

**PORTSMOUTH
TRAFFIC & SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING
8:00 AM – Thursday, August 15, 2002
City Hall - Council Chambers**

I. CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Alex Hanson called the meeting to order at approximately 8:05 a.m.

II: ROLL CALL:

Members Present:

City Councilor Alex Hanson, Chairman Deputy Fire Chief Steve Achilles
John Burke, Parking & Transportation Ted Gray, Member
Steve Parkinson, Public Works Director Ralph DiBernardo, Member

Police Capt. Tom Schladenhauffen

Also present was Lucy Tillman of the Planning Department.

Excused Absence: Ron Cypher and Hank Greenberg

III. ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES:

IT WAS VOTED on a Motion by Ralph DiBernardo to accept the minutes of the Traffic & Safety Committee (TSC) meeting of June 20, 2002. Seconded by Ted Gray. Motion passed.

IV. CORRESPONDENCE:

(A) Lafayette Road – Exclusive Pedestrian Signals - John Burke stated that the Police Department had provided testimony at the New Hampshire Highway Safety Conference to let them know of the City's objection to NHDOT changing the exclusive pedestrian crosswalk signals on Route 1 to concurrent (with vehicular traffic). DOT has agreed to evaluate the system and report back on their findings.

V. NEW BUSINESS:

(A) 505 Lafayette Road – TAC Referral – Proposed Office Use/Site Improvements – Jessica Winston with Millette, Sprague & Colwell presented the site plan proposal to enclose the 8 ft. x 28 ft. canopy that exists at the rear of the old Bruegger's Bagel building. The new

use will be an optometrist office. On July 30th, the TAC reviewed the application and recommended approval to the Planning Board with stipulations including the need to widen the interior drive aisles, increase landscaped areas, and reduce the width of a 35-ft. aisle to a 24-ft. aisle. At the Traffic & Safety onsite meeting, it was requested that a walkway be extended across the property line to eliminate any cut through traffic that may occur. Chairman Alex Hanson asked how many of the parking spaces go with the building. Ms. Winston answered about 49 spaces, which is more than what is needed by the new use. Chairman Hanson asked if the signage prohibiting left-turns was in place at both driveways to Route 1. Ms. Winston stated that she believed they were but that she would have to check.

Ralph DiBernardo stated that Ms. Winston accurately described the onsite review. He reiterated the need to reconfigure the interior island for the purpose of closing off the rear entrance to “through” traffic.

MOTION made by Ralph DiBernardo to approve the plan as presented with the stipulation that the interior island be extended as discussed and that appropriate signage be provided as approved by the City’s Parking and Transportation Engineer at both driveways to prevent vehicles from exiting left from the driveways. Ted Gray seconded. Motion passed.

- (B) **Sheafe Street – Proposed One-Way - DPW Referral** – John Burke stated that Sheafe Street is an 18-ft. wide street with a single 10-ft. lane and 8-ft. parking lane and is currently listed as a two-way street under the Ordinance. If a vehicle is traveling from Chapel Street toward Penhallow Street and a car comes the other way, you are unable to pass that car without going onto private property. He added that he has seen vehicles backing up practically the length of Sheafe Street to allow oncoming traffic to pass. This street width does not meet design standards for a two-way street. Many people he has talked to who live in town actually believe that this is already now a one-way street.

Alex Hanson asked if any complaints had been received from residents, the Police Dept. or Fire Dept. Capt. Schladenhauffen stated that there have been incidents of road rage on Sheafe Street because people think that it is a one-way street and end up face to face. Steve Parkinson stated that it is particularly dangerous when you come around the blind corner from Penhallow onto Sheafe Street. Capt. Schladenhauffen stated that this is very confusing. John Burke noted that the street is wide enough for two-way traffic,

however, it would mean eliminating the onstreet parking spaces, which was not likely to be acceptable to residents.

MOTION made by Steve Parkinson that Sheafe Street be made a one-way street from Chapel Street to Penhallow Street. Seconded by Capt. Tom Schladenhauffen. Motion passed. Ted Gray opposed.

- (C) **Hoover Drive – Speed Concerns** – Capt. Schladenhauffen stated that a stealth stat operation was run from July 25th to 27th between 6:00 am and 10:00 pm. There was a lot of residential traffic on Hoover Drive - an average of 1267 cars per day. It is posted 20 mph, but average speeds are 29 mph, and the 85th percentile speed is 35 mph, which is unacceptable. In response to the stealth stat report, the Police Department has deployed a message board with speed control advising residents of the speed they are going and asking them to be good neighbors and slow down. Officers patrolling the area have also been asked to respond to the speed issue. It is recommended that the residents meet with the Police Department and discuss other options including community-based options such as letters to residents. The high speeds seem to occur during the commuter periods. He added that the road is very wide, which increases speeds.

Chairman Hanson suggested communicating back to the resident who drafted the letter, David Serio, explaining what the Police Department is doing with regard to speed and enforcement. Capt. Schladenhauffen will follow up with the resident and also include another survey in future months to see how well the enforcement is doing. Chairman Hanson asked Elaine Boucas to include a copy of the letter in next month's packet.

- (D) **Madison Street – Proposed 20 MPH Speed Limit** – John Burke reported that a Madison Street resident has requested speed limit signs be installed on the street. In reviewing the Ordinance, the City has no speed limit identified for Madison Street. He suggested that 20 mph would be appropriate for this residential street.

MOTION made by Ted Gray to set and install 20-mph speed limit signs at appropriate locations on Madison Street. Seconded by Capt. Schladenhauffen. Motion passed.

- (E) **Washington/Gate Streets – Parking at Intersection/Sight Distance** – Chairman Alex Hanson stated that the driver's vision is obstructed by cars parking too close to the intersection. The Committee discussed the same problem at several of the

intersections in these environs. Steve Parkinson suggested putting together a map that shows buildings, fences and onstreet parking to get a better handle on the sight obstruction issues in the entire area.

MOTION made by Steve Parkinson for a report back from John Burke. Seconded by Ralph DiBernardo. Motion passed.

VI. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:

- (A) Frank Jones Neighborhood Group** – John Burke stated that the neighborhood group is proposing a long-term project for Woodbury Avenue utilizing federal grant funding that would be considered during the CIP development process.

VII. OTHER BUSINESS:

Marcy Street at Children’s Museum – Fence - Ted Gray stated that there is a new fence on Marcy Street next to the Children’s Museum that was installed by a resident. The fence is causing people to pull out into Marcy St. just to see oncoming traffic. He suggested this be included in the review of sight-distance previously discussed.

Ted also brought up an issue of vehicle parking on the eastside of Marcy Street. He asked if there was any possibility of moving the location of the centerline slightly away from the river to allow for the parking. John Burke responded that this will be on the next Agenda.

St. John Church – Alex Hanson asked if the lane lines had been repainted in front of the Church. Steve Parkinson stated that the centerline striping has been re-bid and will be awarded shortly.

Farmer’s Market - Harold Whitehouse, City Councilor, requested that a crosswalk be installed for people walking up to the Farmer’s Market at City Hall. Chairman Hanson responded that this had been looked at in the past and the finding was that there is not adequate sight distance to the crosswalk. This would be giving people a false sense of security and could make the City liable. Councilor Whitehouse suggested the posting of a pedestrian crossing warning sign in advance of the hill. John Burke stated that it would be done.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:35 a.m.

Respectfully submitted:
