

# (APPROVED)



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

## PLAISTOW HIGHWAY SAFETY COMMITTEE MINUTES

**MEETING DATE** – Friday, January 15, 2016

**PRESENT** – Police Chief Kathleen Jones, *Chairman*; Fire Chief John McArdle, *Vice-Chairman*; Michael Dorman, *Building Inspector*; Sean Fitzgerald, *Town Manager*; Dan Garlington, *Highway Department Supervisor*; John Sherman, *Selectman Representative*; Lisa Withee, *Citizen's Representative*; Richard Latham, *Citizen's Representative*; Ernie Sheltry, *Citizen's Representative*; and Greg Jones, *Town Planner*

**EXCUSED** – Michelle Auger, *Pollard School Principal*

**ABSENT** – None

**MEETING CALLED TO ORDER** - 9:32 a.m.

**MINUTES** – S. Fitzgerald motions to approve the minutes of 11/13/2015, seconded by M. Dorman. No discussion. None opposed. D. Garlington and E. Sheltry abstained. Motion Passed.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**- None

### **ACTION ITEMS:**

1. Chief Jones explains that she is unable to collect the data due to snow as well as a glitch in one radar unit. S. Fitzgerald requests that Chief Jones and G. Jones review the collected data to look into better ways to graph it using the GIS system.

G. Jones also mentions Action Item #7, concerning the discrepancy of the time frame in which traffic counts were collected on Palmer, Sweethill and Pollard roads. Mentions his conversation with Rockingham Planning Commission who provided him the count reports for the past couple years and suggests disregarding the report previously distributed due to the inaccuracy in the time frame. G. Jones will provide the Committee with copies of the reports.

2. J. Sherman states that he's not received the final RSMS report and requests a final copy from S. Fitzgerald. Explains that the overall rating was not the rate placed on the final document. D. Garlington explains that the last report presented was with the work done. S. Fitzgerald mentions that they need to show the work prior and then the changes based on the work. J. Sherman speaks about the presentation to the Board of Selectmen and how the rates posted were misleading. S. Fitzgerald confirms he will set up a meeting with Tony over the next couple of weeks and get a report back to the committee that satisfies this concern.

S. Fitzgerald speaks about the width of the Town roads and the need to be more strategic as many roads are extremely wide. Chief McArdle explains that back in 80s the Town specifically asked for some roads to be wider in order to give space for pedestrians. L. Withee asks what the alternatives would be for pedestrians if the roads are narrowed. S. Fitzgerald explains that he's currently working with NH DOT to try to tighten up the roadway on Main Street and speaks about options such as bump-outs, green-scapes that signal pedestrian safety. J. Sherman speaks about his concern with the RSMS and the new overall rating for the roads which was higher than before.

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Explains that one slide on it speaks about getting to a new rating and how to get to it. However, the starting point used was the old rating not the new rating. Explains that it gives a misleading representation of what it will cost to improve the rating. J. Sherman explains that if this can be corrected, this action item will be closed.

G. Jones speaks about the wider roads which would allow the Town to put in sidewalks in place of these pedestrian ways. S. Fitzgerald questions the standard road width and how many roads exceed it. D. Garlington confirms it's 24' wide with a 5' shoulder on each side and that at least ¼ of the roads exceed this. S. Fitzgerald speaks about looking into the costs in paving these additional feet of roadway and how else the Town could spend the money through either designing sidewalks or pedestrian safety improvements. D. Garlington mentions the issue of infrastructure, which need to be incorporated when narrowing roadways such as drainage, catch basins, and driveways since you are redesigning the profile of the road. States that the costs can exceed the costs of the excessive pavement.

J. Sherman requests a list of the roads that are wider than 24' as well as how many miles each road is that exceeds 24' and then continue the conversation. Chief Jones questions if the Planning Board, when reviewing new residential developments, are looking into sidewalks. M. Dorman confirms they are. J. Sherman requests clarification as to whether or not it's an ordinance or law that new constructed roadways will be 24'. M. Dorman explains that they have a road profile showing the widths of the pavement and also explains that the right-of-way will always be 50' unless the Town changes it. J. Sherman questions if there is a new development, does the Town enforce the 24' width. M. Dorman explains that if it's a subdivision, it is discussed by the Planning Board who then makes the final decision on the width. Chief McArdle verifies that the road can't go less than 22'. J. Sherman questions sending a memo to the Planning Board that new road developments be limited to 24'. G. Jones explains that it is a requirement. M. Dorman explains it is 24' with an absolute minimum of 22'. R. Latham mentions that the 50' right-of-way is done for other reasons such as placing storm drains, water and sewage. D. Garlington discusses the numerous different road profiles in Town. J. Sherman questions that if there is a new development, are the roads paved 24' wide and also questions why there are so many different profiles. M. Dorman explains that currently there is only 1 profile but that over the past 30 years there have been several different profiles. J. Sherman questions what the mph is on new roads. M. Dorman explains the decision is made by the Board of Selectmen, under the recommendation of the Committee.

3. S. Fitzgerald explains that he's looking to schedule a meeting with NH DOT soon and should have a date within the next week. A letter dated 12/2/2015 from NH DOT is distributed, which is a follow-up letter from the 11/17/2015 meeting.
4. S. Fitzgerald briefs the Committee on a pre-construction meeting he had and expects to have a meeting with the Board of Selectmen soon. Explains that the project is coming together and expects a Public Hearing soon.
5. Chief Jones distributes the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter traffic statistics.
6. Chief Jones explains that she's still waiting on whether or not the Town will receive grant funding for radar units and suggests holding off on this action item until they know if funding was awarded.
7. Chief Jones will keep this Action Item open until the trial period expires. D. Garlington mentions the number of no-thru trucking violators on Hale Spring.
8. Previously discussed with Action Item #1.

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9. Chief Jones mentions the only email she has received was from J. Sherman and comments about R. Latham's ideas presented to her.

R. Latham speaks about his recent study at Border Ave and distributes his proposal. Speaks about the heavy congestion occurring at the lights at Haseltine and how this congestion can deter trucks from staying on Rte 125. Further explains his proposal to keep Border Ave open as closing it would cause more traffic entering/exiting from side roads along Main Street as well as restrict the entrance to the restaurant on Border Avenue. Suggests placing a couple signal lights at East/West Pine Streets and again at the intersection of Elm/Main Streets so vehicles are forced to reduce their speed.

K. Jones questions posting a "Do Not Block Intersection" at Haseltine Ave and explains the amount of congestion she observes, which is mostly caused by the vehicles blocking the intersection. L. Withee suggests changing the lanes on Haseltine Ave for left lane/left turn only and right lane for right turn or proceeding straight.

Chief Jones speaks about J. Sherman's email and goes over the list of ideas mentioned suggesting that the Town go over these with NH DOT at their upcoming meeting. J. Sherman asks that this list be distributed to the Committee so it can be discussed at the next meeting.

J. Sherman comments about jay brakes. D. Garlington explains that jay brakes cannot be regulated on Main Street because it's a state road. G. Jones mentions how if the town had a noise ordinance you could possibly include jay brakes in it but also explains how it could be a safety issue and unenforceable. Will add to the Action Item list – G. Jones review options for possible jay brake ordinance. Chief Jones will reach out to the NH Chiefs of Police as to whether other city/towns have roads posted for no jay braking. G. Jones will also reach out to NH DOT for their opinion.

J. Sherman comments about holding off on no-thru trucking. D. Garlington suggests waiting until spring due to the difficulty in moving street signs during the winter. This matter will be discussed at the next meeting in March.

D. Garlington speaks about R. Latham's proposal and suggests holding off until the widening project is completed on Rte 125. Believes that when the widening project is completed, most trucks will want to use Rte 125 instead of Main Street. Would like to compare R. Latham's counts to counts when the construction is occurring. R. Latham mentions the minimal costs involved in his proposal. G. Jones indicates that he can have traffic counts completed by Rockingham Planning Commission and will work on doing so. Will add to the Action Item list – G. Jones schedule traffic counts on Rte 125 before Border Avenue.

*Lisa Withee excused at 10:40 am*

Chief McArdle questions what the actual problem is that they are trying to solve as he believes trucks are not an issue on Main Street. J. Sherman agrees and suggests that the Committee get direction from the Board of Selectmen on what they are trying to accomplish. J. Sherman will speak with the Board of Selectmen to provide them with a direction to move forward with. Chief McArdle mentions that no laws are being violated by the trucks traveling on Main Street. R. Latham comments that the trucks he's observed entering on Main Street needed to travel on it. Chief Jones agrees with D. Garlington to wait until the project on Rte 125 is completed.

**NEW BUSINESS – None**

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## **OLD BUSINESS –**

J. Sherman questions if the list of all roads and their speed limits was finalized. D. Garlington states that he gave the list to G. Hamel. J. Sherman suggests putting it in the Town Report and was looking for a general consensus. Overall consensus was favorable and J. Sherman will pursue this matter.

## **OTHER BUSINESS –**

G. Jones mentions that the traffic counts on Rte 125 before Border Ave will not be conducted until after the winter to avoid the tubes interfering with any plow trucks.

## **OTHER BUSINESS –**

G. Jones mentions that Hoyle & Tanner are currently performing scoping work on the Westville Road Bridge as the Town is looking into the possibility of realigning it. Mentions the meeting to be held on January 25<sup>th</sup> with the abutters to get any concerns they might have prior to the Town meeting with state officials. Chief McArdle asks if there are any preliminary sketches. G. Jones confirms there are. J. Sherman states that the bridge has not been red listed but that the Town decided to get a design for it to potentially have it ready to go. Explains that it appears 2 abutters are using town roads as their driveways. He will provide this information to G. Jones.

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

Not discussed.

## **OLD BUSINESS – Update on status of a public hearing regarding speed limits on classified roads.**

Not discussed.

## **OLD BUSINESS – Update on outcome of 11/17/15 meeting with planner from NH DOT regarding the options/recommendations for changes to Main Street, including Border Ave, and changes to Rte 125.**

Previously discussed during Action Item review.

## **OLD BUSINESS – Discuss whether or not to close the Border Ave slip lane.**

Previously discussed during Action Item review.

**ADJOURNMENT-** Motion to adjourn by D. Garlington, seconded by M. Dorman. None opposed – all in favor. Meeting adjourned at 10:53 a.m.

## **NEXT MEETING DATE – TBD**

Respectfully submitted,  
Sarah Gibbs, Recording Secretary