

**PORTSMOUTH**  
**TRAFFIC & SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**8:00 AM – Thursday, May 20, 2004**  
**City Hall - Council Chambers**

**DRAFT**

**I. CALL TO ORDER:**

Alex Hanson, Chairman called the meeting to order at approximately 8:00 a.m.

**II: ROLL CALL:**

**Members Present:**

Alex Hanson, Chair, Asst. Mayor  
John Burke, Dir.Parking & Transportation  
Steve Parkinson, Public Works Director  
Deputy Police Chief Dave Young  
Fire Chief Chris LeClaire

Ralph DiBernardo, Deputy Chairman  
Ted Gray, Member  
Ron Cypher, Member  
Jonathan Bailey, Member

Excused absence: Herb Bunnell

**III. ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES:**

**IT WAS VOTED** on a Motion by Ron Cypher to accept the minutes of the Traffic & Safety Committee meeting of April 15, 2004. Seconded by Ted Gray. Motion passed.

**IV. CORRESPONDENCE:**

(A) Corporate Dr./International Dr./New Hampshire Ave./Durham St. – Request for 4-way stop – 4/23/04 City memo to PDA attached. Informational.

(B) Hanover/Fleet Street – Corner Clearance Concerns - 4/30/04 resident letter attached – John Burke stated that the first parking stall is on Hanover Street from its intersection with Fleet is already back a good 40 feet, which is appropriate for posted speeds.

**MOTION** by Ralph DiBernardo to place on file. Seconded by Police Chief Dave Young. Motion passed.

(C) Memorial Bridge & Bicycle Travel – 5/11/04 Seacoast MPO Memo and letter to NHDOT Bridge Design Division attached – Jonathan Bailey asked if the Police could check the database regarding bicycle and motorcycle crashes on the bridge to try and get a sense of how many instances there were in the last 3 years. Alex Hanson questioned how many were caused by people not paying attention to the sign who do not get off and walk the sidewalk. Dave Young responded that he would provide the info for next meeting.

Alex Hanson stated that Maine has a set of rules and NH may have another regarding bike on pedestrian sidewalk. John Burke stated that Maine has used signs at some locations “Yield to Pedestrians”, however, this is not the preferred treatment by NHDOT.

Motion by Jonathan Bailey to recommend to the NHDOT for a temporary stop gap measure. Seconded by Ted Gray.

John Burke stated that reviewing the accident information is a useful exercise for a potential stop-gap measure but also for the ultimate design of the bridge. Chairman Alex Hanson stated the PD will get the accident numbers and asked if the Committee wanted a motion before the numbers were received or should we take it up at the next meeting?

**MOTION** made by Ralph DiBernardo to table until the next meeting. Seconded by Deputy Police Chief Young. Motion passed.

- (D) Marcy, Pleasant & South Street – Speed Concerns – 4/12/04 Friends of the South End letter attached – Christian Hulseman, a member of the safety committee of the Friends of the South End spoke of the group’s speed and safety concerns on South St. and Pleasant St. He noted that if the posted speeds are too low for proper enforcement then they should reflect what is safely considered to be the maximum posted speed and enforced as such.

**MOTION** made by Ralph DiBernardo to refer to the Deputy Police Chief for stepped up enforcement of existing speed limit and at the same time look at the statistics regarding proper speed postings. Seconded by Ted Gray. Motion passed.

Ralph DiBernardo stated that Mr. Hulseman makes some very good points and speed on South Street is something the Committee has looked at many times over the year. Ralph stated that personally, he has a problem with 20-MPH speed on South St. as being unrealistically low. He suggested that John Burke use the criteria that Mr. Hulseman presented to determine whether the 20-MPH postings are reasonable for both South St. and Pleasant St. as part of this motion.

Deputy Police Chief Young stated that we have recent surveys from both streets showing Pleasant St. averaging around 25 MPH and South St. around 28 MPH.

John Burke stated that Police and Public Works are simultaneously collecting speeds along South Street using two different technologies – Stealthstat Radar and tube counters. The technologies have been quite consistent in past studies. John noted that there are standard speed studies usually conducted to determine 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speeds and to assist communities and state agencies in determining appropriate posted speed limits. He stated that this is something that could be brought back to the Committee at a future meeting.

**V. NEW BUSINESS: (OUT OF ORDER)**

- (D) 32 Miller Avenue – Driveway Permit Referral – plan attached -Ted Gray referred to on-site report. Request for a second driveway entrance on Merrimac Street to accommodate three condos. Ted stated that the Committee would like to see the oak tree saved if possible. He recommended approval as presented with the additional possibility of saving the oak tree.

A representative from the City's Women's Club was present and voiced concern as the owner of the land where the oak tree stood. However, it was determined that this was a different oak tree. The owner of 32 Miller Avenue was also in favor of plans that would not impact the oak tree.

**MOTION** made by Ted Gray to approve as presented with the additional possibility of saving the oak tree. Seconded by Steve Parkinson. Motion passed.

- (A) 400 Gosling Rd. – Proposed PSNH Woodchips Project – TAC Recommended Approval with Stipulations (4/30/04 Planning Dept. letter), Board of Adjustment Action (5/7/04 Planning Dept. letter), Project Summary, Traffic Study, Gosling Road Upgrade Estimate, Draft Truck Management Plan attached.

Rob Ciandella, counsel for PSNH, gave an overview of the presentation and a brief explanation of the traffic mitigation proposal, truck management plan, and rail studies. Tom Gorrill, Traffic Consultant for the project, provided a more detailed review of the proposed traffic improvements to Gosling Road.

Atty. Ciandella stated that PSNH is proposing to address short- and long-term needs of the corridor and provide flexibility for future development of Shattuck Way and rail transportation. He noted that Gary Long, President of PSNH, has been in contact with Commissioner Murray, NHDOT and there is an effort to have a meeting between the City of Portsmouth, Town of Newington and Rockingham Planning Commission to discuss federal funding options for Gosling Road. The City has maintained throughout the process that before Shattuck Way in Newington is fully opened to Gosling Road, it needs to be studied to determine its full impact on Portsmouth facilities and abutters. In the meantime, Gosling Road improvements are proposed so that traffic can be safely accommodated on that roadway. Atty. Ciandella stated that the applicant's proposal provides more than their fair share towards the improvements required in the short and long term. He summarized the improvements as correcting the lane drop as you come off Spaulding near the entrance to the Newington malls/plaza. Providing an adjustment to the turning lanes coming off the Spaulding at Exit 1 to allow trucks to negotiate the turn onto Gosling. Signal optimization will be done and the pedestrian crossing from Gosling Meadows will be corrected. The longer-term Gosling improvements including the major infrastructure improvements previously described and outlined. Regarding Shattuck Way, PSNH will grant the ROW necessary to the Town of Newington to complete the roadway. PSNH is working with the City to establish a funding contribution, a financial contribution, which is going to be significantly greater than the fair share of PSNH, that will provide for funding for initial improvements plus a substantial base from which the City can work to obtain supplementary and complementary funds.

Richard Despina, Station Manager of Schiller Station provided an overview of the project. He noted the tremendous benefits for the environment and the economy at the same time. He noted the support of the project from the Society for the Protection of NH Forests, New Hampshire Audubon Society and the NH Seacoast Science Center. Further, he noted that the project will create hundreds of construction jobs and maintain good relationships with vendors in the area. And as Portsmouth's largest taxpayer will provide stability to the taxpayers.

Regarding the delivery components of this project by rail - it would be more expensive than trucking and the infrastructure to support it is not in place. He noted a meeting on rail that PSNH held with the Rockingham Planning Commission, NHDOT, City of Portsmouth, Town of Newington and Guilford Transportation. As a result of the meeting, PSNH has hired an independent consultant to review the rail option for the future and hope to have study completed by end of this month.

There was a detailed review of the truck management plan, which would require drivers to contractually agree to use Gosling Road or risk termination. For the record, Alex Hanson inquired if the plant will operate on Sundays. Mr. Despina stated the plan is that no deliveries will take place on Sundays at this time.

Mr. Despina handed out a sample card that would be provided to drivers for their dashboard. Alex Hanson stated that if the driver has this card and has a problem, there is no telephone number to call. He asked if PSNH had a traffic manager? Mr. Despina stated that this was a good point and he would add a telephone number to call in an emergency.

Tom Gorrill of Gorrill-Palmer Consulting Engineers who prepared the Traffic Impact Study completed a review of the impacts and recommended improvements. He noted that there are a lot of studies that need to be done before we can utilize Shattuck Way. He stated that the studies would provide more information on other impacts of the roadway. He thought the study would take 18-24 months.

Alex Hanson asked about people living at Gosling Meadows who are going to McDonald's. Will an additional pedestrian signal be needed? Mr. Gorrill confirmed that it would.

Mr. Gorrill noted the need to also install a median on Gosling Road at the Mobil Station to prevent most of the accidents occurring there. Alex Hanson asked what happens on the other side of the island where trucks park? Mr. Gorrill stated that he was unaware of this problem but that NO PARKING signs could be installed.

Ralph DiBernardo stated that he wanted to be very careful in cramming Shattuck way into this. He wants to see the technical reports and has reservations about the impact of Shattuck Way becoming a parallel highway to the Spaulding in the future.

Jonathan Bailey asked if there were plans for pedestrian improvement on the Woodbury/Gosling intersection?

John Burke stated one thing we are recommending is there be an optimization of the timing at Woodbury and Gosling, which includes pedestrian timing. He stated that this review should include a full evaluation of the pedestrian crossing.

Ralph DiBernardo stated as part of the motion we concur with TAC.

Steve Parkinson referred to condition #13 from the TAC approval regarding a compliance bond as part of the truck management plan. John stated that the suggestion was that it may be possible for truckers to bond so that there is a monetary loss to them if they violate the stated route. He believes that the proposed contractual language between PSNH and the trucking firms would have the same effect. Attorney Ciandella confirmed that contractual language would be included subject to approval of the City Attorney.

**MOTION** made by Steve Parkinson to approve as presented with the TAC conditions and include the following additional stipulations:

1. Add a crosswalk and pedestrian signal for people crossing the mall/plaza driveway to McDonalds.
2. Request that Newington include no parking on the northside of Gosling Road between Woodbury Ave. and the mall/plaza entrance.

Seconded by Ted Gray. **Motion** passed.

Attorney Frank Quinn of Boynton, Waldron, Doleac, Woodman & Scott, spoke on behalf of Fox Run Mall Crossing. He stated that on Tuesday a letter was delivered to the Committee outlining their clients' position. He referred to the two left turn lanes that are the primary access to our clients' property off Gosling Road. Their position throughout the planning/zoning process is that Gosling Road is an already overburdened roadway in the City of Portsmouth and within the Town of Newington. 70 trucks/day is going to add to that burden. He was appreciative of what PSNH is trying to do to alleviate some of the traffic and safety concerns. He stated that PSNH admitted that there will be times when the number of 70 will increase, which again will burden this already burdened roadway. Atty. Quinn referred to the Master Plan and that Gosling and Woodbury Avenue are currently ranking in the top three intersections of crashes from a study submitted in 2003. On page 124 of the Master Plan it lists locations within the city that operate poorly. No.1 voted intersection is Gosling Rd./Spaulding Turnpike.

John Burke stated that PSNH's proposal to fund the construction of an additional through lane will free up potentially free-up more green time for the double left-turners into the mall. The second point is that the existing double left-turn lane, which solely serves the Newington Malls is within the City of Portsmouth. In other words, the City's property is currently being used to facilitate traffic to the malls and the proposal here is to widen the road to maintain that capacity, which is in the malls interest.

Atty. Quinn stated that restricted deliveries is the way to go and that Shattuck is the best way to get trucks down into PSNH. We understand the need to study Shattuck and our concern is that we are talking about 2010 and believe there needs to be a stipulation now as this project comes on line, that in the event that after the City does its thing and Newington does its thing that it be mandated that if that study suggests or approves that Shattuck is the way to go, we believe now is the time to put that stipulation on so that we are back before the City to try to mandate that the truck deliveries occur via Shattuck.

Alex Hanson stated that this is a matter that TAC has been working on and this information should go back to TAC for further consideration.

Attorney Quinn then spoke on rail stating that the TAC approval of April 30<sup>th</sup> suggests that the rail study be provided prior to Planning Board approval. He understands that the rail study now will not be completed until the end of the month so the issue of rail will go by the boards. He strongly suggested using rail for the project.

Chairman Hanson asked Atty. Ciandella to conclude. Atty. Ciandella stated he had three responses to Atty. Quinn's presentation. John Burke addressed the improvement and recovery of the left lane. However, the night delivery issue is problematic for residents of the road and there is an associated timber safety issue that would make it impossible for nighttime deliveries. Secondly, Shattuck is in play as part of our idea for a long-term solution with the idea it be part of the solution. We should take care when we go to TAC in terms of the crafting a condition that does not prejudice the study. Third, the TAC approval talks about providing to the Planning Board an update on the rail issue and to remain open to rail as a future option. This will be provided to the Planning Board in an executive summary.

- (B) 1166 Greenland Rd. – Proposed convenience store, car wash & related site improvements – TAC Recommended Approval with Stipulations (5/10/04 Planning Dept. letter) and Site Plan attached. Dennis Moulton of Millette, Sprague & Colwell addressed the Committee. The subject property site is a Sunoco Gas Station on Rte.33 on Greenland Road off Exit 3, Portsmouth. The proposal is 20 acres in size. There is a small developed area off the road with the rest of the site mostly wetlands. There is proposed a convenience store, filling station including islands, four vehicle fuel islands and three-tractor trailer fueling stations on the property with the addition of a car wash. In addition to the use of the fueling stops there is a small rectangular sq. ft. convenience store and certain times during the day tractor-trailers use the property for a rest stop. Sometimes tractor-trailers drop off their loads and go off for some other deliveries, come back and pickup their trailers and move on. When the store closes at night, tractor-trailers use the site on any given night for sleeping. The proposed condition will eliminate the opportunity for this to happen by eliminating the number of tractor-trailers at night. This will be a 24-hour operation, the fueling islands will remain the same, in addition to the car wash, a larger convenience store will exist. The owners will have video cameras to survey the entire area.

Ron Cypher asked if the truckers will be notified in advance of the changes. Dennis stated that the changes will be very evident with barriers in place. As part of the agreement Aranco will maintain certain standards, maintain operations and conditions for the site.

John Burke stated that many of the onsite issues have been addressed from previous proposals but concerns now still exist off-site. What we are seeing at the truck stop in Greenland is truckers now parking on Rte.33 and Ocean Rd. This is easily addressed with NHDOT who has to post and enforce the no parking areas. The 2<sup>nd</sup> issue of concern we have is that there is an increase in traffic per the applicant's traffic study and since it is a state road there should be a

stipulation that they extend the left-turn lane striping and signal timing to the state's satisfaction. As they have gone from a 24-hour heavy truck use to a more peak-hour intense convenience store and car wash use – this may be an issue.

Chief LeClaire stated a few reservations regarding onsite development. We have a fuel facility with 9 parking spaces where enforcement will be problematic. Where are the 30-40 trucks that are coming here now going to go – the road? We also need something better than jersey barriers around the area. Alex Hanson asked Lucy Tillman if she had any comments on the jersey barriers versus the rocks and dirt.

Lucy Tillman stated that Planning explored all kinds of mechanisms to keep the trucks out of the wetlands and it was felt that the jersey barriers in combination with the boulders and curbing was the solution. These are included as part of the approval from the Board of Adjustment and for the conditional use through the Planning Board and Conservation Commission.

Ted Gray asked about continuing the arrows on the exit so there would be no question of vehicles on the exit. Also in the wintertime, there is concern that vehicles exiting the car wash will track ice onto the roads. He stated that employees have to salt to ensure this does not occur.

**MOTION** by Ted Gray to approve as presented with the stipulation that arrows be provided at the exit and in the winter salt is put down where the cars exit the car wash to prevent ice and avoid accidents. Seconded by Ron Cypher. Motion passed.

- (C) Greenleaf Avenue/Peeverly Hill Road – Resident request for review of intersection geometrics – 4/1/04 email attached. Steve Parkinson referred to on-site stating that trucks will require the turning radii provided. It was discussed that the car carriers who are using the intersection are legal abutters to Greenleaf Ave. John Burke stated that there will be a truck route study next year.

**MOTION** made by Ralph DiBernardo to place on file. Seconded by Fire Chief LeClaire. Motion passed.

**VI. ADJOURNMENT:**

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:45 a.m.

Respectfully submitted: \_\_\_\_\_  
Elaine E. Boucas