

PORTSMOUTH
TRAFFIC & SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING
9:00 AM – Thursday, August 11, 2005
City Hall - Council Chambers

DRAFT

I. CALL TO ORDER:

Ralph DiBernardo, Deputy Chairman, called the meeting to order at approximately 8:05 a.m.

II: ROLL CALL:

Members Present:

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

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

IV. OLD BUSINESS:

(A) **Pearl Street** – City Council Referral – (letters attached) – Ralph DiBernardo stated the Committee had some discussion at the on-site. The Committee took action on making Pearl St. one-way after input from a number of property owners and residents over a two-month period. This action was forwarded to City Council at which time a number of residents and business commercial owners of the area that were not aware of the previous discussion came before the council with concerns about the action taken. The City Council referred this back to us for further study and action. This Committee is considering tabling this until our new Traffic Engineer comes on board in September. We recognize there are concerns of some property owners and businesses and felt it would be appropriate for the new Traffic Engineer to have a look at the traffic pattern in the neighborhood. Suggested considering a sub-committee of 2 representatives from this committee, two residents and 2 business owners to meet with the new Traffic Engineer after she has a chance to looked this.

MOTION made by Jonathan Bailey to table until our Traffic Engineer looks at this and to create a sub-committee with citizens, businesses and members of this Committee to take another look at this issue. Seconded by Steve Parkinson. Motion passed.

Mr. DiBernardo spoke to the people present who are concerned with this issue and asked if this met their needs and asked if anyone wanted to speak. They stated they were satisfied with this. Mr. DiBernardo told them they would be notified at the appropriate time.

Because Islington Street is quite lengthy Mr. DiBernardo asked for a motion to go out of order so that we could hear from Coast Pontiac.

MOTION made by Steve Parkinson to hear the Coast Pontiac issue. Seconded by Ron Cypher. Motion passed.

V. NEW BUSINESS:

- (B) **Coast Pontiac Cadillac** – Proposed Entrance - (Plan attached) – Attorney Charles Griffin was present on behalf of Coast Pontiac. Also present was Vice President of Coast and Paul Connelly of Civilworks Consultants to answer any engineering questions the Committee may have. Coast Cadillac wants to relocate the existing driveway approximately 150’ farther down Cottage Street. Attorney Griffin referred to the plan. The reasons for the change are as follows: Cottage St. is not flat, has a crown which causes vans delivering vehicles to Coast to get caught thereby blocking traffic at both ends of Cottage St. This situation did not exist when Coast first moved to the site in 1962 as delivery vans carried 6 vehicles and today carry 10 and because of the increased length of vans has caused catching on the crown. Vehicles are delivered to Coast 2 or 3 times a week and take approximately 2-3 hours to unload. The relocation of the driveway will improve greater site distance. This proposal is consistent with American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials Standards. The NH DOT Regulations say that in the municipal area, driveways ideally should be located at least 100’ from an intersection and this driveway will be located in excess of 200’.

The 2nd aspect of this proposal, which is not a consideration of this Committee, however he explained that in connection with this driveway an 18-space parking lot used strictly for vehicles being serviced will be created.

The 3rd is landscaping consisting of arborvitae near the existing driveway to be closed off. The purpose of this is to minimize the visibility of the driveway and proposed parking lot. The two issues raised at the on-site, will be eliminating six parking spaces and Mr. DiBernardo asked if any kind of barrier would be placed there so that vehicles could not pass through? Attorney Griffin answered yes, we are willing to stipulate that we will put some kind of barrier in this area so that vehicles cannot exit that area on Cottage St. Question was raised about an alternate plan dealing with a 6’ wide paved area in place. Attorney Griffin spoke with Paul Connolly and stated this refers to essentially 6’ of existing entranceway, which needs to be left in place to allow drainage.

This proposal will result in decreased traffic on Cottage St. and Woodbury Ave., increase site distance and eliminate an unsafe situation by allowing vehicles to be off loaded on Coast property.

Attorney Griffin presented the Committee with a copy of the 1994 AASHTO Standards as well as NH DOT Driveway Design, given to Elaine for the record.

Fire Chief referred to their intent of having this driveway was so the car haulers could go in and unload. Is your proposal when this is completed, that there would be no unloading of car haulers on Cottage St. Attorney Griffin stated that is correct. Secondly, would that 6’ wide paved area make sense for drainage because of stormwater? Are you going to coordinate some means to ensure that does not become an impromptu entrance or exit? Attorney Griffin answered “yes”.

Ralph DiBernardo asked if the 6' could be 4' and still carry the water? 6' invites someone to try to squeeze through there. Steve Parkinson agreed to reducing it to 4' and then in conjunction with the barrier you are placing around the corner that it does not impede the flow of drainage.

Ralph wants the record to reflect that if this is favorably looked at by this Committee, we have included in our minutes that there will be no car carriers parked on Cottage St., parking or unloading. Suggested the truckers be educated in this aspect so it is carried out.

Alex McEachern, 81 Cottage St. spoke of his concern about what is being proposed here. Mr. McEachern referred to the City's Master Plan and read a section of the Plan relating to this. Mr. McEachern asked if any type of study has been done to focus on the By-pass? Mr. McEachern acknowledges that it is going to be a safer situation if the entrance is moved back down Cottage, thinks there's no question about that, but has a concern because this applicant was before this Committee before and went to the BOA for a variance to move his driveway and never did so and the variance lapsed. The reason as far as he could tell was Coast did not get the parking it wanted to put parking on residential lot and did not get this from the BOA and are now taking a second chance.

Steve Parkinson stated that the Rte.1 By-pass Committee is not only looking at the traffic circle, but also the northbound lane from traffic circle to main lane as well as the traffic circle south to Greenleaf Wood Drive. Nothing is definite at this point, there are some alternatives that have been looked at. Mr. McEachern is correct as far as the Circle is concerned, they are now looking at either a signal control or a flyover for the system. Looked at various configurations of connecting Borthwick Ave into the By-pass as well as Cottage Street into By-pass. Nothing has been finalized and will be sometime before they are. The whole Rte.1 By-pass project came to fruition because of the bridges across the By-pass.

MOTION made by Ted Gray to approve as presented with the stipulation that the 6' wide opening be reduced to 4' and an appropriate barrier be placed on the corner were the 6 parking places are being removed and these improvements will eliminate unloading or parking of carriers on Cottage Street.

Ralph DiBernardo stated we are only approving the driveway, this Committee does not have the authority to deal with the parking proposals, that will be before another Board. Seconded by Steve Parkinson. Motion passed.

OLD BUSINESS Continued:

- (C) **Islington Street** – Resident Concerns with Traffic/congestion and continued construction – report back –Mr. DiBernardo suggested going through each item to see which ones we can easily do, some will be referred to the Police Dept.
1. Proposing 20-MPH speed limit - Ralph stated this Committee has issues with 20 MPH on main roads and would not consider 20MPH at this time without further study.
 2. Use of Traffic Speed trailer at top of hill prior to Union St. – Capt. Champlin stated that traffic officers ran radar here and found average speed of 30 MPH and for the most part people were not speeding, a high of 38 MPH with most

cars going between 28 – 32 MPH. Ralph suggested putting the sign board there that states the speed vehicles are traveling.

3. Flashing signals indicating the approaching stop light a Cabot St. and same for Goodwin Park area – Ron Cypher noted that outbound there is a good block and half of site before light. Inbound there is a metal sign with stop light indicated on it on a pole some distance away, warning approaching signals. This committee will not act on this issue.
4. “No Passing on the Right” signs – Not enforceable.
5. “One way entrance and one way exit at Getty Station – Would like to see one way entrance in and out of the Station because of the massive size curb cuts. Ralph and Steve discussed this and the only way to make a change would be during a road project, cannot arbitrarily close off a driveway. Steve Parkinson stated similar to what we just did down at Bridge and Deer Streets and as part of the project there we tightened it up.
6. Curbing and signage at Getty Station to designate above – Only as part of a larger project.
7. Correct traffic congestion at Dunkin Donuts? It was agreed it is congested there – No action by the Committee.
8. Albany St. exiting “Right turn only”- Discussion, no action
9. Signs indicating crosswalks ahead requiring stopping – Discussion, no action
10. Entrance/exit from Store 24” closed onto Islington St. & directed to street by CVS and traffic light – City cannot do anything, private property.
11. Daily observe vehicles going wrong way on Union St. exiting onto Islington St. (its one way) – Police Dept. will monitor for a month and get back at the next meeting. Steve Parkinson will check the signage.
12. Jewell Court – left turning onto Jewell Court going west and left turning from Jewell Court onto Islington, will worsen when old City yard and Brewery are developed. Suggested closing Jewell Co. – Steve Parkinson referred to the traffic study being done by a consultant to look at the configuration of road, accidents, patterns and Steve has received a draft report of this, will look at it, and will be available to the committee at next month’s meeting.

Mr. Vaughan will be advised that this Committee has addressed his issues and be given a brief summary of what this Committee and the Police Dept. are able to do and that there is a study that will make suggestions for improvements to Islington St.

- (D) **Woodlawn Circle** – Report back from Police Department – Capt. Champlin referred to the on-site that there are no speed signs at the top. Cars are speeding there, not by much. 1. It is used as a cut through; 2. There is a lot of traffic coming in and out; and 3. Ford dealership uses it as a test-driving track. Recommends speed limit sign coming from Echo down Woodlawn. Steve Parkinson stated those streets are not listed under any speed limit in the Ordinance Book and as it is a tight residential area, recommended including these streets in the section of the Ordinance for 20 MPH.

MOTION made by Police Capt. Janet Champlin to recommend to the City council to include the Woodlawn Circle and Hillcrest Drive be included in the section of the Ordinance for speed limit of 20 MPH. Seconded by Asst. Fire Chief Achilles. Motion passed.

- (E) **Leary Field** – report back from Fire and Police Departments – The Fire Dept. did not have an opportunity for a truck to get to that area. Steve Parkinson stated that parking problem is on Sherburne St. the issue of the neighbors is cars park across from each other whether or not vehicles get through and suggested parking on one side be eliminated. Police Capt. Champlin stated there is really only a problem when there is a ballgame. During ballgames cars do park all over but an emergency vehicle is able to get through. Capt. Champlin suggested monitoring when there is a ballgame.

MOTION made by Police Capt. Champlin to place on file and Police Dept. will monitor. Seconded by Jonathan Bailey. Motion passed.

- (F) **Sherburne Road** – Report back from Police Department – Capt. Champlin reported Traffic Officers monitored speed and found it is either people living there or people visiting there as it is a dead-end neighborhood. There are about 8-11 new families with young small children. Recommended more signage. Steve Parkinson stated that the school zone signs will be updated. It was suggested that the Neighborhood Association be helpful. Ralph DiBernardo suggested the radar trailer be placed there at the end of this month prior to start of school.

VI. ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION to adjourn. Adjourned at approximately 9:20 a.m.

Respectfully submitted: _____
Elaine E. Boucas