

Traffic Safety Advisory Committee
March 30, 2010
Minutes

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

Absent: Dave Wheeler

Secretary: Kathryn Parenti, Recording Secretary

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

5. *Approval of minutes from February 22, 2009.*

G. Archambault made the motion to approve the minutes.

R. Tortorelli seconded the motion

All were in favor of approving the minutes from February 22, 2009; none were opposed.

Moving the minute approval to the first item on the agenda for future meetings was discussed and agreed upon.

OLD BUSINESS:

4. *Discussion: Disability signage (Tabled from February 22, 2010).*

B. Ruoff noted he had asked everyone to revisit this issue through the review of past minutes. He had thought there was more discussion but from the minutes in the packets supplied to the Committee members, there were a couple of scenarios for signage requests: children at play, horses either in the road or crossing the road and handicapped (deaf, blind) people. He came to the conclusion related to the horse and children sign requests was if the residents want those signs installed, the residents formally request the signs and pay for the installation, which is done by the town. With regard to the handicap signage, he called the state and spoke with the District 5 chief engineer and to Bill Lambert of the Bureau of Traffic. He also tried to call Primex but was unable to get in touch with anyone. Bill Lambert said the state does not have any thing to do with caution signs relating to children; they will not install them. He recommends to families who call and ask for them, to go to hardware stores or Home Depot and buy the lime yellow “Children at Play” signs and put them on the side of the road when their children are playing in the yard or driveway. These signs are to warn drivers of things that might happen and are effective. He has found the permanently installed caution signs are usually totally ignored, if they don’t see any children. The portable “Children at Play” signs are only to be put out when the children are in the yard playing and are brought in when the children are not. With regard to the requests for handicap signage, they are installed on the requestor’s property after a note from a doctor is submitted. He did admit the State of NH does not do a good job of policing these signs to make sure the handicapped person still lives

in the area. The engineer from District 5 agreed; the only signs the state installs are the handicap signs and he also noted the caution signs lose their effectiveness over time.

G. Archambault noted on Savage Road there are signs indicating there are horses in the road. He wondered if a sign is not authorized, and something happens, who is liable.

B. Ruoff replied the state only suggests families put up the “Children at Play” signs but notes they are far more effective than the permanent cautionary signs. He noted the state stopped installing the “Children at Play” signs and only put up handicap signs for medical conditions with a note from a doctor.

G. Archambault asked if the “Children at Play” signs are installed on a pipe inserted into the ground.

B. Ruoff replied they were either an easel type sign or a tripod that can be taken down. He noted most new “Construction Ahead” signs were now made of mesh and easily transported and are not the rigid plywood signs as in days past.

B. Parker asked what B. Ruoff wanted to do with this issue.

B. Ruoff replied they should have a policy to cover sign requests. The horse related signs are paid for by the people who want them. The town should avoid installing the children playing types of signs and the handicap type signs can be installed provided there is a doctor’s note and the signs are installed only in front of the home where the handicapped person resides and no place else. A blind person resides in the town of Pittsfield and that person walks all over town. That person requested signs be installed throughout the town instead of just in front of that person’s home. It was not done as it would not be effective. He recommended requests for horse related signs be directed to the BOS, who would then run it through the TSC. The applicant would pay for the sign and it would be installed by the town. He recommended homeowners take care of the children playing types of signs and the medical related signage request should be accompanied by a doctor’s note and only be installed on that person’s property and monitored by the town.

B. Parker moved to adopt the policy as explained by B. Ruoff.

R. Tortorelli seconded the motion.

All were in favor; none were opposed.

3. Discussion: Elimination of one parking space on Nashua Street to the right of School Street (Tabled from February 22, 2010).

B. Ruoff stated this was tabled from the last meeting pending the results of the BOS meeting on February 22, 2010.

F. Douglas replied he was not notified of any definitive results but he thought the BOS had decided not to do anything with the parking space and would inform the residents of the Mill Apartments of their decision.

G. Daniels noted the BOS had taken this under advisement.

B. Ruoff asked if the TSC should do anything about this issue.

G. Daniels replied the TSC makes recommendations and if a decision needs to be made, it’s made at the board level.

B. Ruoff agreed and noted this issue is closed.

NEW BUSINESS:

2. Request to install convex mirror on telephone pole at crosswalk at School Street and Nashua Street intersection (Email from Dawn Griska)

B. Ruoff noted this email was a result of the parking space not being eliminated.

G. Daniels replied the normal procedure is for all requests to go to the BOS and then sent along to the TSC; this request bypassed one (1) step.

F. Douglas recommended an email be sent to D. Griska to inform her of the procedure.

B. Ruoff replied he would inform her of this.

OTHER BUSINESS:

6. Parking on Linden Street near Shepard Park

G. Daniels noted he was surprised to not see this on this agenda as it was discussed at a recent BOS meeting and was to be sent to the committee.

B. Ruoff noted Charlie Vanetti was concerned about the parking at Shepard Park interfering with the line of sight at the stop barn on Linden Street. If the driver moves forward, beyond the stop bar, they can see both ways on Nashua Street. He noted the plan was to make the two (2) parking spaces near that intersection for compact cars only.

G. Daniels noted this issue had come up before on Middle Street and the Committee had not been able to come up with a definition for compact cars. He wondered if the state had a definition.

F. Douglas stated they could not define it before and thus would make enforcement ludicrous.

G. Daniels suggests those spaces should be designated for motorcycles only or perhaps limit the spaces to no SUV's or pickup trucks, which might capture 90% of the problem.

B. Ruoff replied the situation on Middle Street, before the bumpouts were installed, a vehicle looking to turn onto Middle Street from Putnam Street could not see to make the turn. He didn't see what the issue was on Linden Street – you only have to move a bit forward of the stop bar to see well in both directions on Nashua Street and the travel lanes on Nashua Street are twelve (12) feet wide.

G. Daniels asked if the stop bar could be moved forward.

B. Ruoff replied he would have to see where it was in relation to the stop sign. This isn't an issue during the week, only on the weekend when there is activity at Shepard Park.

G. Daniels asked if there was an issue parking on Linden Street.

B. Ruoff replied the town had widened Shepard Street and the street behind the park for parallel parking but that side of Linden Street is marked no parking. He recommended not changing it because of the location of the medical center.

G. Daniels concluded they should do nothing unless they put up a "Compact Cars" sign.

B. Ruoff replied he was going to put up the sign and wasn't aware this issue was supposed to come before the TSC; he thought it was a daily operational issue.

OTHER BUSINESS:

7. Sign prohibiting skateboards and bicycles on the side walks around the Oval.

B. Ruoff noted he had gotten a call from Karen Walker, owner of Karen's Kollektibles, who asked for a sign to be placed on the light pole.

B. Parker replied there was an ordinance supporting that.

F. Douglas added both state and town statutes state bicycles are not allowed on the sidewalks.

B. Ruoff thought the request seemed reasonable.

There was some discussion regarding the wording of the sign, perhaps adding the statute to the sign.

8. Request to change the speed limit on Federal Hill Road.

B. Ruoff noted K. Bauer had asked if a traffic study needed to be done to reduce the speed on Federal Hill Road. He spoke with District 5 and the speed limit is based on RSA 265:62 which is based on the type of the road and this one is a 35 mph road. He spoke with the District 5 engineer who said that would be why an engineering study would need to be done to change the speed limit. Based on what he was told, there was a very strong likelihood the speed limit would remain at 35 mph, even after a traffic study.

R. Tortorelli recommended the speed limit remain the same.

B. Ruoff stated he would relay this to K. Bauer.

9. Installation of a blind driveway sign and a request to reduce the speed on Foster Road.

B. Ruoff state there is a new family that has moved onto Foster road and they are requesting a blind driveway sign and a reduction in speed on the road. The resident stated the previous owner of the property was either hit or almost hit while trying to leave the driveway. They also noted drivers, especially young ones, speed along that section of road, hoping to “catch some air”.

F. Douglas said he would check the accident data over the last five (5) years for that area.

G. Daniels thought that was the same issue as the request for the reduction in speed on Federal Hill Road.

B. Parker recommended this be tabled to the next TSC meeting and noted this request should come from the BOS as well.

B. Ruoff replied he had gotten two (2) calls from the homeowner ; he had told them he would bring it up at today’s meeting. He will inform them of the normal procedure for requests.

10. Stop sign and stop bar on Meadowbrook Road onto Whitten Road.

G. Archambault asked B. Parker if he had a chance to look at this item.

B. Parker replied he did not and would for the next meeting.

11. No left turn sign exiting the library parking lot.

G. Archambault noted his wife recently had a near miss with someone turning left exiting the library. He had noticed on another occasion, Chief Douglas speaking to someone who had made an illegal left turn out of the parking lot. He thought an additional sign posted on the other side of the driveway would help alert drivers left turns are not allowed.

G. Daniels noted those drivers who do turn left, do so knowing they are breaking the law.

F. Douglas replied there are often problems there. He felt a sign on the other side of the drive would not be seen.

B. Ruoff thought a larger no left turn sign might help.

B. Parker asked which would be more effective: a no left turn sign or a right turn only sign.

B. Ruoff replied some people don’t care and will disobey both.

B. Parker thought a bigger sign would be a start.

B. Ruoff asked if the symbol or the words for no left turn would be better.

F. Douglas stated he had worked with Michelle Sampson, library director, to put notices up and to inform the public of the change in exiting the library. He doesn’t want to take money from taxpayers through ticketing, if it’s not necessary.

B. Ruoff suggested in warmer weather, they could paint arrows on the drive to indicate right turn only; it would be easy enough to do.

B. Parker also suggested this could be addressed in the downtown traffic improvements.

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. G. Daniels seconded; all were in favor. Meeting was adjourned at 4:40 pm.