

# (APPROVED)



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

## PLAISTOW HIGHWAY SAFETY COMMITTEE MINUTES

**MEETING DATE** – Thursday, July 14, 2016

**PRESENT** – Police Chief Kathleen Jones, *Chairman*; Fire Chief John McArdle, *Vice-Chairman*; Sean Fitzgerald, *Town Manager*; John Sherman, *Selectman Representative*; Michael Dorman, *Building Inspector*; Greg Jones, *Town Planner*; and Dan Garlington, *Highway Department Supervisor*; Ernie Sheltry, *Citizen's Representative*; Arthur Wiggin, *Citizen's Representative*; and Michelle Auger, *Pollard School Principal*

**EXCUSED** – Lisa Withee, *Citizen's Representative*

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

**MEETING CALLED TO ORDER** - 9:30 a.m.

**MINUTES** – J. Sherman motions to approve the minutes of 05/13/2016. Motion seconded by G. Jones. No discussion. None opposed. A. Wiggin, E. Sheltry, M. Auger, and M. Dorman abstained. Motion Passed.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**- None

**NEW BUSINESS** – Traffic and speed on Walton Road.

Walton Road residents in attendance for discussion: Debra Darling Pam Smith  
Sheila Clark Tammy Reqazzini Julie Healy (Via Teleconference) Mary Ellen Pelletier

Chief Jones briefs everyone of her recent conversation with Julie Healy and her plan to meet with the residents on Walton Road in the next few weeks to discuss their concerns.

J. Healy speaks about her discussion with the Board of Selectmen about her concerns on Walton Road to include its use as a cut-thru to avoid lights on Route 125. Mentions how the speed and volume of traffic has increased significantly and her concern for the safety of all the children living on Walton Road. She is looking to the Town for options to alleviate these issues and suggests possibly horseshoe the road.

Chief Jones mentions the increase of directed patrols to Walton Road. J. Healy comments that the worse times for the traffic are from 6am-9am and from 3pm-7pm. S. Fitzgerald suggests coming up with a temporary solution today while working to resolve this problem. D. Darling mentions that cones have been placed out in the past which don't work and distributes to the Committee letters from other residents on Walton Road expressing their concerns.

D. Garlington suggests inviting the residents on Shady Lane to the meeting since changes on Walton Road could affect them. Chief Jones agrees and will invite them.

S. Clark explains that about 15 years ago this issue went before the Planning Board and discussions were held about placing jersey barricades at the end of the road. However, back then police and fire

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didn't support it and nearby residents had concerns about it. S. Clark mentions that she lives at the beginning of Walton Road where cars start to speed and how often it occurs. Comments how she appreciates the police presence on Walton Road. Continues to speak about how some residents are parking on the road to try to slow the cars down.

Chief Jones comments on the changes to Route 125 which most likely pushed the traffic onto Walton Road. S. Clark explains that one concern is to make sure police and fire have access for emergencies on Walton Road.

J. Sherman questions who is most likely speeding on Walton Road. S. Clark explains that there is no specific age group. J. Sherman doesn't believe it's students from Timberlane since it comes out on Route 125 going into Kingston. S. Clark mentions how it appears to be used as a drag way more than a cut-thru. J. Sherman mentions that anyone trying to take a short-cut using a cut-thru is most likely speeding.

S. Fitzgerald believes drivers are avoiding the Route 121A intersection. S. Clark mentions that 3 new sets of traffic lights have been installed over the past few years and isn't certain which one they are avoiding. J. Healy explains that most are traveling from Route 125 at Sawyers towards Route 121A to avoid the light at Sanborn Candies. They will either go from Walton Road north to Hampstead or straight across to Atkinson. Chief McArdle believes most are probably cutting thru going towards Atkinson.

M. Pelletier mentions her concerns as a resident on Walton Road and supports cutting traffic off from Route 125. Chief McArdle states his support for a temporary barricade and explains that 99% of the routes traveled by the fire department would be from Main Street.

S. Fitzgerald questions if traffic counts have been done on Walton Road and speaks about his concern with blocking traffic from Walton Road causing problems on Shady Lane.

D. Garlington suggests placing under the advance sign on Route 125 for Walton Road, "Closed" to give notice before entering Walton Road and placing jersey barriers at the island from Route 125. M. Auger questions if this would affect school buses. D. Darling indicates it would not affect their routes.

Chief Jones states her support to closing off the road and suggests bringing a recommendation to the Board of Selectmen for a temporary closure at Route 125. However, would first like to meet with the residents including those on Shady Lane and in the condo complex to address any concerns from the residents. D. Garlington mentions that before any permanent changes are made discussions will have to include the highway department.

S. Fitzgerald requests G. Jones complete a traffic count on Walton Road. J. Sherman mentions that the last time this went before the Board of Selectmen it was not supported by police and fire and that the Board of Selectmen will want a recommendation from the Committee.

G. Jones confirms the type of traffic counts they are looking for. J. Sherman suggests traffic volume and S. Fitzgerald indicates he'd like whatever can be collected.

Chief Jones informs the Committee that she'll put a letter out to the residents inviting them to a meeting to discuss Walton Road and work with J. Healy to get a date and time for the majority of residents wishing to attend.

**NEW BUSINESS** – Truck traffic and speeding on Old County Road.

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Chief McArdle speaks about a resident's concern with trucks using Old County Road as a cut-thru as well as the deterioration of the road at Kingston Road. Believes any conversations being held with the owners of the truck companies are not working and suggests fining the drivers directly for the violations.

S. Fitzgerald speaks about his conversations about this with Chief Jones and the added directed patrols on Old County Road. Chief McArdle agrees that enforcement works but only for the time they are out on Old County Road. Chief Jones states that there have been 122 directed patrols and 83 traffic stops on Old County Road since May 1<sup>st</sup>. Chief Jones suggests posting no-thru trucking before Old County Road to give advance notice. D. Garlington explains how the Town can't post it on the road before Old County Road. M. Dorman states it would have to be posted on Town property. D. Garlington mentions asking the State to place it on the road's sign but believes they would say no.

S. Fitzgerald speaks about enforcement, infrastructure, and education as the 3 things that will help. Suggests meeting with the truck companies to explain the road is no-thru trucking.

Chief Jones mentions her conversation with the resident and explains that some of the trucks are from out of Town going to Pro Bark or Atlas and their GPS tells them to take Old County Road. However, once they see the sign for no-thru trucking it is too dangerous for them to try to turn around. Chief Jones states that most offenders are not local and are traveling using their GPS.

D. Garlington suggests making a small sign for no-thru trucking and placing it on the post above the street sign for Old County Road. Chief Jones mentions that there is a way to notify GPS of the no-thru trucking and will get this information to the Committee.

D. Garlington comments on the resident's concern of the road deteriorating by the intersection and explains it's the cars stopping at the end that is pushing the pavement.

Chief Jones questions if there are any objections to posting the no-thru trucking sign on the post above the street sign, as suggested by D. Garlington. No objections from the Committee.

## **OLD BUSINESS – Safe Routes to School design discussion and updates with Hoyle & Tanner.**

Steve from Hoyle & Tanner is present to discuss the design drafted by Hoyle & Tanner. Steve speaks about the studies completed and the project goals of crosswalks, including one on Elm Street. He also mentions other issues of concern such as wide shoulders for parking that hide pedestrians, speed, slip lane closure, sidewalk and curbing improvements, and intersection re-alignment at Elm/Main Streets.

Steve speaks about the first public meeting held on May 2<sup>nd</sup> which gave the residents an opportunity to express their concerns which included sight distance coming onto Elm Street, narrowing the shoulders as a concern of the fire department, and reducing speed. States that everyone was on board with the slip lane closure at the meeting. However, there were concerns about the visibility of the crosswalks. He continues speaking about the turning radius at the Elm/Main Street intersection. J. Sherman questions if Chief McArdle is comfortable with the radius at Main/Elm Streets. S. Fitzgerald speaks about the radius standards and if they are adequate for fire apparatus. Steve mentions that there shouldn't be an issue as the radius hasn't changed.

J. Sherman mentions that he'd like Hoyle & Tanner to look into the costs associated with installing sidewalks on Elm Street all the way to Stanwood Avenue.

Steve speaks about the costs for landscaping. J. Sherman briefly mentions the interest some residents have in volunteering to do the landscaping and suggests the landscaping be only a contingency.

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M. Dorman questions if the sidewalk at Elm/Main Street should be moved into the property line to avoid making it look like a part of someone's front yard. Steve explains that the driveway on Elm Street needs to avoid backing out onto the road so they provided room for them to turn around.

J. Sherman mentions the plan for Stanwood Ave's extension across Elm Street and how the extension will have sidewalks. He'd like to take into consideration the possibility of including sidewalks up to Stanwood Ave in the plan.

D. Garlington mentions the parking issues on Elm Street at the Courthouse and his concerns if sidewalks were placed on both sides of the road. M. Dorman explains that the sidewalks should be on the cemetery side of the road. D. Garlington raises the concern of the sloping issues on that side of the road for sidewalks. Chief Jones mentions that a sidewalk already exists up to the Courthouse.

J. Sherman questions if speed bumps are an option. Steve explains that NH DOT will not allow speed bumps on their roads.

S. Fitzgerald discusses possibly sculpting the road in. Steve speaks about some concerns if the road was sculpted in including parking and emergency vehicles. Chief McArdle speaks about his concerns for the fire trucks responding to calls if this was done.

D. Garlington explains how it's the shoulders of the road that are too wide and not the actual road. Mentions that NH DOT only paves the actual road and not the shoulders. Steve comments that NH DOT is only concerned about the road and not the shoulders. However, mentions the costs the Town would incur in order to modify the drainage in the shoulders. J. Sherman mentions his conversation with Kevin at NH DOT during the last public meeting over the high costs involved in changing any drainage.

S. Fitzgerald speaks about the high costs involved in maintaining the wide width of the road and how the shoulder should be reduced, which will also be more esthetic.

Chief McArdle again explains his concern for the fire trucks should the shoulders on Main Street be reduced. D. Garlington further speaks about making sure the cars traveling are able to move to the side of the road for the emergency vehicles coming through along with providing space for cars parked along the side of the road.

D. Garlington questions if there is an additional grant the Town has applied for and if so, what it covers. G. Jones indicates there is a grant which if approved would be for up to the rail road tracks.

S. Fitzgerald continues to discuss narrowing down the shoulder on Main Street and how it would make it safer for pedestrians. Would like to know what the cost savings would be should it be narrowed. D. Garlington discusses the expenses of repaving the shoulder and bringing it back down to reclaim. Steve mentions that paving Main Street is not part of the project.

Chief Jones begins suggests providing some direction to Hoyle & Tanner. D. Garlington questions how much the design presented addresses the concerns of the residents. Steve explains how it does address most of the concerns brought forward at the public meeting. Also, mentions that the only concerns of NH DOT is the road and not crosswalks or sidewalks.

J. Sherman would like to know how the funding for the project looks under the grant. Steve explains that the presentation before the Committee is fully supported with grant funding. G. Jones mentions that if the Town adds items such as moving drainage, it will increase the costs. M. Dorman questions if the Town is going to move the sidewalk in on Elm Street. J. Sherman agrees to this.

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S. Fitzgerald questions why the Town is funding a turn-around for the property on Elm Street. Steve explains that it's the suggestion of Hoyle & Tanner. S. Fitzgerald suggests looking for other options. M. Dorman suggests providing the property with a curb cut.

J. Sherman states that the Town has made no commitments to plowing/clearing any sidewalks.

Chief McArdle questions what the benefits are to the Town if it narrows down only a small piece of the Main Street corridor and would like to know if there is any data that supports it is currently unsafe for pedestrians. S. Fitzgerald speaks about the area being unsafe and how narrowing it down would create a safe space.

Chief Jones questions putting in a 3-way stop. S. Fitzgerald indicates that this option has been looked at but narrowing down will slow traffic and not start/stop traffic. Believes it's worth spending the money on the drainage to reduce the shoulders. Chief Jones states that if the Town narrows down the shoulders than the police and fire will need to be involved throughout the design process. Steve explains that if they decided to narrow down the road it would be 34' of pavement across.

S. Fitzgerald speaks about the current plan presented which does allow for the project to move forward to get approval from NH DOT.

Chief Jones questions how school buses at Pollard School would be affected if the road was brought in. Chief McArdle explains how the parents line up on both sides of Main Street to pick up/drop off their children, which is already an issue. Comments that if it was narrowed down with the parents lined up this way to pick up their children twice a day, it would limit even more room for fire apparatus traveling on Main Street.

Chief McArdle speaks about whether or not there was a final outcome was on the survey provided to the parents a couple years ago as to whether or not they'd allow their children to walk to school if the improvements were made. S. Fitzgerald indicates how he'd have to check the numbers but mentions that the parents were overwhelmingly in support of the project.

S. Fitzgerald asks for a consensus on the presentation today. G. Jones adds it would be with the one change at Elm Street. Chief McArdle expresses his concern and the need to include public safety officials in the process as they haven't been engaged so far. S. Fitzgerald asks Steve to attend an upcoming fire department meeting.

Chief Jones confirms the Committee is good moving forward with the plan presented with one change at Elm Street. Chief Jones also confirms that Hoyle & Tanner will set up a meeting with the fire department to discuss their concerns on narrowing in the road.

## **OTHER BUSINESS –**

Chief McArdle would like to place on the next meeting's Agenda a discussion about changing the yield sign on Old Road at Jesse George to a stop sign.

**ACTION ITEMS** – Postponed until next meeting.

**ADJOURNMENT-** Motion to adjourn by D. Garlington, seconded by S. Fitzgerald. None opposed – all in favor. Meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

## **NEXT MEETING DATE – TBD**

Respectfully submitted,  
Sarah Gibbs, Recording Secretary