

Traffic Safety Advisory Committee
April 23, 2012
Minutes

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

Secretary: Mindy Lavallee, Recording Secretary

Chairman Archambault made the following statement:

“On behalf of the Traffic Safety Committee we bestow to you, Chief Douglas, our sincere sympathy and condolence for the loss of a fellow police officer. Chief Maloney gave all.”

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

NEW BUSINESS:

2. *Future Ambulance Facility: Light on Elm St.*

G. Daniels asked whether or not ambulance personal had a switch that could turn lights green.

R. Riendeau explained that this “switch” is called an Actuator.

B. Parker said Ambulance Director Eric Schelberg was talking about having an actuating device at the new facility that would trip the West Street light.

R. Riendeau said the Opticom system on West Street is old and needs to be upgraded.

D. Tortorelli said that when the system was installed, Ambulance had requested a switch to trip it but was denied.

B. Parker said it would make the most sense to get the facility up and running and then see what the issues are before the Committee tries to address them.

G. Daniels asked if the warrant article for the new facility included the cost of a new light system.

B. Parker said he was unsure but it could be up for interpretation.

G. Daniels said he was in favor of B. Parker’s idea of waiting to make any decisions until after the new facility is built.

D. Tortorelli said he was in agreement. He said he thinks people will most likely yield anyway to the one or two ambulances leaving the facility.

F. Douglas said he does not feel the light is necessary. He said that if it is necessary on West Street than it is also warranted on Cottage Street where the Police Department exits. Having a light could provide a false sense of security.

G. Archambault made a motion to hold off on making any decisions on a light system until the new facility is built.

G. Daniels seconded the motion. All were in favor; none were opposed.

3. *Future Ambulance Facility: Bales School traffic congestion*

G. Archambault said he spoke to the superintendent of schools, Bob Suprenant. Mr. Suprenant said that the school assigned someone to direct traffic at the Bales School driveway thirty (30) minutes prior to and thirty (30) minutes after school is in session, and that this should have solved the traffic issue. Mr. Suprenant said he is glad to come to a Traffic Safety meeting to discuss the issue further. One idea Mr. Suprenant had was to request that teachers and parents stop parking on Elm Street, but this might not go over well with school staff.

F. Douglas said the traffic congestion is twofold. The suggestion of eliminating parking on Elm Street west of the school will bring up the issue of finding other places for people to park. He said Elm Street is a narrow road when cars are parked there but there is a low accident rate. There are other parking spots at the Congregational Church and off of Union Street, but eliminating the parking on Elm Street will most likely not relieve traffic congestion.

B. Parker asked how many parking spaces there were on Elm Street.

F. Douglas said between fourteen (14) and sixteen (16).

G. Daniels questioned if the Committee was charged with looking at the parking situation specifically. He believed the parking was unrelated to the congestion issue.

F. Douglas said he met with school officials Bob Suprenant and Katie Chambers to discuss the traffic congestion. The school was planning to deploy a teacher to guide traffic at the lower entrance of the school to prevent drivers from making the left-hand turn which causes traffic backup. He said parents should be driving into the Oval and then returning back to the school to drop off and pick up their children. The school also sent out notices to parents requesting that they not make the left-hand turn. F. Douglas said he would send around to the Committee a copy of the letter that the school sent out to parents. He mentioned that although parking is available to parents near the Police Station, the area is largely underutilized.

D. Tortorelli said he had seen a teacher out there guiding traffic. He said the Boys and Girls Club white school bus is still blocking traffic in the mornings.

F. Douglas said he would make an inquiry as to why the Boys and Girls Club bus is still blocking traffic. He said he made a recommendation to the school to make the entryway of the bus entrance wider so that there are two lanes, a right-turn and left-turn.

R. Riendeau asked if the school utilized the sign he gave them last year which reads "No Left Hand Turn".

F. Douglas said he wasn't sure if the sign was being used, but it is unlikely it could be enforced because it is an administrative rule and not an Ordinance restriction. R. Riendeau said DPW will be painting a stop bar on the road so that buses have enough room to exit the school. The line will be painted when the weather gets warmer.

F. Douglas said he would follow up on the situation with the school officials and recommended that the Committee table the issue in the meantime.

4. Federal Hill Road speed limit

G. Daniels said the latest request to look at the speed limit on Federal Hill Road had come from Noreen O'Connell, a resident of Federal Hill Road. He said there are one (1) or two (2) 35MPH signs heading toward Hollis, and three (3) signs heading into town. Part of the road is owned by the State.

B. Parker said he had checked the road earlier in the day. The State portion of the road begins just after the second left into the Reserve, if one was travelling South on Federal Hill.

R. Riendeau said there is a mark in the pavement to signify that State part of the road.

G. Daniels said he spoke to Tim O'Connell about changing one (1) of the signs to read "The Speed Limit in Milford is 30MPH Unless Otherwise Posted". He said Mr. O'Connell thought this might take the edge off of the problem.

D. Tortorelli asked if the Town was allowed to post the signs on the State part of the road.

R. Riendeau said the signs would have to go up before the State part of the road began.

B. Parker said because there is a long distance to travel on Federal Hill Road, it might be helpful to put up an additional 30MPH sign. He recommended placing a sign at the Town borderline and then another sign a little further down the road near Foster Road.

R. Riendeau said the sign should be posted after Foster Road.

B. Parker clarified that there is currently a 35MPH sign at Foster Road heading northbound. He said his idea would be to replace this sign with a 30MPH sign, and then add an additional sign a little further down the road.

G. Daniels asked if anyone had heard of any further problems on Federal Hill Road since the Committee had last discussed the issue. He said he personally felt 35MPH is not that unreasonable northbound from Foster Road, but south of Foster Road the road becomes curvy. He said it would make sense to have a 30MPH sign from Foster Road to the Hollis line, and an additional 30MPH sign for travelers coming into town.

B. Parker asked Chief Douglas if he had seen or heard of drivers travelling northbound and going off of the road in the area between Foster Road and Emerson Road.

F. Douglas said he had not and that there is not a high accident rate in this area.

D. Wheeler added that the intersection at Foster Road is an appropriate demarcation line for the speed limit change because the road is noticeably narrower.

G. Archambault said the Committee should make a recommendation to the BOS with the proposed signage changes and provide a map detailing sign locations.

R. Riendeau clarified that the Committee would recommend placement of a 30MPH sign located on Federal Hill Road, south of Foster Road, and a sign reading "The Speed Limit in Milford is 30MPH Unless Otherwise Posted" for northbound traffic crossing the Town line.

B. Parker motioned to go ahead with the recommendation.

D. Tortorelli seconded. All were in favor; none were opposed.

OLD BUSINESS

5. Resident concerns @ 226 Whitten Rd. – Tabled from 3/19/12

R. Riendeau stated that the curve analysis report had come back from Hoyle and Tanner and one of the recommendations from the engineers was to place six (6) chevron signs at the curve. He said he ordered the six (6) signs and they will be placed on the same side of the road but facing different directions so that drivers on both sides of the road can see them. Regarding the cross-slope, DPW was planning on shimming the road anyways which will eliminate some of the cross-slope in the curve of the road. He said not much can be done concerning the horizontal alignment of the road.

G. Daniels questioned if the road would now be too concentrated with signage to the point where drivers would ignore it.

G. Archambault said having the chevron signs would be an eye-opener for drivers and an ideal solution at this time.

G. Daniels asked if the chevrons would be in addition to the other signage already there.

R. Riendeau said the sign that is already there is being upgraded to a larger size because it does not meet MUTCD standards.

G. Archambault said he was in favor of adding the chevrons.

G. Daniels said the sign that is already there is sufficient.

B. Parker said the additional signage would be helpful.

G. Daniels said he felt that the Town would be spending taxpayer money to accommodate drivers who break the law by speeding on the road.

R. Riendeau said in terms of cost, the shimming of Whitten Road is normal maintenance and was already on his list to do.

F. Douglas said he wanted to remind the Committee that although the report focuses on the road's cross-slope, it has nothing to do with the causation factors in the accidents that have occurred. He said the engineers agreed on this. The report states that in terms of the accidents that have occurred, the cross-slope is irrelevant and it is truly operator error, excessive speed

and drivers under the influence along with being an enforcement issue. Critical speed marks appeared before the cross-slope of the road in all of the accidents that have occurred. He said the number of accidents that have occurred in front of the Noble's residence at 226 Whitten Road is four (4) and not eight (8). This was made clear in the documentation he had previously submitted to the Committee, and agreed upon by the engineers. He said that although it is unfortunate that Mr. and Mrs. Noble have to see these accidents in their yard, it is not a road design issue.

G. Archambault said that the engineers' report listed the boulders in front of the Nobles' yard as being hazardous.

F. Douglas said the engineers agreed that the boulders are better than having a guardrail.

G. Daniels asked if the new chevron signs would be fluorescent.

R. Riendeau said the signage would glow in the dark to comply with new retro reflectivity laws.

F. Douglas made a motion to have DPW post the additional signage and to also continue police enforcement in this area.

B. Parker seconded the motion. All were in favor; none were opposed.

6. *Approval of Minutes from March 19, 2012*

G. Archambault asked for a motion to approve the minutes.

D. Tortorelli made a motion. G. Daniels seconded; G. Archambault, G. Daniels, F. Douglas and D. Tortorelli voted to approve the minutes from March 19, 2012. R. Riendeau, B. Parker and D. Wheeler abstained.

Meeting adjourned at 5pm.