

TRAFFIC SAFETY COMMITTEE (TSC)

DECEMBER 8, 2014

MEETING MINUTES

Attendees: Dave Wheeler (Chairman)
Gil Archambault
Bill Parker
Tina Philbrick
Rick Riendeau, DPW Director
Chief Mike Viola, Police Chief
Gary Daniels, BOS representative

Chairman Wheeler opened the meeting at 4:03 p.m. and welcomed new member Tina Philbrick. Since the last meeting of the Traffic Safety Committee (TSC), the Board of Selectmen decided that the Police Chief and DPW Director would be advisory-only to the TSC.

Gil Archambault moved to approve the minutes of September 29, 2014. Gary Daniels seconded. All were in favor.

Residents in attendance included Duane Gagnon who is here for the discussion on George/Ford Streets; Muriel Descoteaux is here for the discussion regarding Cahill Place and a crosswalk, and Ms. Tessier was in attendance for the discussion on Wallingford Road.

1. Wallingford Road issues: Ms. Tessier from Wallingford Road indicated the police have spent time monitoring the situation. Chief Viola said the police summary showed that: 64 vehicles traveled 35 mph or less, 22 vehicles travelled 32-35 mph and 76 travelled at the posted speed limit. Five vehicles did not stop at the intersection in question; there was one suspicious vehicle early in the morning which ended up being a newspaper delivery person. The recommendations for speed limit is to have two signs and to review the T-intersection, and possibly place a stop sign at Settlement Lane since there is almost a blind spot in that area.
Chief Viola said the recommendation for a stop sign is not at the area of the intersection, it is in an area where there is no clear understanding of who has the right of way. Mr. Daniels asked if the recommended stop sign is for Wildflower Way/Wallingford Road? Chief Viola said that is the intersection where they were asking for a stop sign, but he is recommending it in a different place. Mr. Riendeau said they can look a different type of stop sign. Ms. Tessier said her house is right next to the intersection where the stop sign was requested and she sees people driving through that intersection all the time. Mr. Riendeau said a different type of stop sign is available and he will look into that, but Milford has a lot of signs in town, the sign may not deter them running through. Ms. Tessier said she deserves that the neighborhood will be kept safe, the school buses use the road as well. Gil Archambault suggested maybe looking at yellow lines

being painted on the road. Mr. Riendeau noted that only about half the required yellow lines are painted in Milford because of budget constraints.

Chief Viola believes the bus from Amherst goes up there to turn around; they could be contacted. Ms. Tessier asked where this situation stands. Ms. Tessier said the different stop sign might get people's attention. Gary Daniels said they might still go through the sign even if it is different; 99% of people up there are people that live in the neighborhood. Ms. Tessier asked if the TSC visited the neighborhood, and if so, could they consider limiting travel to those that live on the road? Chief Viola said safety is important and we want to take care of this; no through streets are hard because you have to catch the person doing it. Ms. Tessier said that in nice weather there are kids out on bikes and we need to keep them safe. We should give a different stop sign a try. Mr. Riendeau said we need to check some traffic volumes and the traffic flow. Mr. Daniels does not see any more there than in other areas with a concentration of homes. It comes down to enforcement. Ms. Tessier's big concern is the "cut through" traffic in the morning and evening; if we can make it a priority in the spring to see what the volume is, that would be good. Most of this is patrol by the police which usually will help, said Mr. Daniels. Ms. Tessier said this is a great neighborhood but she does not want to always have to be there when her kids are outside. Chief Viola said he will continue the patrols and go from there. Ms. Tessier asked why there is a stop sign where it is, it does not make any sense, she is concerned about the four way intersection.

Chief Viola said the police will continue to have a presence up there and he and Mr. Riendeau will keep an eye on the neighborhood, in the spring the TSC will re-visit.

2. Request for crosswalk on Nashua Street at Cahill Place. Bill Parker presented pictures of the area in question; noting there are six crosswalks in that area between Town Hall and the Urgent Care facility, but people cannot get to the crosswalks as there are not sidewalks on the whole route. Ms. Descoteaux volunteers at the Urgent Care facility and walks to get there so she has to cross the street without a crosswalk. Bill Parker spoke about putting a cross walk between the other two roads across the street. Ms. Descoteaux spoke about the crosswalks and said most people (driving) do not want to stop for people unless they are in a crosswalk. Mr. Riendeau indicated that DPW cannot just paint a crosswalk on the street, we also need to look at the sidewalk and make it handicap accessible if there is a crosswalk. Gary Daniels said there might be one there already (curb cut). Mr. Riendeau responded that we have to look at it, we cannot just paint it on, we have to follow the standard. Ms. Descoteaux said they have a sidewalk to nowhere on the same side of Cahill, and the residents would appreciate this being considered. Ms. Descoteaux is impressed that the sidewalks do get shoveled and plowed. Mr. Daniels suggested the sidewalk at Charles Street is just a painted line, why can't we just put a crosswalk there? Mr. Riendeau might have to step it back a little bit; we have to take a look at it. Mr. Daniels was just suggesting rather than doing the sidewalk alteration it might be easier to do this. With crosswalks, pedestrians will be just as close to the vehicles. Ms. Descoteaux said we realize that, but it will be more likely for drivers to let us cross. In winter, Gil Archambault said

there is ice and snow, and it is difficult to make this type of change. Ms. Descoteaux likes that she can walk down to the oval from Cahill Place. Mr. Riendeau noted that with expected construction coming up, they expect to have a crosswalk at Linden Street; Mr. Riendeau would need to look to come up with plan before anything gets done and present what that recommendation is.

Gil Archambault moved to table. Gary Daniels seconded. All were in favor.

3. Request for Stop Sign at King and George Street. Duane and Michelle Gagnon are concerned about the cars that do not stop at the intersection, they just roll around the corner, it is a "T" intersection, if there are cars in the street (because of the business right at the intersection), there is no room to pass. The Gagnon's feel there should be a stop sign at the intersection. Michele Gagnon said whenever she comes home at night, she has to drive on the wrong side of the street to get by; some pictures were provided. The complaint is that the cars do not stop at the intersection. Gary Daniels said it sounds like the problem is more of the cars being parked in the road than of people not stopping. Ms. Gagnon said that two cars cannot pass at the same time because of the width. Duane Gagnon said it is very heavily traveled at certain times of day. Ms. Gagnon sees all the people that drive and do not stop at that intersection and we see that it makes sense to put a stop sign there because we see near misses. When you see it day after day, it is surprising that there have not been more accidents. Gary Daniels said that intersection has been a problem since he attended Milford High School. Gil Archambault summarized that with more cars parked on the road, the speed and the narrow width of the road, there are several things that can be done. Mr. Riendeau said it has changed over the years, now there are a lot of people that drive their kids to school and drop them off at the chain. The car business on the corner has also added to that intersection. Dave Wheeler suggested looking at it during school hours. Mr. Riendeau agreed, stating there might be multiple things that have added to the intersection. Dave Wheeler stated that we should look at sight distance, width of the road and give some thought to if a sign could be posted or if striping might help. Mr. Riendeau said the road is not wide enough to stripe. Gary Daniels asked if there are any other signs on the road? Mr. Gagnon responded that there is a "no loitering" sign at the chain.

Gil Archambault moved to table to late January. Gary Daniels seconded. All were in favor. The police will continue to monitor the area.

4. Warrant Article request to open the intersection at Jones Road. Gary Daniels asked if the committee would be in support of re-opening the Jones Road entrance toward Market Basket only to East bound traffic; this was closed by town vote and he is asking if the TSC feels it might be a good idea since the Route 101 work to be done in 2015 might be a good time for it to be re-opened. Right now there is a truck parked there but we might be able to eliminate some congestion by allowing East bound traffic to go right into the Market Basket and medical facility parking areas from that entrance; he does not want it to be used as a short cut. Chief Viola

mentioned if it gets opened up, it might only be for right hand turns into the two facilities. Gary Daniels said that people who live in the Whitten Road area could use Jones Road to get to their homes easier. Bill Parker mentioned it might be worth having a traffic study done. A warrant article would give authority to the Board of Selectmen to negotiate that, the railroad must also be involved.

Captain Craig Frye indicated people will use it as a cut through, that road behind Market Basket is not in great condition either. That is his concern, people using it to get off of Route 101 instead of going through the lights. Captain Frye said accidents occur mostly at the Phelan road intersection. It would be a good idea if it was not so congested. That is why the State is widening the road / center lane on route 101. Captain Frye noted people are trying to get somewhere else, it is a great idea but he knows it would be used as a cut through.

Dave Wheeler said we should make a decision now about this for funding reasons. If we open it up, someone is paying for it. Gary Daniels wants to start now so that we can talk to the railroad. Tina Philbrick indicated the suggestion was to have a study done. Bill Parker agreed, saying because of the impact on Phelan Road. Ms. Philbrick asked if that would include the cost to maintain it? Bill Parker responded that it might reduce some of the problems. Gary Daniels asked if NRPC might get involved in something like this? Bill Parker said he could ask them about it. Dave Wheeler said we should at least look at this. Another issue to consider is the other businesses down there, Chief Viola does not want to see that those businesses are shut off at the end; it should only be one way. It is a good idea to look at it, there is a lot of traffic there trying to make a turn. Gary Daniels said there would need to be a turning lane for turning right.

Gil Archambault said the railroad is a big component of this; it takes a lot of time to get anything through the railroad. Rick Riendeau understands the concept, but it should be looked at. Gary Daniels said we will have to have a warrant article by mid-January. Gary Daniels is looking for a recommendation to write up a warrant article that would authorize negotiation, or to look at it to see if there is a need. Dave Wheeler said it needs to be more than a study, the widening is moving down the line.

Gil Archambault moved to recommend putting forward a warrant article to negotiate the re-opening of the Jones Road and Elm Street intersection. Tina Philbrick seconded. All were in favor.

Gary Daniels move to adjourn at 5:20 p.m. Gil Archambault seconded. All were in favor.