

Traffic Safety Coordinating Committee

Jan. 9, 2007

DPW Building, 1:00 pm

Minutes

Present: Jody Kablack, Bill Place, Peter Fadgen, Ken MacLean

1. The first question of the group was whether these meetings need to be posted as public meetings. J. Kablack will check with the Town Manager. [Note: the answer is yes. All future meetings will be posted]
2. The Police Chief received an email message dated 1/5/07 from John Plunkett, 14 Blackmer Road questioning why the reflecting crosswalk sign has been removed and not replaced in front of his house. Bill Place will look into this. [Note: All of the pedestrian free-standing signs have been removed around for ease of snow removal and they will all be replaced in the spring.]
3. The Police Chief stated that he has received several complaints from residents of Powers Road on excessive speed on the street. He has responded and will place the traffic counters out to monitor speed and volume. The data will reveal if the problem is real or perceived. Due to the lack of walkways on that street, any pedestrians might think cars are traveling faster than they really are. In addition to call, an email from John Merritt was received on this topic on 1/3/07. [Note: Data has just been delivered which indicates 85% of the cars traveling on Powers Road are going 34 mph]
4. There was a discussion about lowering speed limits in general in town. The unposted streets in Sudbury are classified as either rural (40 mph), or thickly settled (30 mph). The state sets forth the process to change a local speed limit. The Town cannot arbitrarily change or post limits. This was done approximately 10 years ago and tested by Ralph Tyler, who successfully overturned the Town's decision to post speed limits without going through the proper procedure. The state's process is to measure speeds along a road, and take the speed that 85% of the cars travel. This is assumed to be a safe speed limit, and many times will actually increase the speed limit of a road. Bill Place will obtain the state requirements for reference for the committee.
5. There was discussion on Powder Mill Road and the proposed/new developments in Maynard and Concord. The Police Department has received a few calls from Cranberry Circle residents. There is a desire by the residents to limit the use of heavy trucks on Powder Mill Road, or to re-examine the issue of closing the street to through traffic to Route 62. The Town had attempted to close the street approximately 15 years ago, and at that time had been denied the right to do so because Powder Mill Road was an old County Road and the town had no jurisdiction over it. Due to the dissolution of Middlesex County, we should re-examine those policies. The Selectmen are meeting with the neighbors on 1/16/07, and it is likely that additional questions will come up for this committee to advise the Selectmen on.

6. The walkway planning and prioritization process was discussed. Walkway petitions are due at the end of January, and a meeting will be convened to discuss the merits of each petition. This committee will be asked for a recommendation.
7. A letter from Henry Sorett to Maureen Valente dated 1/3/07 was discussed. Mr. Sorett makes several observations on traffic patterns and situations in Sudbury and Wayland, and provides recommendations. He has also suggested that the Traffic Safety Coordinating Committee meet on Saturday mornings so that he can participate. Mr. Sorett made several specific points:
 - ♦ Remove traffic light at Route 117 and Dakin Road – the committee does not endorse this idea. The number of accidents at that intersection prior to the traffic signal being installed demonstrated the need for a signal.
 - ♦ Pressure Wayland to restore the light at 127/26/20 to its original configuration – the committee does not endorse this idea. That light is a MassHighway Dept. project, and it is unlikely that Sudbury would have any influence. Additionally, the intersection has just recently been fully completed, and may function better once area drivers get used to the new configuration.
 - ♦ Stop construction of the BMW dealership on Old County Road due to added traffic – the committee realizes that this is not a feasible solution. The development was approved conditioned on significant traffic improvements being made to the intersection of Old County Road and Route 20 and the addition of a left turn lane, which should alleviate congestion in that area.
 - ♦ Widen the intersection in the town center – this project has been in discussion in committee for over 1 year. There is much public sentiment to limit expansion of the roadways in the town center due to potential diminution of the character of the area. Alternatives are being discussed which attempt to address the major safety issues of the intersection (the alignment).
 - ♦ Create a left turn lane along Route 20 from the Wayland Town line to Goodman's Hill Road – as discussed above, a segment of Route 20 will be improved with a left turn lane at the intersection of Old County Road. We are also under discussion with MassHighway about increasing the shoulder at Goodman's Hill Road to allow cars to go around left turning vehicles. As there are no other major intersections in that area, the committee does not see the need to extend a left turn lane for that entire section.
 - ♦ Raise speed limits across town – As discussed above, the issue of changing speed limits is addressed by following proper protocol and cannot be done arbitrarily. In addition, most residents feel that speeds across town are too high, and would not be receptive to increasing speeds. The issue of increased speeds at night was not endorsed.
 - ♦ Restore passing zones on Route 27 and 117 – the Police Chief did not support this idea.
 - ♦ Widen Route 20 for most of its length in Sudbury – the committee has no position on this, however it was noted that a similar proposal by MassHighway failed in the late 1980's after much public discourse.
 - ♦ Build a Route 20 by-pass – this issue has been discussed many times over the last 20 years. Environmental constraints would make this very difficult, land takings would be necessary and the costs would be high.

- ♦ Connect Nobscot Road to Union Ave. along the railroad bed – this idea is under discussion as the Town negotiates with CSX Transportation and the state for use of the railroad corridor in this location.
8. The Police Chief raised an issue by a resident at the corner of Old Lancaster and Concord Road regarding the proposed reconfiguration of the Concord Road/Union Ave. intersection. The resident feels that traffic will be backed up in front of his house when the intersection is constructed. The DPW Director does not believe it will, as the traffic flow has no restriction in this area (no stop signs or yield signs).
 9. Ms. Kablack suggested getting the schools involved in a campaign against speeding in town. A logo and slogan contest was suggested, i.e. Slow Down In Town.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:30 pm.