

**Traffic Safety Advisory Committee**  
**November 29, 2010**  
**Minutes**

Present: Bill Ruoff – Chairman  
Gil Archambault  
Chief Fred Douglas  
Richard Tortorelli  
Bill Parker  
Dave Wheeler  
Dana MacAllister  
Gary Daniels – Board of Selectmen representative

Rodny Richey

Secretary: Kathryn Parenti, Recording Secretary

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

2. *Approval of minutes from November 1, 2010.*

G. Archambault made the motion to approve the minutes.

R. Tortorelli seconded the motion.

All were in favor of approving the minutes from November 1, 2010; none were opposed.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

3. *Ball Hill Road – Resident concerns*

B. Ruoff noted K. Parenti had put together a summary of the concerns that resulted from the November 1, 2010 resident forum. He reread the minutes and noted that several of the concerns were Public Works related. He noted the lining of the road issue had been taken care of and the lines were painted on the road. He also acknowledges some of the sight issues were due to vegetation and would be taken care of over the next couple of months, as the weather allows. He recommended sign changes from yield to stop signs at the intersections of Ball Hill Road and Young Road and Ball Hill and Melendy Road. He also noted there was a drainage issue at the intersection of Young Road and Ball Hill Road as well as some road surface deterioration along the length of Ball Hill Road. He stated he would check the pavement width; if it is only eighteen (18) feet wide, he would look to see if it was possible to widen it to twenty (20) feet. He stated a couple of items were missing from the list of concerns: 1. increased population in the area due to new developments and 2. no parking signs. He noted some of the issues were Public Works concerns and asked if the Committee had any comments on the speed, signage and no parking signs.

R. Richey stated one (1) speed limit sign was added.

B. Ruoff thought more should be added, after a survey of the road was completed to see what was needed to improve signage.

R. Richey replied just north of where Young Road comes into Ball Hill Road would be a good location. He also noted there was once a children playing sign in his yard; the sign is gone but the post is still available for adding a new sign.

R. Tortorelli stated he was not sure a reduction in the speed limit would do any good. He agreed it should be marked as 25 mph as the road is narrow, hilly and curvy. He couldn't see where the placement of no parking signs would be appropriate on a rural road. It would be very hard to enforce them.

R. Richey asked if the police can cite people for parking on the road.

F. Douglas replied they could; they should call the police department if they feel it is a dangerous situation. He felt it would be cost prohibitive to put no parking signs on all the rural roads in town. He did note it was illegal to park on a road near a hill, curve or railroad tracks or to impede traffic. Drivers must employ common sense but if they do not and it becomes a problem, call the police department.

R. Richey replied that would be a real solution and he would put the word out.

R. Tortorelli asked if there was any reason not to change the yield sign on Young Road entering Ball Hill Road to a stop sign.

B. Ruoff replied there was none.

F. Douglas agreed that should be a stop sign.

B. Ruoff stated traveling up Melendy Road from Route 13S to Ball Hill Road there is a stop sign. He felt from Ball Hill Road to Melendy Road should remain a yield sign. Going from Osgood on Melendy Road towards Ball Hill Road should be a stop sign.

R. Tortorelli stated if the sign remained a yield, during winter, drivers would still be able to gain momentum to get up the hill.

B. Ruoff noted there is a common problem of no one stopping at yield signs any more.

B. Parker thought, because of the additional traffic that comes from Annand Drive, coming down Ball Hill Road at Melendy Road should still have a yield sign.

B. Ruoff thought cars should be stopped in both directions so people on Ball Hill Road have the right of way. He thought it was amazing that more people have not gone off the road and into the woods during the winter at that location.

R. Tortorelli stated a portion of Osgood Road is similar; in the winter it remains icy and people have a hard time getting up that section.

R. Richey replied the yield sign at Melendy Road and Ball Hill Road is nice when the road is slick. A stop sign there would be abused by people trying to get up the hill. It could improve safety as people do try to beat the yield; drivers don't give the yield sign the respect they should.

B. Ruoff noted speed was mentioned a lot in the public forum as well.

F. Douglas stated he was not opposed to reducing the speed limit to 25 mph. He thought the yield sign was in place to allow motorists to make it up the hill in inclement weather.

D. MacAllister stated lowering the speed limit to 25 mph would be a good idea as the road is windy but there are still people who will abuse that. Regarding the sign at Ball Hill Road, he didn't know how that affects anything but it is tough to see who's coming down the hill. It would be nice to give them a clear right of way.

B. Ruoff asked if there was any accident history at the intersection of Melendy Road and Ball Hill Road.

F. Douglas stated they don't have any record of near misses or cars off the road but in 2005 there were two (2) accidents, 2006, 2008, 2009 and 2010 there was one (1) accident each year; 2010's accident was the fatality. This does not include "not reportable" accidents in which the damage is less than \$1000. The accident history does not suggest there is a huge problem on the road.

B. Ruoff noted there was a consensus to leave the yield sign up at the intersection of Ball Hill and Melendy Roads and change the yield sign to a stop sign at Young and Ball Hill Roads. They would also change the speed limit to 25 mph.

F. Douglas suggest some sort of traffic advisory sign be installed stating there was a dangerous intersection ahead before the yield sign at the Melendy and Ball Hill Road intersection.

B. Parker recommended it be installed on both Melendy and Ball Hill Roads.

F. Douglas stated the BOS will ask if a traffic study has been done to warrant the reduction in speed limit.

B. Parker thought a traffic study had not been done in that area at this time; he thought there might have been one done for the Badger Hill development, but it may not have taken this area into consideration.

B. Ruoff asked if there was a motion to table the reduction of speed to the next meeting, until B. Parker has a chance to see if any traffic studies had been done.

R. Tortorelli made the motion; F. Douglas seconded the motion; all were in favor.

B. Parker stated he was almost positive there were no studies that addressed the safety issues in this location but common sense and the condition of the road says the speed limit should be reduced.

G. Archambault noted if the speed limit was 25 mph going up Ball Hill Road, it would not be easy to climb the hill at that speed. He noted in the winter, at the Savage Road and Whitten Road intersection, cars slide into the intersection on a regular basis. He did not recommend lowering the speed limit.

B. Parker stated he would check for traffic studies.

F. Douglas read from RSA 265:63 – Alteration to Speed limits; *“I. Whenever local authorities in their respective jurisdictions determine on the basis of an engineering or traffic investigation that the prima facie speed permitted under this chapter is greater or less than is reasonable and safe under the conditions found to exist upon a way or part of a way, the local authority may determine and declare a reasonable and safe prima facie limit thereon which: (a) Decreases the limit at intersections; (b) Increases the limit within an urban district but not to more than 60 miles per hour; (c) Decreases the limit outside an urban district but not to less than 25 miles per hour; or (d) Decreases the limit within any business or urban residence district but not to less than 25 miles per hour. II. Local authorities in their respective jurisdictions shall determine by an engineering study or traffic investigation the proper prima facie speed for all arterial streets and shall declare a reasonable and safe prima facie limit thereon which may be greater or less than the prima facie speed permitted hereunder for an urban district. II-a. Local authorities shall not be required to hire outside consultants to determine the proper prima facie speed limits as provided in paragraphs I and II if the local community has sufficient staff to conduct the required engineering or traffic investigation. III. Any altered limit established as hereinabove authorized shall be effective at all times or during hours of darkness or at other times as may be determined when appropriate signs giving notice thereof are erected upon such street or way. IV. Any alteration of limits on state highways or extensions thereof in a municipality by local authorities shall not be effective until such alteration has been approved by the commissioner of transportation.”*

There has to be a traffic investigation or traffic study done to justify the change. The hiccup in this case is the accident rate. They should look at the volume of traffic when the subdivision went in as the traffic volume down to Armory Road is great. He wondered if anyone knew the number of residents and the number of vehicles in the area. He also wondered what it would cost to get NRPC to do a study.

B. Parker stated he would and asked what they would do with the counts; he stated someone needs to figure out what to do with those counts; what is the safety issue based on those counts.

F. Douglas replied volume is the precursor to safety; the accident rate isn't that high.

B. Ruoff asked if there was a motion to table this issue until the next meeting.

R. Tortorelli made the motion to table the reduction of speed limit on Ball Hill Road until the next meeting; G. Archambault seconded the motion and all were in favor.

B. Ruoff asked if there was a motion to change the yield sign at Ball Hill Road and Young Road to a stop sign.  
F. Douglas stated it was a 90 degree intersection and must be a stop sign.  
B. Ruoff asked for a motion.  
F. Douglas made the motion; G. Archambault seconded and all were in favor.  
G. Archambault asked if they had to go to the BOS to change the sign.  
B. Ruoff replied yes.  
F. Douglas noted the addition of a stop sign must be presented to the BOS and adopted by ordinance.  
There was a discussion over advisory signs and what type they should be: dangerous curve signs with and without the speed limit posted on them, steep grade ahead. It was also noted many of these signs are stolen and what could prevent that from happening.  
B. Ruoff concluded this discussion by noting the highlights such as gathering the information to potentially change the speed limit, changing the yield sign to a stop sign at Young and Ball Hill Roads, and certain items that can be dealt with by DPW.

#### *4. Amherst Street – Request for a reduction of speed limit (From the BOS)*

B. Ruoff noted this issue came as a result of a letter sent by Matthew Willette. He read the letter again and noted there are seven (7) crosswalks on the road, inadequate signage and it is a mixed residential and commercial area. In addition, the roadway topography is not flat. The speed limit is 40 mph from Amherst and changes to 30 mph at the town line. M. Willette recommended reducing the speed limit to 25 mph. He asked if the committee had any comments on any of these issues.

R. Tortorelli felt the 30 mph speed limit is sufficient and should not be reduced in that area. The signage from Amherst to the Milford town line should note a reduced speed ahead.

D. Wheeler noted there was a speed limit sign within one hundred (100) feet of the town line.

B. Ruoff felt this was not an unsafe road and there are other roads with more issues. There are sidewalks on both sides and it is wide. He felt nothing should be done about the road.

A discussion regarding making the motion to not change the speed limit was undertaken but it was thought they should be consistent and look at the accident rates in the area as they did with Ball Hill Road.

B. Parker made the motion to table this until the next meeting in order to gather the accident data.

R. Tortorelli seconded the motion; all were in favor.

#### **OTHER BUSINESS:**

*5. CMAQ (Congestion Mitigation Air Quality Advisory Committee) public hearing on December 20, 2010.*

B. Parker stated he would be in attendance to present the town's application.

D. Wheeler said he would try to attend. He had spoken to the Commissioner to find the money for the intersection, if the application is turned down. He noted CMAQ had made some criteria changes and noted this does need to be pursued. He stated he would try to be in attendance but he is on the Gasset Committee, where the CMAQ recommendations go up one step higher, which should meet after January 5, 2011. He noted the council is busy with the banking commission so this meeting may be delayed.

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

*6. Safety of Union Square crosswalks.*

F. Douglas passed out paperwork concerning the safety of the crosswalks on Union Square. The complainant recommended more or better lighting to eliminate the near-misses that have been occurring on the crosswalks.

R. Tortorelli asked if this was only at night.

F. Douglas replied it was mainly at night but it was an issue at any time.

G. Daniels asked if the crosswalks were painted; they are. He noted Michael Cleveland of the Milford Cabinet had noted there were twenty two (22) crosswalks in and around the Oval. It is difficult for drivers to keep their mind on the road because of all of the people crossing the road.

F. Douglas noted people are not as visible as the green paint on the crosswalk. He wondered if the low sodium lights were to blame; he thought they were installed to reduce the glare and enhance the décor.

G. Daniels stated what people wear affects their visibility as well. Some people just walk out into the crosswalk without regard for traffic.

R. Tortorelli commented that many drivers are on their cell phones while driving through the Oval.

F. Douglas wondered if anyone had addressed the issue of installing solar electronic pedestrian signs.

B. Parker replied the engineering company was not at that point yet in their redesign South Street; the Oval was the next scope of work.

F. Douglas noted the pedestrian crosswalk issue was a very difficult thing to enforce. He noted there was a lot of hesitation to install the electronic crosswalk signs; they aren't wired in and would be self sufficient.

G. Daniels wondered if any yield to pedestrian signs could be painted on the road.

B. Ruoff noted the cones that are installed in the walkways in the summer get run over on a regular basis and each costs between \$300 and \$500. He has seen raised crosswalks, brick and colored crosswalks and roundabouts installed to mitigate pedestrian issues.

G. Daniels noted the electronic crossing signals may interfere with the traffic too much.

B. Parker stated this was a good time to have this discussion as CLD will be looking at the crosswalks in the spring and summer of next year.

G. Archambault noted there was a manual cross walk box at the intersection of West Street and Elm Street but there is also a traffic light.

B. Ruoff thought that was installed years ago for the high school athletes who walked to Keyes Field for athletic programs.

There was some discussion regarding the light at Bales and Jacques Schools. Because the light is a long light, people drive through the red light when there is no pedestrian traffic. Crossing guards complained about that activity on a number of occasions. It was thought that maybe it could be bypassed during school hours but some classes leave the building and walk to the library and have the need for the longer light to allow for all of the children to safely cross the road. It was also suggested the crossing guards manually shut off the light when they are present.

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

B. Parker made the motion to adjourn.

R. Tortorelli seconded; all were in favor. Meeting was adjourned at 5:00 pm.