

Traffic Safety Advisory Committee
April 25, 2011
Minutes

Present: Bill Ruoff – Chairman
Gil Archambault
Chief Fred Douglas
Richard Tortorelli
Gary Daniels – Board of Selectmen representative

Absent: Bill Parker
Dana MacAllister
David Wheeler

Secretary: Kathryn Parenti, Recording Secretary

1. *Roll Call vote required by the BOS.*

2. *Approval of minutes from January 25, 2011.*

G. Daniels made the motion to approve the minutes.

G. Archambault seconded the motion.

All were in favor of approving the minutes from January 31, 2011; none were opposed.

NEW BUSINESS:

3. *Request for reduction of speed limit on Noons Quarry Road – Citizen Request*

B. Ruoff stated he took it upon himself to bring this to the committee. An email was sent explaining concerns with the speed of the traffic on the road. The request is for the road to be posted as 25 mph even though the town wide speed limit is 30 mph, except where there are signs indicating it is not. He asked if anyone had any comments.

R. Tortorelli asked if there were 25 mph speed limit signs on the road already.

B. Ruoff replied there were not. The resident was stating the people who reside on Noons Quarry Road were driving faster than 25 mph and was concerned with the excessive speed.

R. Tortorelli stated even if the speed limit is 30 mph, people will speed; it's human nature. The police can't patrol all the roads all the time.

G. Daniels read from the email: "...vehicles drive at speeds far in excess of what I believe is the 25 mph limit."

F. Douglas stated they don't have any basis to lower the speed limit. He didn't know of many or any accident rates on the road. If there have been complaints with regard to speed on the road, he hasn't heard of any. If there is a missing speed limit sign, it would be for 30 mph. If there is no sign, the signs posted around town state the town wide speed limit is 30 mph unless otherwise posted. He would suggest they contact the police department if there are certain vehicles or certain times when the speeding occurs.

G. Daniels stated the resident lacks the knowledge there is a town wide speed limit.

B. Ruoff replied he would send a letter, with K. Parenti's assistance, that this issue was discussed, make them aware there is a town wide speed limit and the police department would be glad to speak to them about enforcing the speed limit. He thought they could put up a 30 mph speed limit sign on the road. He would also suggest they go as far as putting up a sign that states there are children at play when they are outside.

F. Douglas noted the town wide speed limit signs were installed to prevent excessive signage.

B. Ruoff stated his goal was to reduce the number of speed limit signs rather than increase them. There has been much vandalism and theft of signs which is expensive to deal with.

G. Daniels stated that would set precedence.

B. Ruoff said he would list in the letter for the applicant to call the police department, inform them of the town wide speed limit is 30 mph and suggest they purchase a "children playing" sign to be placed in their yard when their children are outside playing.

G. Daniels suggested lastly, it should be noted during this discussion, the Chief pointed out there have been no accidents and as a committee, it has been decided there is no need to consider any speed limit less than the town wide speed limit. All this is just to make them aware of what was determined at this meeting.

OLD BUSINESS:

4. Update on complaint regarding the parking of trucks on Bridge Street – Tabled from 1/31/11

F. Douglas stated the police department has ticketed several trucks for parking on the sidewalk.

B. Ruoff asked if the situation has improved.

F. Douglas stated they are enforcing the law but people are breaking the law, whether there are signs or not. If anyone calls to check on this issue, they are enforcing it.

G. Archambault stated he didn't think the trucks should be parking on the sidewalk at all.

B. Ruoff replied the police are ticketing them if they do, which was discussed at the last meeting.

G. Daniels thought if he was in the place of the drivers, he would be courteous for other drivers along Bridge Street and park as far to the left as possible; otherwise they would block the road.

F. Douglas stated if they park by the island, it would eliminate the problem.

G. Archambault asked if the Board of Selectmen needed an answer.

G. Daniels replied it hasn't been on the agenda for a while.

F. Douglas stated the parking space by the island was no longer labeled "loading zone".

B. Ruoff agreed; there were no signs there but drivers know it is a loading zone. It is the same for the parking space on Middle Street. The lettering in the spaces is blacked out.

G. Daniels asked if drivers know about parking on the Oval. He wondered if the same people are being ticketed and assumed that most vendors have been ticketed at this point.

F. Douglas stated everyone who parks illegally gets ticketed.

B. Ruoff stated it is not emergency parking. If the vendors are making deliveries, they can stop, drop the tailgate, unload and move on within a reasonable amount of time.

F. Douglas state the law specifies momentarily parking to pick up or off-load goods.

5. Amherst Street speed concerns – (Tabled from 1/31/11)

F. Douglas stated the electronic sign has been placed in front of the Old Red Eye's Tavern, 90 Amherst Street and it's been there for approximately one and a half weeks.

He will leave it there for a few more weeks and might put it on Noons Quarry at that time.

B. Ruoff stated the sign effectively slowed down traffic on Nashua Street when it was placed in front of Shepard Park. This item was for updating the Committee and won't be on the next agenda.

6. *Oval Crosswalk Safety Concerns – Tabled from 1/31/11*

B. Ruoff stated there was a memo from B. Parker with updates about this, South Street improvements, the Oval Project, and the Route 13S/Emerson and Armory Road intersection. The memo lists target dates for engineering and construction.

G. Daniels stated there was nothing new in the memo, just catching everyone up on the information that is available.

B. Ruoff asked if there were any questions on the memo.

G. Daniels suggested this item be taken off the agenda as crosswalk safety will be addressed during the Oval improvements.

G. Archambault seconded the motion.

OTHER BUSINESS:

7. *Sidewalk crossing at Post Office parking lot*

G. Archambault stated the vice chairman of the zoning board had asked him if there was anything that would make this area safer. He had noticed when drivers stop at the stop sign, they don't look both ways when pulling out of the lot. He wondered if a crosswalk could be painted across to extend the sidewalk.

G. Daniels asked if this would be at the exit of the parking lot.

G. Archambault stated the drivers are only looking left when making a right turn and not looking to the right for pedestrians.

G. Daniels stated he would not go along with the expense; it is another case of the rules of the road. When a driver is stopped at a stop sign, they should look both right and left before proceeding. He can't see the sense in giving this to Public Works.

B. Ruoff replied painting lines would not do anything. He did say the situation has gotten better since the church moved out of the building next to the post office as there is less traffic in the area.

G. Daniels stated there were no lines designating the sidewalk in front of the driveway at the Masonic Hall.

B. Ruoff felt, generally speaking, many drivers leaving those areas are wary of pedestrians.

G. Archambault requested two (2) copies of the minutes so he could give one (1) to the vice chair. He felt it was good to keep people informed and let them know their concerns have been addressed.

8. *State of New Hampshire Highway Safety Agency Project Grant*

F. Douglas stated there is a proposal that runs from May 1, 2011 to September 15, 2011 for the police department and other police departments along the Route 101 corridor. The grant is for extra patrols to decrease speed along the road. There will be twenty two (22) patrols of four (4) hours each totaling seventy seven (77) man hours. The cost of the project is \$7124.70 and is a federal highway safety grant. They do this every year and wondered if the Committee felt it was worth it. He needed the chairman of the Committee to sign the application along with the town administrator and the chairman of the BOS.

B. Ruoff said he would sign it if the Committee agreed.

G. Archambault made the motion for B. Ruoff to sign the grant.

D. Tortorelli seconded the motion and all were in favor; F. Douglas abstained from voting.

9. State of the Committee

G. Archambault noted the Committee consists of the Chief of Police, the Directors of Public Works and Community Development along with a former fire chief and a member of the Board of Selectmen. He wondered why they have to submit their findings to the BOS for approval. He wondered why the Committee had no power to act on its own.

B. Ruoff noted the Committee is an advisory committee not governing body.

G. Daniels reiterated it is the Traffic Safety Advisory Committee. It is the same as the facilities and the budget advisory committees. They are advisory to the people, not the town.

G. Archambault noted many issues go on for years due to inactivity by the BOS. He wondered if they could take "Advisory" out of the title.

G. Daniels replied they could not; it is a state statute.

G. Archambault asked if G. Daniels could make any decision without the rest of the BOS.

G. Daniels replied he has a 20% vote.

R. Tortorelli stated the BOS, in the recent past, has been very unstable, with members who have had personal agendas.

F. Douglas stated he understood what he was trying to get across but it has always been like this. The placement of sidewalks is one thing that is up to the BOS. Stop, yield and speed limit signs are dealt with, statutorily, by the BOS, the governing body of the town. The BOS has to enact the ordinances with proper readings with public input and passes it if it feels it is worthy; it has always been that way.

G. Archambault noted it has been smooth recently but in the past has been a struggle.

F. Douglas stated the Committee is a supportive role to the BOS.

B. Ruoff asked if there was any additional business; there was none so he asked for a motion to adjourn.

R. Tortorelli made the motion to adjourn.

G. Daniels seconded; all were in favor. Meeting was adjourned at 4:30 pm.