

**PORTSMOUTH
TRAFFIC & SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING
8:00 a.m. – Thursday, October 12, 2006
City Hall - Council Chambers**

I. CALL TO ORDER:

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

II. ROLL CALL: Members Present:

Councilor Ken Smith, Chairman	Ted Gray, Member
Steve Parkinson, P.E. Public Works Director	Jonathan Bailey, Member
Deputy Police Chief Len DiSesa	John Connors, Member
Assist. Fire Chief Steve Achilles	Eric Spear, Member
Deborah Finnigan, P.E., Traffic Engineer	Christina Westfall, Member

III. ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES:

IT WAS VOTED on a Motion made by Assist. Fire Chief Achilles to accept the minutes of the September 14th meeting. Seconded by Ted Gray. Motion passed.

IV. NEW BUSINESS:

- (A) **Islington Street – Request for 25 MPH** – (letter dated 09/21/06 attached) – Deputy Police Chief DiSesa stated that complaints have been received from residents concerning what they consider to be excessive speed, there also have been accidents on Islington St. 3 within 2 days of each other in the last week which created some stir. The Police Dept. has done a traffic survey on upper Islington St. What the public perceives to be excessive speed does not in fact turn out to be that. The average speed is 35 MPH, we did two week days in June. The problem we are finding is congestion on the lower part there are a lot of intersections, parking on both sides, it is a narrow street, people are sometimes inattentive to bicyclists and pedestrians. The contributing factor to the accidents last week seemed to be loose dirt more than speed, the bicyclists slipped on loose dirt. These are the issues we are finding. The upper part of Islington St. is mostly residential, the street widens up a bit, perhaps we could look at some engineering component that may slow that street down, maybe stripe it. The reality is they are not really speeding for the volume of traffic, we had 8,000 cars on those two June days. The Police Department feels that enforcement is not the only solution. It needs to be an educational aspect for the public, engineering to slow things down and enforcement which we are doing. Deputy Police Chief DiSesa answered the residents letters who wanted the speed limit reduced to 20-25 MPH, we don't see that as the solution to this problem. The radar was set up just past the overpass where speed is picked up where we could see if it were a speeding issue. The average speed was 31 to 40 MPH, so the average speed was 35, the 85 percentile of this survey we are doing around 38 MPH, not excessive speed for that strip of road. A stealth state will be placed on lower Islington St.

MOTION made by Steve Parkinson to refer to the Public Works Department for a report back on some proposed improvements for that corridor and have the

Police Department place a stealth stat at that location. Seconded by Jonathan Bailey. Motion passed.

- (B) **Metro Restaurant** – Parking Lot Gated – (e-mail dated 9/28/06 attached) – Asst. Fire Chief Achilles referred to the on-site, it was on their land and did not seem that it would effect any traffic on that short stretch of road or going into the parking garage.

Steve Parkinson asked who uses the gate and who controls this gate? Debbie Finnigan responded the same as Porter St. they will have a button inside their car to activate the gate.

The Chair stated that the spaces are leased out during the day to some of the area businesses. The lot would be open at night during restaurant hours.

John Connors stated that people coming out of the Restaurant lot take the wrong turn into the square.

MOTION made by Assist. Fire Chief Achilles to approve their request and place a “No Right Turn” sign at the lot. Seconded by Eric Spear. Motion passed.

- (C) **Tanner at Hill Streets** – No Parking at Tanner St. at Hill Street – Jonathan Bailey referred to the on-site with the question of where City property ended and where private property began making it difficult for the Committee to ascertain whether or not there is space for parking or no parking and suggested referring back to Public Works to find out where the pavement ends and where the City property is before deciding what our next steps would be.

MOTION made by Jonathan Bailey to refer this to the Public Works Department to find out where the pavement ends and where the City property is. Seconded by Ted Gray. Motion passed.

- (D) **Aldrich Road** – Traffic issues – (various correspondence attached) – Debbie Finnigan referred to the residents of Aldrich Road having concerns with speed and trucks. Debbie Finnigan referred them to this Committee for discussion to see what we could do and what they might like.

Julie Poteet, 286 Aldrich Road, has two small children and is scared at the speed which cars travel between 4-6 pm. She gave the neighbors flyers to get feedback and was overwhelmed at the response. Some comments were, there are at least 20 children on the street, there are two “Children playing” signs that are rusted and not seen, people are afraid of backing out of their driveway especially around School and Aldrich, are nervous when their children are at bus stops. Referred to an article from the Portsmouth Herald in 1988 to show this has been going on for 20 years. They are asking for more enforcement, stop signs on School at Aldrich and Aldrich at Boss, speed bumps, trees so that people zig zag round the trees and asked for help in reducing speed.

Amy Lahey, 260 Aldrich Road – She has three children, 5,4, and 1 and a dog. Most of the traffic on the street are people cutting through from Islington to Middle St. or vice versa. There are two signs posted for speed, problem is the signs are at the end beginning from Islington to Aldrich and Middle to Aldrich, when entering from Sewall you don’t see the speed limit signs. The “children playing” signs are rusted and old. Would like to see a 3-way stop at Sewall and Boss to help eliminate some of the speed.

Susan Neilson, 31 Aldrich Road – There was a pedestrian that got hit at 6:30 a.m. this morning at the corner of Aldrich and Middle, she wasn't hurt. Traffic between 6 and 8a.m. is mostly tractor trailer trucks roaring down the street and her windows rattle when they go by. She runs in the early morning, looks both ways before crossing and barely gets across when someone whips around the corner from Middle racing down Aldrich. She has seen an increase over the years, most recently around 7:30pm with her dog, a gentleman came down from Islington, had no intention of stopping, backed up and harassed her, finally sped off and screeched around the corner. Went into her home and found Julie's letter stating we need to do something about the speeding on Aldrich Road. We have a great family neighborhood, we want to protect it and hopefully you will be able to help us out.

Deputy Police Chief DiSesa asked if she had a plate number from the person who harassed her. She responded it was dark and unfortunately was not able to see it as he sped off.

MOTION made by Deputy Police Chief to initiate a stealth stat survey for speed and a report back for next meeting. Seconded by John Connors. Motion passed.

Deputy Police Chief DiSesa stated that Aldrich is on their radar screens for traffic unit and will follow up on that and wants to do the survey first and get a lock on the speeding issues referred to this morning. Will also check accident stats for the last five years and will have have a report back for the next meeting. The whole street including the intersections will be checked. The Police will continue to have regular enforcement there.

Asst. Fire Chief Achilles asked Steve Parkinson what improvements other than sidewalks have been made that might alleviate this problem?

Steve Parkinson responded that the only work done there were the replacement of sidewalks, the upper end was curbed and sidewalks were installed at locations that didn't have sidewalks. Also stop signs cannot be used to control speed, We are mandated to follow certain rules and regulations when we install signage.

There are other things we can do to try to control speed such as traffic calming measure like bump outs. The intersection of Middle and Aldrich is wide open seal of asphalt and may want to look at as well to make it less inviting to round corner and keep going.

The Chair asked if Aldrich Road is allowed on the truck route?

Steve stated it is not designated as a truck route but also it is not a street that prevents trucks on it.

The Chair welcomed the neighbors back at the next meeting and will keep working on this.

- (E) **Middle Street** – Crosswalk (letter dated August 3, 2006 attached) – Debbie Finnigan passed out pictures to the committee and reported that it looks like the crosswalk was repainted. Recommended putting a “Crosswalk Ahead” sign as it is a curvy section.

Steve Parkinson stated there was a request from neighbors on both sides of the street for a crosswalk. It is not an ideal location, but thinks signage at the crosswalk and one in advance of it would help the situation.

MOTION made by Steve Parkinson to place “Crosswalk Ahead” signs on both sides and one in advance of it. Seconded by Eric Spear. Motion passed

Jonathan Bailey referred to the top of Greenleaf crossing Lafayette has a fair amount of pedestrian traffic, kids crossing to the high school, families going to the Day Care at the Church, not an ideal crosswalk location, but maybe needs consideration.

John Connors stated that because of the hill there are a lot of visibility problems with confusion and congestion there now that a crosswalk would multiply and could not imagine trying to walk the crosswalk there and try to watch cars from the left and right of me, and behind me with blind spots, not a good place for a crosswalk.

- F. **Peirce Island Boat Ramp** – Parking of Boat Trailers (letter dated 9/21/06 attached) – Ted Gray referred to suggestions of how to park boat rigs. Currently there is a proposal to have one-way with diagonal parking but it won't work when taking car and trailer out, you'll have to do less than a 90 degree angle which can't be done. The Chairman of the Peirce Island Committee thought this Committee could take a look and come up with something that would be a better solution for dropping off and picking up boats. There is a map that shows parking (not available at this meeting).

MOTION made by Jonathan Bailey to table until next meeting so that Ted Gray and Steve Parkinson can look at this for ideas. Seconded by Deputy Police Chief DiSesa. Motion passed.

V. **OLD BUSINESS:**

- (A) **Route 1 (Lafayette Rd) at Peverly Hill /Elwyn Road Traffic Signal** – Attached NH DOT response dated 9/29/06 with attachments) – Debbie Finnigan received a response back from the State and they requested more information. They were in some concurrence that we should either have a split phase or have a dual left depending on cost and impact on Rte.1. They now have the information requested and she has not yet heard back from them.

MOTION made by Steve Parkinson to place on file. Seconded by Jonathan Bailey. Motion passed.

- (B) **Café Kilim** – Crosswalk – The Chair stated this was brought up to him again to look at it again and refer it to the Parking Committee. The crosswalk would eliminate a parking space. The Chair has tried to get in touch with Café Kilim and has not had a return call. The Chair is not in favor of the loss of a parking space to put in another crosswalk as there are two already there up further. However, there are more people crossing the street now. Before referring this to Parking Steve Parkinson would like to table this pending the report back from the Islington Street to see how it fits it with other recommendations that have been made.

MOTION made by Steve Parkinson to table this until the report is received back from Islington Street. Seconded by Asst. Fire Chief Achilles. Motion passed.

VI. **OTHER BUSINESS:**

- (A) **Taft/Arthur/Cleveland Roads** - Deputy Police Chief DiSesa reported they had some problems with their new stealth stat computer and were not able to have this for you. It is in the works now and will have the statistics when it comes up

for discussion. The Chair asked him to get in touch with Elaine for the next Agenda.

- (B) **Frank Jones Neighborhood – Truck Traffic** - Lenore Weiss Bronson referred to the letter she wrote to the City Council that was referred to this Committee and is wondering when this will be dealt with. The Chair reported this was dealt with a few months ago and was placed on file with a report back because of a project on the CIP. It is something that we are still looking into. She reported that the strict enforcement on Woodbury has made a difference and thanked the Police Department. The rezoning will encourage congestion and on Woodbury Ave. another strip mall is being put in with Rite Aid at the end of the street. The truck traffic servicing that location because the residential area of Woodbury is an SR2 neighborhood with no truck traffic allowed on that street. The state signage sends people off Rte.95 and off state road into Woodbury Avenue, they think they are going into the malls. They get on Woodbury Ave. to go to the Fox Run Mall and get lost in our neighborhood. The State has been contacted regarding the signage. We will have more traffic from the new Home Depot that is being built. Please get the truck traffic off Woodbury Avenue. She is here on behalf of her neighborhood to save it and is asking for help if anything can be done. Felt that her letter deserved the respect of being dealt with rather than being tabled or put on file.

Deputy Police Chief DiSesa responded that they are concerned and not fair to say that your letter was ignored. The letter was taken seriously and the Police did respond and have been hammering Woodbury, we did our own speed survey and have been hammering enforcement on Woodbury in order to slow things down. We do not want you to feel your pleas have fallen on deaf ears. The problem is it is a wide road, the CIP project is in the works identified for 2011 as part of the 95 corridor calming. The neighbors felt that since it was not on the Agenda it was not being dealt with.

Ted Gray asked where she would like traffic moved to?

Ms. Bronson responded that if you are coming from Massachusetts to the Mall, the signage should send you onto the Spaulding toward the Mall rather than through our neighborhood. The people don't want to be in our neighborhood they get lost there. Mapquest sends you down our street to get to the Malls. Signage to keep people on the Spaulding would get them to their destination more quickly. John Burke and the Police Chief had signs replaced that were old and no longer visible and put up additional ones, but they are disregarded.

Ted Gray asked if anything could be done legally in view of the fact that this is state related?

The Chair responded by suggesting that Mr. Parkinson get a letter to the State to see if we can have signage off 95 to direct people to the Malls. Also it is in the ten year plan add as soon as the state puts the funding for it, we will get that and also direct the Police to stopping trucks there. Trucks are allowed to be on there if they are making a delivery on the street, the only reason they are suppose to be there. If they are cutting through then they should be cited.

Ms. Bronson asked, for example, if trucks are making deliveries to Marshall's mall are they allowed to drive through.

The Chair referred to water delivery to your home, they are allowed to do that or if someone ordered a large object that comes on an 18 wheeler, that is allowed to be on the street.

This was specifically clear when the Planning Board did the truck routes and also the Planning Board asked that the companies that do the GPS's for truck routes be notified so that the GPS systems in the trucks realize they are not suppose to traverse certain streets. The Chair asked Steve if this could be done to update those companies.

Deputy Police Chief made the recommendation that the Police will step up enforcement on the trucks illegally using those roads. Once we identify the actual companies doing this, will have the street supervisor contact the president of these companies. This has been done before with some success and get them to cooperate with us, they will be facing summons on top of summonses and this also helps.

Ms. Bronson thanked the Committee and appreciates what they are doing.

The Chair stated there will not be a motion as this was not on the Agenda and asked if anyone had any other ideas?

VII. ADJOURNMENT: Adjourned at approx. 10:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted

Elaine E. Boucas, Secretary