

**PORTSMOUTH
TRAFFIC & SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING
9:00 AM – Thursday, May 12, 2005
City Hall - Council Chambers**

I. CALL TO ORDER:

John Hynes Chairman, called the meeting to order at approximately 8:05 a.m.

II: ROLL CALL:

Members Present:

Councilor John Hynes, Chairman	Assist. Fire Chief Steve Achilles
Ralph DiBernardo, Deputy Chairman	Ted Gray, Member
Steve Parkinson, Public Works Director	Ron Cypher, Member
Dave Young, Deputy Police Chief	Jonathan Bailey, Member

Chairman John Hynes turned the meeting over to Deputy Chairman Ralph DiBernardo.

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 14, 2005. Seconded by Steve Parkinson. Motion passed.

IV. COMMUNICATONS:

(A) **African American Burial Ground Committee** – Invitation to April 11, 2005 City Council work session to review committee’s report attached – **MOTION** made by Ralph DiBernardo to place on file. Seconded by Steve Parkinson. Motion passed.

(B) **Vaughan Street** – Safety Issues – resident letter attached – Ralph DiBernardo stated that the Committee has looked at this issue and asked the Committee if they need to take another look at this based on the concerns of the letter. Steve Parkinson stated that part of the issue at that time of year are the snowbank that narrow the streets even more. Ralph stated he thought it would be affected by the moving of the Portsmouth Herald in the near future and will see changes there again.

Deputy Police Chief informed the committee that he checked their accident status for the last three years, the intersection at Vaughan and Maplewood and also Maplewood at Vaughan and it was determined there have not been any reports of accidents in the last three years.

MOTION made by Herb Bunnell to place on file. Seconded by Steve Parkinson. Motion passed.

(C) **Hanover Street/Vaughan Mall** – Downtown employee request for crosswalk signage – Ralph DiBernardo stated that John Burke gave him a brief background before he left. It seems to be generally related to the construction in the area.

Parking has been displaced. Vaughan Mall employees are parking in the garage because of the displacement so we have a larger number of newer people crossing Vaughan St. to the Parade mall and in light of the construction there are two things going on, more traffic, more people. Mr. Burke suggested to pass on to the committee we need to look and redefine the crosswalk at Bananas and he suggested there be a crosswalk at the end of Fleet St. to take you to the parking garage side to the mall. Whether it belongs on the right or left-hand corner would be a question of how to get people away from the construction.

Steve Parkinson stated there is currently a crosswalk from Fleet St. to the opposite side as part of the construction of the Hilton project. They have closed the sidewalk from High St. down to Fleet St. and have put in a temporary crosswalk. Also, the City has a sidewalk project in conjunction with the Hilton on both sides of the street as part of the bus shelter and turnout area to get the buses out of Market Sq. The City has looked at putting permanent crosswalks across Hanover St. from Fleet St.

Ralph DiBernardo stated we have made this part of the Committee's review.

One letter asks for a response and asked Steve if he would please respond to those letters.

MOTION made by Ted Gray to place on file and ask Steve to respond to the letters. Seconded by Herb Bunnell. Motion passed.

- (D) **Rt. 1A/Rt. 1B – Request for Traffic Signal Warrants Analysis** – 4/1/05 letter to NHDOT and previous letters attached – Ralph DiBernardo informed the Committee this was informational only. John Burke notified the State that it has been over a year and a half since we asked for an analysis of the intersection of Rte.1A and 1B, Wentworth Road and request that the state fulfill their obligation. Steve Parkinson stated the intersection of Rte.1A and 1B is owned by the State of New Hampshire and it is their responsibility to analyze the traffic. Hopefully a decision will be made before reconstruction of the Sagamore Bridge. Steve Parkinson will be following this. No action.

- (E) **High Street/Deer Street** – Resident concern for one-way violations – 4/4/05 letter attached – This also relates to the Hilton construction project. John Burke also looked at this and it appears there are residents and owners of property on the hill that have decided to avoid construction from Hanover St. end and go into their places from the Deer St. end the wrong way on a one-way street. In addition, some construction equipment has been reported going the wrong way. Ralph stated he felt this was enforcement. Steve Parkinson will speak with the contractor.

MOTION made by Herb Bunnell to refer this to the Police Department for enforcement. Seconded by Jonathan Bailey. Motion passed.

V. **OLD BUSINESS:**

- (A) **Pearl Street One-Way Proposal** – Resident letters attached – Ralph DiBernardo stated the neighborhood created a survey form expressing their desires on how to address the problem and the vast majority would like to have Pearl St. one-way toward Hanover and not eliminate any parking as parking is a premium in the area. Also noted that residents are misinformed of residential parking on Hanover Street which Steve has addressed.

Steve Parkinson prepared and presented to the Committee a plan of all the streets along Islington and McDonough area so they could see what we have currently for one-ways and which direction they go. John Burke looked at this before he left and the desire was to have it one-way from Islington into Hanover. It solves the issue of parking and traffic flow on Pearl St. and does not create a hardship. Ralph DiBernardo asked if the Committee would like to have a decision today or look at this as a committee for a month.

Ted Gray suggested looking at this plan until the next meeting as there may be some changes to be considered.

Steve Parkinson suggested having a person there for a day to observe the traffic to see what kind of flow on Pearl St. at the am and pm peak. From a safety point of view, it is better to send traffic to the Bridge St. intersection than to have it come up to the intersection of Islington St.

MOTION made by Deputy Chief Young for Department of Public Works to do the traffic survey and report back next month. Seconded by Assist. Fire Chief Achilles. Motion passed.

VI. NEW BUSINESS:

- (A) **Bartlett/Thornton St.** – Resident concern for 4-way stop violations – Fire Chief Achilles referred to the on-site visit and that the committee felt a 4-way may not be appropriate for this intersection.

Steve Parkinson suggested having a consultant look at what the warrants are at the intersection to determine if this is an appropriate area for a 4-way stop. Ralph DiBernardo stated there is a question in this committee's mind whether the 4-way stop is legitimate as there is a criteria for 4-way stops. One issue is when stop signs are not justified people ignore them and have statistics to prove it.

Ron Cypher went out there Monday morning, parking his car half way down Thornton. His wife counted the cars as he concentrated on who went through without stopping. Counted 18 cars that rolled through the stop sign, no attempt to stop. Some went left and some straight. There were 4 cars with no attempt to stop at all and probably doing 30 MPH through the stop sign going straight. Three cars came to a complete stop out of 25. Dave Young asked if this was traffic on Bartlett. Ron answered yes.

Steve Parkinson stated that stop signs are not to be used to control speed. 4-way stops are normally warranted when you have equal flow of traffic on various lanes at intersections. It is obvious that Bartlett has the heavier traffic flow at the Bartlett/Thornton intersection, little traffic on Thornton.

Ralph DiBernardo stated there is the future issue of the Children's Museum which will come before this committee with respect to traffic & safety in the area.

Ralph DiBernardo stated Steve has a good suggestion to look at the intersection and see how it fits into the criteria of the signage that is there before taking any action. The other point is to look at enforcement temporarily.

Steve suggested rather than pay our consultant to come out to look at the intersection at this point in time, we may want to wait until the traffic study comes in for the Children's Museum and then incorporate that study and see what the projections are at that time.

MOTION made by Steve Parkinson to have the Police Department increase enforcement as appropriate for that intersection and to look at the warrants of the intersection in conjunction with the traffic study conducted by the Children's Museum in the near future. Seconded by Herb Bunnell. Motion passed.

- (B) **Haven/Bracket St.** – Resident request for crosswalk – Ted Gray referred to on-site stating it gets traffic early in the morning when school starts and a little more when school ends. The dilemma is there is no real place to put a crosswalk that would be effective to the children.

Steve Parkinson suggested a sign to alert school area, children crossing.

John Hynes referred to the blinking sign that Liberty Mutual has and thought it may be a caution sign to slow traffic rather than a crosswalk.

Ralph DiBernardo referred to aged school signs that could be brought up to date. It was suggested that there should be an educational component and that the Police Dept. work with the school principal and perhaps have a hand out as a reminder that when dropping off your children, you are in a residential neighborhood where many children walk. When you leave the school please be alert.

Deputy Chief Young stated this could be done and has been done before.

Jonathan Bailey stated this is a very low traffic density going through this intersection.

MOTION made by Ted Gray to put up corrected signs and try the education program for parents of the children. Seconded by Asst. Fire Chief Achilles. Motion passed.

- (C) **Church Street** – Downtown Business Owner request to locate dumpsters in the public right-of-way -City Council referral to us requiring our comment on the impact of the traffic flow for the City Council to make a decision as to whether they will grant a license to put dumpsters in the City right-of-ways.

Keith Malinowski owner of the building at 84-88 Pleasant Street stated he was waiting to hear the committee's recommendations. This situation has been there a long time and feels it does not affect traffic in any way. The only issue he has is people throwing stuff in dumpsters and not picking it up if it falls on the ground. There are four dumpsters there, only one is his. The other three belong to the State Street building that Peter Florus owns. Ralph DiBernardo asked if they were approached as we are hearing from only one owner.

Mr. Malinowski stated the City Attorney is under the impression that all the dumpsters were his when in fact only one is. His dumpster is emptied twice a week and is full. Ralph DiBernardo feels this probably should go back to the Legal Dept. before we go any further with this. We are only dealing with one of the four dumpsters and if the Legal Dept. realizes this and contacts the other owners, then we would be discussing the whole picture and not one-quarter of it.

Ralph DiBernardo stated there is a yellow line that was painted by an occupant of one of the businesses to create a parking space for themselves.

Steve Parkinson stated that the section of Church Street between Porter and State St. and the section between State to Court St. are being dealt with in the Legal Dept.

Jonathan Bailey asked if it is appropriate to hold off on a decision to see what Legal says and how it relates to parking.

Mr. Malinowski stated that his tenants use City service and not the dumpster. The only ones using the dumpster is the Green Monkey and they have an agreement with 430 North to use it as well.

Jonathan Bailey questioned what our specific function is here?

Ralph DiBernardo stated creation and elimination of parking is the Parking Committee. But when parking effects public safety it has its place before this Committee.

Steve Parkinson made the suggestion to table this matter for a report back from Legal as we only have one quarter of the problem here. We need clarification from Legal.

Ralph DiBernardo stated for the minutes, we found out there are four dumpsters with at least three owners that we know of and also want to clarify parking issue on that segment of the street, is there or isn't there parking?

MOTION made by Steve Parkinson to table this matter until a report is received from Legal Dept. for clarification. Seconded by Herb Bunnell. Motion passed.

- (D) **Strawbery Banke Parking Lot** – directional signage – Planning Department referral – Ralph DiBernardo stated this is an issue related to the building of a new visitor's center at Strawberry Banke and its effect on traffic. The issue specifically deals with buses leaving the parking lot and turning left and not being able to take the corner onto Marcy St. The desire is to direct them in a direction that is better accommodating for buses. John Burke pointed out this is another area for signage and education.

Gloria Guyette, 7 Hancock St. stated that this was an issue 10 years ago Strawberry Bank proposed a large building and related site changes. One of the agreements for the visitor's center to receive approval for traffic flow from the proposed changed parking lot and closing the entrance from Marcy St. The argument for closing the entrance on Marcy St. was to direct traffic away from Marcy St. Now that Strawberry Banke only has one exit the traffic flow from that exit could be directed. The exit was closed on Marcy St. but no other changes were affected. The whole project fell apart despite the fact there were monies to make the signs. Now that the visitor center is going up again and the new restaurant going in Ms. Guyette is asking that this be revisited. It was suggested that the exit from the parking lot onto Hancock St. be a right hand turn up to Pleasant St. with proper signage on Pleasant St. directing buses and cars. In addition to this signage Strawberry Banke literature and website have the appropriate maps to direct buses on how to enter and exit Strawberry Banke.

Ted Gray stated that this was a good idea but does not know that it is our responsibility to do it.

Ralph DiBernardo stated this is a Planning Dept. referral and should go back to the Planning Dept. But again, we are required to look at the big picture. We need to see if Mrs. Guyette's request to create a no left turn would create other problems.

Deputy Police Chief Dave Young suggested tabling this to next month and have a representative from Strawberry Banke here along with Lucy Tillman from Planning to get more information about the particulars.

Ralph DiBernardo would like to know from Planning whether the restaurant was going through any review process, and will the Committee have any input into traffic because of restaurant change and what is the process for the visitor center.

MOTION made by Asst. Fire Chief Achilles to table until next month and have a representative from Strawberry Banke present as well as Lucy Tillman, Planning Dept. Seconded by Ron Cypher. Motion passed.

VII. OTHER BUSINESS:

- (A) Steve Parkinson referred to the letter received from Del Morse, resident of Atlantic Heights Neighborhood about a situation at the intersection of Ranger Way and the access road to Boise Cascade. There is a yield sign at the intersection at Ranger and the trucks are running through that yield sign. The residents are requesting a stop sign, but the bigger problem at the intersection is that it is wide open. Erecting a stop sign will be problematic. Second issue with that particular stretch of road is that the truck traffic to Boise has increased dramatically with trucks stacked up all the way out to Kearsarge which is creating traffic problems for people trying to get in and out of the neighborhood. Steve suggested putting this on the on-site for next month and take a look at the whole intersection area. We need to work with the state as the City owns the road going in, and the state owns the area to the right going out underneath the bridge. It will be a joint effort.

Ms. Del Morse, 35 Concord Way was present and stated that Mr. Parkinson explained the issue covering the whole thing and she stated it is a danger.

Mr. Kevin Donlon of 37 Concord Way suggested looking Monday morning as on any Sunday night between 2 and 8 trucks are stacked there with overnight parking, it is not a truck stop and would like your help.

Ralph DiBernardo stated that the Police Department will take a look at that. Issue about Jake brakes on I-95 was discussed. Steve Parkinson suggested having the residents send us a separate letter dealing with jake braking on 95 issue. Steve also referred to the improvement of the intersection at Market and 95 adding a second turn lane to Maine.

MOTION made by Ralph DiBernardo to place on next month's on-site. Seconded by Ron Cypher. Motion passed.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION to adjourn. Adjourned at approximately 9:10 a.m.

Respectfully submitted: _____
Elaine E. Boucas