Garlington, *Highway Department Supervisor* and Michelle Gaydos, *Pollard School Principal*

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

MINUTES – R. Latham motions to approve the minutes of May 9, 2014, seconded by E. Sheltry. No discussion. None opposed. All in favor but E. Sheltry who abstained.

PUBLIC COMMENT- None

NEW BUSINESS – None

OLD BUSINESS – Follow-up discussion on whether or not to take over portion of North Avenue from the State of NH and make it, "No-Thru Trucking".

Chief Savage briefly explains that this was discussed at the last meeting and questions if the Board of Selectmen have an interest in looking into this.

S. Fitzgerald mentions that he spoke with K. Russell at NH DOT and that they would want to meet with the Committee to discuss several logistics involved including how traffic would flow and how it could possibly be disruptive to other roads. Explains that he'll follow up with K. Russell and suggests a few members meet with him to discuss this matter. Chief Savage suggests inviting K. Russell to an upcoming meeting but before then, he'd like to know the Board of Selectmen's thoughts. D. Poliquin indicates that he doesn't recall ever discussing this on the Board of Selectmen. S. Fitzgerald mentions that a few small discussions were held.

D. Poliquin mentions how it's a small section of roadway. M. Dorman explains that it wouldn't be too much effort for the Town to maintain it in the winter. Chief Savage believes the Board would want to see a State review of what's in place and what the predictability is on future repairs. M. Dorman mentions how NH DOT previously agreed to get any road up to standards prior to it being turned over to the Town.

S. Fitzgerald believes North Avenue would be a large acquisition for the Town to take and suggests focusing on South Main Street. In regards to North Avenue, is concerned about issues such as storm water drainage and the potential long term costs to maintain it. Suggests the Town look at intersections first and review the Main Street Traffic Calming Study including the recommendations in the report to see what the top few priorities were and look into possible grant funding. M. Dorman believes the State would take care of any drainage issues before turning it over to the Town.

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Chief Savage suggests moving the sign posted on Route 125 northbound on the Haverhill border that indicates, "Right Turn Ahead to Plaistow Village", closer to the lighted intersection after the South Main Street slip lane. Chief Savage comments on the two issues at hand; 1) South Main Street and 2) North Avenue and stresses the need to decide on one and proceed with it and suggests starting with South Main Street.

S. Fitzgerald suggests focusing on intersections first before taking over a road like North Avenue. Mentions the changes the Town of Pelham did recently to improve traffic and pedestrian safety. Chief Savage indicates how the intersection at North Avenue was discussed several years ago and was voted down (3-2) by the Board of Selectmen to advance with any changes.

S. Fitzgerald would like to provide enough notice prior to any changes and questions if they are looking at posting South Main Street, one-way or "No-Thru Trucking". Chief Savage explains that it's the Board of Selectmen's decision.

S. Fitzgerald suggests temporarily closing the South Main Street slip lane similar to what they did at the slip lane onto Elm Street and monitor it to see how it goes for a month or so. D. Poliquin believes it should stay open to avoid causing traffic issues at the traffic light after the slip lane. Explains how he's observed the large amount of traffic at this light that vehicles use to get to the Town. If the Town closes the slip lane, he explains it wouldn't work, because they will turn at the light and/or come up North Avenue onto Route 121A. Chief Savage confirms the original intent was to limit truck traffic.

S. Fitzgerald questions if the start of the road is in Haverhill. Chief Savage confirms it is and mentions how they would have to close it at the border with plenty of advance warning. S. Fitzgerald would like to make sure Haverhill is agreeable to make this portion of the road "No-Thru Trucking".

D. Poliquin indicates that "No-Thru Trucking" would be the better option as it won't affect any development Haverhill might have at the vacant site on South Main Street. M. Dorman mentions that when a restaurant was interested in the property, their engineer was told that vacant land next to it that Plaistow partially owns would be a parking lot. S. Fitzgerald would first like to meet with NH DOT to make certain there's no conflict. Explains his recent conversation with NH DOT and how they mentioned a regulation concerning truck movement and how it was suggested the Town might have to improve the intersection.

D. Poliquin explains that the State turned over this portion of the road to Plaistow and believes the Town can choose to make changes to it without NH DOT's approval. Agrees that advance notification should be provided to trucks traveling northbound on Route 125 and recommends to the Committee to memo the Board of Selectmen stating that this is one of the next concerns they would like to see addressed and for the Board of Selectmen to allow the Committee to have discussions with the City of Haverhill and NH DOT to move forward to either block the slip lane off temporarily or limit the type of traffic through it.

D. Latham questions requirements by NH DOT to allow access from one state highway onto another. S. Fitzgerald believes if it is an issue, NH DOT will let them know. S. Fitzgerald would like to have a meeting with NH DOT and Haverhill to discuss the logistics of making South Main Street "No-Thru Trucking".

S. Fitzgerald mentions his recent conversation with the Haverhill Mayor who explained his frustrations as well with truck traffic and how he doesn't believe Haverhill will have any concerns. Suggests reviewing South Main Street again along with the truck counts to get a sense of what the implementation strategy would be.

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Chief Savage has no objection to a temporary trial basis. S. Fitzgerald believes the best option is “No-Thru Trucking” and believes that the Town is not ready to make any decisions regarding North Avenue. D. Poliquin explains that the North Avenue matter is limited because Marsh Avenue is already posted.

Chief McArdle explains how South Main Street has been a problem for a long time and this change will be a big problem for the fire department because they go that way to get on Route 125 for accidents on the Haverhill line. Chief Savage explains that they would be allowed to go southbound because it's only northbound that they are trying to limit truck traffic.

R. Latham speaks about the intersection of Elm Street/Palmer Avenue. Explains that he's noticed smaller trucks going up Hale Spring Road and if they are going southbound from Kingston Road and turning onto Palmer Avenue they are taking better than a 90 degree turn causing some tractor trailers to swing a little more widely. R. Latham suggests reconfiguring this intersection.

S. Fitzgerald would like to get a vote from the Board of Selectmen at their next meeting to temporarily post “No-Thru Trucking” on South Main Street. Chief McArdle questions what the valuation criteria is as to how the Town is going to assess from the day it's closed to when it's reopened and who will be monitoring it. S. Fitzgerald suggests getting a counter from Rockingham Planning Commission, possibly have patrol observe the location. Explains how he's unclear of the truck travel pattern but does know there is a high level of it and would also like to know if tractor trailers are trying to turn onto Haseltine Avenue. Mentions that they will need to observe if other intersections become problematic with this change. Chief Savage believes the tractor trailers will continue north on Route 125 avoiding other roads.

S. Fitzgerald would like to come up with a matrix to monitor. Chief Savage explains that he does not have the man power for an officer to patrol the slip lane. S. Fitzgerald believes NH DOT or Rockingham Planning Commission might have some resources that could help. Chief Savage believes he could get a message board from NH DOT to use. D. Poliquin suggests possibly a go-pro camera that you can download the video and watch on super fast forward to observe the number of trucks traveling.

D. Poliquin comments about the heavy traffic flow on weekends when traveling southbound and how it can be stopped on Main Street before North Avenue, which never use to occur. Chief McArdle explains how this traffic makes it difficult for the fire department and rescue to get to calls such as an incident in the Shaw's Plaza. Expresses how the changes that are being made are truly messing up more than they are actually solving and explains the effects of these traffic changes have on the emergency vehicles.

S. Fitzgerald speaks about a traffic flow models he's seen and how it shows you what impacts will occur if you change certain things. Believes a traffic flow study would give them the necessary information to make the right decisions.

Chief Savage suggests having a temporary trial period, informing NH DOT and the City of Haverhill of the trial, and place a warning message board in advance. S. Fitzgerald would like to see the change occur before the start of the next phase of construction on Route 125.

Committee briefly discusses the truck enforcement recently seen throughout Town. Chief McArdle indicates that if you want to get trucks off Main Street then the truck patrols need to be put on Elm Street, Main Street, and Kingston Road and not on Route 125.

OLD BUSINESS – Continue reviewing permanent street signs and lawn signs for the Safe Routes to School Grant

Chief Savage mentions that he will be making a final decision on the signs soon and place the order.

(APPROVED)

OTHER BUSINESS –

S. Fitzgerald informs the Committee about the Board of Selectmen's vote to post "No-Thru Trucking" at the last meeting for Forrest Street and Pollard Road. Mentions the lengthy discussion on the GVW and how it was voted to post the GVW at 26,100 instead of 12,000 GVW. Explains how there might have been some confusion as to GVW and suggests providing photos of each category. Mentions that the Town needs to review the roads to see what capacity each road can handle, as Forrest Street shouldn't even have a GVW of 18,000.

D. Poliquin explains how a regular pick-up truck hauling can place it over 18,000 GVW depending on what's being hauled. Explains that some vehicles that are under the GVW of 26,100 cannot handle some Town roads including, trying to navigate a turn onto them. Informs the Committee that he'll be asking the Board of Selectmen to revisit the GVW limits in order to give them a better understanding and will be recommending reducing it to 12,000 GVW. Mentions how even landscaping vehicles travel through these roads at higher rates of speed. S. Fitzgerald explains the Town's goal is pedestrian safety and how he's not sure 26,100 GVW is the threshold.

Chief Savage explains that the Town could post different GVW on different streets. D. Poliquin states that if they post "No-Thru Trucking" on South Main Street he would prefer they post it at 26,100 GVW.

R. Latham suggests getting the intersection of Palmer Avenue and Elm Street done as previously mentioned. Chief Savage explains that the State has the ability to fix small projects such as this one.

R. Latham expresses his concern about tractor trailer trucks coming southbound on Kingston Road, but if the Town is posting "No-Thru Trucking" on Pollard Road and Forrest Street then they will also be coming from the other direction which only has enough space to cut the banking. D. Poliquin believes the telephone pole and stop sign are the big limitations and if they were moved changes might not have to be made.

D. Poliquin would like the Committee, if they are agreeable, to memo the Board of Selectmen to reconsider the 26,100 GVW and lowering it to 12,000 GVW for Forrest Street and Pollard Road. Motioned by M. Dorman, seconded by R. Latham. No objections. Motion passed. Chief Savage suggests members attend the Board of Selectmen meeting concerning this matter. S. Fitzgerald comments about how it was D. Garlington opinion that they should have been posted at 12,000 GVW.

R. Latham questions what the GVW is on Spring Hill Road when coming from Sweethill Road. Chief Savage indicates its 12,000 GVW both directions.

Chief Savage mentions his conversation with D. Garlington about revisiting what is posted throughout Town to make sure all the signs are up and replace those that are not.

D. Poliquin speaks about consistency and understands all the posting are at 12,000 GVW. However, if the Town posted Westville Road he would suggest posting it at 16,000 GVW. Chief Savage reminds the Committee to keep in mind emergency vehicles when posting GVW on the roadways.

ADJOURNMENT- Motion to adjourn by Chief McArdle and seconded by M. Dorman. Meeting adjourned at 10:35 a.m. None opposed – all in favor.

NEXT MEETING DATE – TBD

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah Gibbs,
Recording Secretary