

**PORTSMOUTH
TRAFFIC & SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING
9:00 AM – Thursday, March 9, 2006
City Hall - Council Chambers**

I. CALL TO ORDER:

Ken Smith Chairman, called the meeting to order at approximately 8:00 a.m.

II: ROLL CALL:

Members Present:

Councilor Ken Smith, Chairman	Fire Chief Chris LeClaire
Deborah Finnigan, Traffic Engineer	Ted Gray, Member
Steve Parkinson, Public Works Director	John Connors, Member
Deputy Police Chief Len DiSesa	Herb Bunnell, Member
	Jonathan Bailey

III. ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES:

IT WAS VOTED on a Motion by Steve Parkinson to accept the minutes of the Traffic & Safety Committee meeting of February 9, 2006. Seconded by Jonathan Bailey. Motion passed.

III. OLD BUSINESS:

- (A) **Cottage Street - Coast Pontiac Cadillac** – No Parking Signs – Debbie Finnigan stated they are currently constructing the new driveway and the signs were in order to make sure the car carriers don't park on the street which they currently do. They requested back in December to wait until February or March and suggested approving this.

Attorney Charles Griffin representing Coast Pontiac was present and stated the above was correct and the ground work has been done and awaiting hot topping plans to be done in April and the project should be completed by middle of May. The goal is to have everything done by May and asked to factor this into the recommendation of "no parking".

Steve Parkinson asked how far up from the driveway towards the first house is the last sign. Debbie Finnigan responded the last sign is approximately 20-30ft west of 160 Cottage Street on the southerly side. On the north side right up to the Armory (their second driveway).

MOTION made by Steve Parkinson to remove this from the table. Seconded by Ted Gray. Motion passed.

MOTION made by Steve Parkinson to approve the installation of "no parking" signs as outlined in the drawing from our Traffic Engineer once the project has been completed and refer this to the City Council for an Ordinance change. Seconded by Ted Gray. Motion passed.

- (B) **South Street/Summit Road – High School** - Request for no left turn – **MOTION** made by Steve Parkinson to remove this from the table. Seconded by Ted Gray. Motion passed.

Debbie Finnigan has spoken with Forest Randall whose concern is that the traffic backs up on Summit Ave. when parents are dropping off their students at school at 7:30 a.m. The traffic director, Janet Vincaguerra has had verbal abuse from people directed to go right and Forrest Randall thought if we put a left-hand turn it would help mitigate her abuse and move traffic out of the school more efficiently. Debbie Finnigan stated from her perspective it might help alleviate some of the issues of abuse by parents by her not letting them take a left turn. From a traffic perspective the vehicles will not be cleared out from school property. We could try it for 6 months to see if it helps her, but from a traffic perspective it won't alleviate the problem. Mr. Randall asked the committee to look at it again during the time frame that she was directing traffic which we did. The committee can put up the no left turn sign to help Ms. Vincaguerra or deny knowing from a traffic perspective it will not help alleviate the traffic queue. Ted Gray referred to buses taking a left turn and the person behind the bus will also take a left. Janet has a good handle on this. John Connors agreed it is a no win situation and if a left turn sign is there, we will just be pushing the traffic over a whole block. Deputy Police Chief agreed with John Connors and feels this would not solve the problem. The Police Department's position is opposed to a sign. Ms. Vinciguerra has full powers to direct traffic and does a wonderful job at controlling this choke point. She does take some abuse and also passing motorists thank her. Ted Gray asked if the Committee could revisit the possibility of incorporating more traffic going in and out of Andrew Jarvis Drive?

MOTION made by Herb Bunnell to deny the left turn sign. Seconded by Steve Parkinson. Motion passed.

- (C) **Noise Ordinance** – Jake Braking - Report Back –Memo dated December 12, 2006 (attached) – **MOTION** made by Ted Gray to remove from table. Seconded by Herb Bunnell. Motion passed.

Deputy Chief DiSesa referred to the Memo from Kathleen Dwyer (which also was included in the December packet) stating her recommendation of changing the Ordinance in order to deal with the issue of the jake brake system. This system creates a prohibitive amount of noise. The brake can be turned off by the driver by a switch on the dashboard. Referred to the two paragraphs on Page 2. The first is the current wording in the City Ordinance for noise and would remain the same. The second paragraph is the addition she is proposing. Kathleen Dwyer proposes this go before the City Council to change the Ordinance to include this 2nd paragraph. This would give the Police Department leverage to enforce this as a noise ordinance and need to be careful of not infringing on any interstate commerce, and cannot dictate to a trucking firm they shall not use the brake at any time, we could receive an injunction. The Deputy Police Chief recommends the Committee pass this recommendation on to the City Council for an Ordinance change.

MOTION made by Deputy Police Chief DiSesa to recommend to the City Council for approval an Ordinance change by adding Paragraph B to Chapter 3, Article IV, Section 3.402. Seconded by John Connors. Motion passed.

Steve Parkinson asked how you would advise the trucking companies of this Ordinance?

Deputy Chief DiSesa responded that once this Ordinance is in place nothing stops the Police from contacting firms that we know use certain streets where we have had noise complaints of jake braking and ask them to comply voluntarily. The Ordinance needs to be in place in order to give the Police Department leverage.

Chairman Ken Smith suggested signs in areas such as along the by-pass?

Steve Parkinson stated the problem along the by-pass is state jurisdiction.

Deputy Chief DiSesa feels the way of going about this is to have the companies cooperate with us and feels this can be done.

Jonathan Bailey referred to signs throughout the City explaining the noise Ordinance?

Chair Ken Smith responded they are focused more to motorcycles and loud mufflers.

John Connors asked if we could pick out the problems areas where we receive complaints and place signage in these areas to see what difference it may make?

Chair Ken Smith stated that on state roads such as Ocean and along the by-pass where we know the trucks are and use of brakes, would we have to get permission from the state for signs?

Steve Parkinson stated he was not sure they would be conducive to doing this.

Ted Gray asked if this effects the stopping ability of these trucks.

Deputy Chief DiSesa responded not at the speeds they are going and under 30 MPH can use regular brakes.

Fire Chief LeClaire asked if there was an exemption for emergency vehicles? Jake brakes are a safety device, they do help the vehicle stop. Fire and ladder apparatus driving around the City at City speeds use them to stop the vehicle. Deputy Police Chief DiSesa asked Fire Chief LeClaire if a truck going on a non-emergency run at normal City speed would the truck use the jake brake or only used in an emergency situation?

Fire Chief LeClaire answered all the time.

AMENDED MOTION made by Fire Chief LeClaire to add exemption of emergency vehicles. Seconded by Ted Gray. Motion passed.

(D) **Pearl/Islington Streets** – Sight distance – **MOTION** made by Ted Gray to remove from table. Seconded by Steve Parkinson. Motion passed.

Debbie Finnigan stated many complaints have been received from people having a hard time getting out of Pearl St. onto Islington Street because they cannot see oncoming traffic. The proposal to help mitigate this issue is to put a “No Parking here to Corner” sign and add a loading zone on the easterly side. Debbie Finnigan feels this will help people pulling out of Pearl St. onto Islington St. Debbie Finnigan reported that she spoke with a representative of Robbins Auto and they are okay with the proposal as long as it doesn’t impact their business.

The previous discussion was to put a crosswalk, a stop bar and stop sign to help better define the intersection. Most people do not park on a crosswalk and this will also help the sight distance issue.

MOTION made by Ted Gray to add a loading zone as well as a “No Parking Here to Corner” sign. Seconded by Herb Bunnell. Motion passed.

Steve Parkinson asked if the loading zone would be for a specific time period as other loading zones in town. This opens up these spaces for other parking during

off hours. The time the loading zone is in operation will be the same as other loading zones in the City.

- (E) **Pearl Street** – Proposed No Parking – **MOTION** made by Ted Gray to remove from the table. Seconded by Herb Bunnell. Motion passed.

Debbie Finnigan reported the proposal is to have resident parking only on the easterly side of the street during the day, currently 6-6 as on Hanover St. and no parking from 8-5 on the westerly side. The reason The Pearl St. Committee did this was so that residents are not penalized who might park there overnight and then have to get into their car at 6am to go to work. This is the current proposal to mitigate complaints that it is hard to get up and down Pearl St. There are a lot of trucks coming in and out of Henniman's. Debbie Finnigan feels this is a good idea to help make the street easier and safer to traverse and during the day, make truck traffic easier to pass.

MOTION made by Herb Bunnell to accept the Traffic Engineer's proposal for resident parking only on the easterly side of the street during the day, 6:00 am – 6:00 pm and no parking from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm on the westerly side. Seconded by Ted Gray. Motion passed.

IV. NEW BUSINESS:

- (A) **Middle Street Intersections – Cass, Madison, Union, and Cabot Streets** –

Sight distance – Debbie Finnigan reported that Dave Desfosses is concerned about sight distance as they are going to upgrade Middle St. and wants to make sure that we erect appropriate signs when the upgrade of Middle is being done. Looked at the existing conditions at the on-sight and as per discussion it was determined there are many locations that aren't currently signed that probably should be. The proposal is where it isn't currently signed to have "No Parking Here to Corner" 40 ft from the corner. From a safety perspective this is a good idea and there is plenty of parking within the area. Chair Ken Smith stated they also observed that some of the intersections did have signs up.

Chair Ken Smith has about the area where the bus stop was? Ted Gray stated there is a COAST bus stop but apparently is not a recognized bus stop. Steve Parkinson did not believe it was listed in the Ordinance and suggested making a recommendation to the City Council to include this particular area back from that corner an appropriate distance and have it strictly as a bus stop.

MOTION made by Jonathan Bailey to place "No Parking Here to Corner signs 40 ft sight distance from corner rather than the standard 20 ft. Seconded by Steve Parkinson. Motion passed.

Barbara Mackusick owner of 426 Middle St. on the corner of Cabot & Middle.

This is a law firm as well as residential and bringing the "No Parking" sign 40 ft back would hinder our clients and ask that it be 30 ft.

Chair Ken Smith stated they observed it was at the edge of the building and at the on-site there were two cars there and you could not see. This morning there was a Jeep SUV parked there and could not see and had to come out almost into the street to look at on-coming traffic before making a left out of there and this is the reason the on-site felt it should be 40 ft plus it would be consistent with all the other streets.

Ms. Mackusick agreed but was concerned about losing parking spaces. Chair Ken Smith stated the Committee took this under advisement when they were there and that it would leave at least one space in front of her property.

MOTION made by Steve Parkinson to recommend to the City Council to add that the bus stop be located on Middle St. at Madison St. Seconded by Deputy Police Chief DiSesa. Motion passed.

Jonathan Bailey asked if we wanted to include language that we are tying this to the stops that COAST is actively using, the stops don't change often but certainly change. An old bus stop that hasn't been used in years but is still in the Ordinance. Do we want to coordinate this with the schedule that COAST is using?

Steve Parkinson wasn't sure you can tie a City Ordinance to something such as that.

Chair Ken Smith stated getting a report back on whether it was still active or inactive.

Steve Parkinson stated typically when they change stops they work through this Committee. Would prefer to have it included in the bus stop for the Ordinance section.

V. ADJOURNMENT: MOTION to adjourn. Adjourned at approximately 8:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by:
Elaine Boucas, Recording Secretary