

Traffic Safety Advisory Committee
September 29, 2008
Minutes

Present: Chief Douglas - Chairman
Bill Parker
Gil Archambault
Mike Putnam, Board of Selectmen Representative

Absent: Bill Ruoff
Dave Wheeler

Kathryn Parenti, Recording Secretary

1. Roll Call vote required by the BOS.

NEW BUSINESS:

G. Archambault began the meeting with some questions regarding people riding bicycles without lights at night. He was wondering if there were any regulations for this as he has noticed several instances of bicycle riding at night without lights.

F. Douglas replied there were: cyclists must abide by certain rules such as riding near the side of the road, not riding on the sidewalk, riding with the flow of traffic, using a bell and having lights at night. He noted he will bring it up at roll call to make the officers aware of this concern.

G. Archambault asked if there was a law that required bicycle riders to dismount and walk the bikes across a crosswalk. He noted there were such rules in Europe.

F. Douglas replied he was not aware of any such law in New Hampshire. He did state that bicyclists are required to follow all the rules of the road that are subject to motor vehicles.

2. *Election of officers:*

F. Douglas noted he had been chairman for over a year and it was past time to elect a new chairman and vice chairman. He asked if there were any nominations for the position of chairman.

M. Putnam nominated B. Ruoff.

B. Parker seconded.

All were in favor.

F. Douglas asked if there were any nominations for vice chairman.

M. Putnam nominated G. Archambault.

B. Parker seconded.

All were in favor.

F. Douglas noted to M. Putnam to let the Board of Selectmen know of the election results and he would send an email as well. He stated the next meeting could be at the police station or a new location could be set before the October 27, 2008 meeting, at which time the new chairman and vice chairman would assume their rolls.

3. *Discussion: Request from the Board of Selectmen regarding the installation of stop signs at the corners of Border & Souhegan Streets and Chestnut and Souhegan Streets. (Tabled from August 25, 2008)*

F. Douglas began by stating the committee could not take a vote at the last meeting due to the lack of a quorum but there was much discussion and a sense of the meeting that the Committee agreed that stop signs should be installed at the above mentioned locations. He noted there were no stop signs present at these intersections and it was very inconsistent with what was in the area. He did note that D. Wheeler did not agree with the request to put a stop sign on Border Street but he was in agreement with the request for the sign on Chestnut Street; the majority agreed there should be stop signs at those intersections. He noted Mrs. Fino, the author of the letter requesting the signs, was adamant that the area is inconsistent with the rest of the town. He noted there was even a stop sign on Hilltop Drive, which has no outlet. He asked if there were any additional comments.

G. Archambault stated that of the four (4) streets intersecting Souhegan, two (2) had stop signs and two (2) did not. He felt the two (2) without stop signs should have either a stop or a yield sign.

F. Douglas noted that all 90 degree intersections require a stop sign.

B. Parker stated he had gone out to look at the sites and felt there should be stop signs present at the locations since they feed onto another street.

F. Douglas noted that could be said about Knight Street as well and it is a combination of public safety and consistency and a liability factor.

M. Putnam noted there was no stop sign at the intersection of Walker Street and Johnson Street either.

F. Douglas stated Walker Street was a dead end but noted there was a stop sign at the end of Hilltop Drive, which is also a dead end but there are none on the other busy streets.

B. Parker made the motion to place stop signs on the corners of Border Street and Souhegan Street and Chestnut and Souhegan Street.

G. Archambault asked if there were certain requirements involved in the installation of stop signs.

F. Douglas noted the requirements are present in this situation: there is a 90 degree intersection, visibility is poor and the speed limit down the side streets is 25 – 30 mph. The request does fit the criteria. He asked if there was a second to B. Parker's motion.

M. Putnam seconded the motion.

All were in favor.

F. Douglas noted to K. Parenti that a memo should be written to the BOS stating the TSC recommended the installation of stop signs at the corners of Border Street and Souhegan Street and the corner of Chestnut Street and Souhegan Street.

4. *Request from the Board of Selectmen regarding the reduction of the speed limit on Wellesley Drive. (Tabled from August 25, 2008)*

F. Douglas noted two (2) people wrote letters and he had received two (2) emails and several calls with regard to the request to lower the speed to twenty five (25) mph. He stated Mr. O'Brien of Wellesley Drive had come to the last meeting and gave some testimony and was very adamant that there were some issues with the area and thanked the police department for trying to address the issues. He noted the actual speed limit on the road was much higher, 30 or 40 mph, and several residents agreed the speed limit should be lowered to 25 mph.

F. Douglas noted the speed limit on Crosby and West Streets is posted as 25 mph. He noted he has been on Wellesley Drive and noticed there were a large number of children present in the neighborhood. He did state that lowering the speed limit may not solve the problem but perception was everything. The speed limit on the street is currently marked at 30 mph. The

limit on Nashua Street was reduced from 30 mph to 25 mph but he did note that everyone cheats; people still drive at 40 to 50 mph. He had closely worked with the Gerry Dusault of the Variety Store and educated the public with regard to the lowering of the speed limit. G. Dusault reported that generally speeding is down and there have been no accidents at the crosswalks. He stated it was all about driver attitude and people are being conscious of this. He thought the next step would be to have all non-posted roads be 25 mph.

B. Parker stated he had looked at the green ordinance book that in Milford all non-posted roads are 30 mph. He noted, especially in the neighborhoods without sidewalks, as is the case in this situation, the speed limit should be reduced to 25 mph. He thought that should tie in with all the streets within the urban compact, that unless it is posted, the speed limit should be 25 mph.

F. Douglas replied it is accepted, by law, and if it is agreed on then signs could be made and posted at the ends of town.

M. Putnam asked if the speed limit would be 30 mph unless posted. He felt they should be consistent.

F. Douglas replied they could not go as low as 20 mph, as that is only specified for school zones.

M. Putnam asked how well the streets were posted.

B. Parker noted that Crosby Street is posted but Ridgefield Drive is not posted.

M. Putnam replied he was just thinking about anticipated questions from the BOS.

F. Douglas noted this was a discussion about the adoption of an ordinance that is approved by the BOS.

M. Putnam asked if the town would have to go around and take down signs.

F. Douglas replied the majority of the streets are posted but there are some that are not; adopting an ordinance like this would solve the problem. It would also take care of the financial burden of putting the signs up. The streets that are not currently posted would be considered 25 mph; if the streets are posted, that would not change.

M. Putnam replied if they are doing this within the urban compact, some of the streets are posted, would they leave it that way.

F. Douglas noted if they wanted to, they could take down all the signs but that would be a waste of money.

M. Putnam stated they should post Wellesley and let the BOS know they are looking at blanket speed limit coverage.

F. Douglas suggested a letter be forwarded from the new chairman or vice chairman that the Committee is looking to reduce the speed limit in the urban compact are of town to 25 mph and taking down the 30 and 35 mph signs in that area. He noted this would not work on Elm Street as it has already been reduced to 30 mph; they wouldn't be able to go down to 25 mph due to heavy opposition.

B. Parker recommended a reduction from 30 mph to 25 mph on Wellesley Drive.

G. Archambault seconded the motion

All were in favor.

B. Parker noted they would work on putting together something global.

F. Douglas brought up an item for the next agenda: the new construction off Maple Street, and the intersection that has changed from 45 degrees to 90 degrees. He noted the road is basically finished. He thought the committee should look at the intersection and change the yield sign to a stop sign.

B. Parker stated he would check the plan as he thought there should be a stop sign there.

F. Douglas commented that the road is basically done but there is no sign.

5. Discussion on memo to BOS and presenters of requests.

F. Douglas stated a memo should be prepared showing the recommendations made by the Committee with regard to today's discussion. In addition, a memo should be prepared for Mr. O'Brien and the other residents advising them of the committee's recommendation that the speed limit be reduced to 25 mph on Wellesley, in both directions. He also will ask that "Children at Play" signs be erected on each end of Wellesley as well. He stated he will draft a letter outlining that as a result of the many issues that have come up, the Board will understand the Committee's concerns: the urban compact area of town should be 25 mph with the option of leaving all the existing speed limit signs in place or take down all the signs and put signs at the major arteries going into town stating that all the roads in the urban compact area of town are 25 mph. He thought a sub-committee should be formed to look into that issue. He also noted Mont Vernon has the signs at the major arteries into town, noting that all the roads in Mont Vernon are 25 mph.

B. Parker thought that would be a good thing.

F. Douglas noted the 25 mph signs that are already installed could stay.

M. Putnam asked if he could identify the streets that are in the urban compact area.

F. Douglas replied he had a list of all the 25 mph streets.

M. Putnam wondered if they would need to note the signs that will be coming down. He also asked about Federal Pointe.

B. Parker note that area was not in the urban compact area.

F. Douglas noted it was not a town road yet.

B. Parker thought that should be another 25 mph area.

F. Douglas replied it was not enforceable yet as the road has not been accepted by the town.

Another example of non-enforceable signs are the stop signs in the Shaw's Plaza. He noted he would work on the memo tomorrow and asked M. Putnam to take notes of any questions that might come up during the BOS meeting regarding the global reduction in the speed limit.

G. Archambault noted the speed limit on Savage Road was not 25 mph. He felt drivers have to go a bit over the speed limit to travel on the road.

F. Douglas noted there was no absolute speed limit in New Hampshire, except on the interstates. He noted in the court system, based on the existing conditions, the drivers will be found not guilty if their infraction is less than 15 mph over the speed limit. They would be hard pressed to get a conviction if someone is traveling on the bypass on a Sunday morning, when there is no traffic, at 70 mph in a 55 mph zone. However, if someone is on the bypass, traveling at 65 mph in snow conditions, they will get a conviction. He felt going 30 mph would be reasonable and prudent and it would tie into the posted speed limit.

6. Approval of minutes from June 23, 2008 and August 25, 2008.

The minutes were not approved due to the fact there was not a quorum of members who were present at the meeting.

M. Putnam made the motion to adjourn the meeting.

B. Parker seconded.

All were in favor.