



SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
Monday March 17, 2008 at 10:00 a.m.
City Hall Conference Room A

The Safe Routes to School Committee met on Monday, March 17, 2008 at 10:00 a.m. at City Hall, Conference Room A

- I. **CALL TO ORDER:** Christina Westfall, Chair brought the meeting to order at approximately 10:05 a.m.
- II. **ROLL CALL:** Christina Westfall, Chair and Traffic & Safety Representative, City Council Representative, Councilor Ned Reynolds, Debbie Finnigan, Traffic Engineer, Robert Lister, Superintendent of Schools, Rebecca Emerson, School Board Representative, Police Commissioner John Golumb, Police Commission Representative, Jonathan Bailey, Traffic & Safety Committee representative and Detective Rebecca Hester, Police Department Representative. Also present were Steve Parkinson, Public Works Director, Barbara Massar, Pro Portsmouth and Kirsten Barton, Parent.
- III. **ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES:**
MOTION made by Jonathan Bailey to accept the minutes of the February 11, 2008 meeting as presented. Seconded by John Golumb. Motion passed
- IV. **NEW BUSINESS:**
 - A. **Review Committee Guidelines** – The Chair has added a public comment period to the Agenda, as time allows. There will be a signup sheet, for anyone wishing to talk, prior to the beginning of the meeting. Information coming from this Committee should come through either Debbie Finnigan or Christina Westfall, and Roberts Rules of Order apply to the meeting.
Robert Lister suggested that we introduce ourselves to the people here so they will know who we are and also when people speak at the opening could we make it time certain.
The Chair responded “yes”.
The Committee introduced themselves.
The Chair welcomed Officer Hester, the SRO for the elementary schools.
 - B. **NHHSA Annual Highway Safety Program** – New Franklin School – Debbie Finnigan explained the Annual Highway Safety Program Grant and stated a few things we’re looking at, but in particular for the SRTS Committee to support the

school zone signs for New Franklin School. The State will not allow a new traffic signal in front of New Franklin School because it does not meet MUTCD signal warrants. After looking through some journals, Debbie Finnigan came up with a flashing school zone radar speed detection capability sign and presented the members the drawing. The sign will work during the pick up and drop off to help lower the speed limit through that area. This type of sign doesn't need to meet any warrants. Requesting that the SRTS Committee support this particular recommendation at that location.

Supt. Lister stated that in front of Little Harbor School the sign posted speed limit is 20 MPH, yet when school is in session, there is a flashing light that says 15 MPH, is there a problem with one saying 15 and one 20.

Debbie Finnigan stated if it is flashing 15, that's the speed to enforce.

Rebecca Hester stated at the time it's flashing 15, that is the speed limit for that section and that would be what would be enforced when stopping someone, when lights are not flashing it would be the 20 MPH.

Discussion followed about the aesthetics of the sign.

MOTION made by Councilor Raynolds to request the City Traffic Engineer to investigate more esthetically pleasing and at the same time there would be a more potentially effective sign or way of accomplishing our goal. Seconded by Rebecca Emerson.

Rebecca Emerson suggested instead of a sign would it be possible to have a crossing guard or police officer during those times, and also because the area doesn't qualify for a signal. Also consideration been given entering New Franklin from the highway and existing onto Dennett St. and where do we go from there?

Deb Finnigan responded it is a very good question and should be considered, but does not know the past history and not sure why it is currently designed the way it is. In finding alternatives that are not at a traffic signal, how do we change it so it functions differently, the left turn out and left in. The state suggested putting in a median up and it might be a consideration, so it's a bigger discussion than just today.

Rebecca Emerson asked what would warrant a police officer or crossing guard?

Dr. Lister stated it is definitely too dangerous for a crossing guard, the police don't even want to stand there, it is a very dangerous intersection.

Rebecca Hester stated it would become a manpower issue as to whether or not we would pay for someone to be assigned to that specific location. It can be put to the Police Commission.

Debbie Finnigan stated that this particular Grant and also the SRTS grant does not cover personnel costs, it covers buying equipment for that person to use or education, those kinds of things, not salary.

Debbie Finnigan stated this sign will only be on during pick up and drop off times, the rest of the time it will not be on, so it will have that impact because it is not on all the time.

Rebecca Emerson asked if we ask for this how long until the sign goes up?

Debbie Finnigan responded if the grant is approved in four months, it will take approximately 6-8 weeks to order, so possibly September.

The Chair stated for the sake of moving this along, this is a school, a problem area and if I could put up a big flashing sign saying "School, Slow Down" I would. As far as the esthetics I understand, but this is a safety issue, and in my opinion it cannot be bold enough, it cannot be bright enough, it cannot be more important in that location, this is a problem location, we have done several things to try to make this area safer for these kids. Understanding what you are saying and would like Elaine to read back the Motion so we can move forward at least off this Motion.

MOTION made by Councilor Raynolds to request the City's Traffic Engineer to investigate a more esthetically pleasing sign. Seconded by Rebecca Emerson.

At this point Councilor Raynolds asked to amend his motion.

AMENDED MOTION made by Councilor Raynolds requesting the City's Traffic Engineer and to invite any other member of the Committee to investigate a more esthetically pleasing sign. Seconded by Rebecca Emerson. Motion passed. Jonathan Bailey and Christina Westfall opposed.

Debbie Finnigan in trying to process the Motion asked "it doesn't say anywhere in that Motion that this Committee approves this sign for this Grant".

The Chair asked as we didn't really address that question, is there a Motion to approve a general...

MOTION made by Jonathan Bailey to accept as presented and to authorize the Traffic Engineer to put forth a grant proposal for a sign, it's location to be determined. Councilor Raynolds seconded the Motion. Motion passed.

Councilor Raynolds asked to make another motion. A member of the Committee can always make a Motion.

MOTION made by Councilor Ned Raynolds to authorize the City's Traffic Engineer to prepare and submit the Grant Application for a really effective, really good looking sign to increase the safety of the school children and pedestrians at all times in this location. Seconded by Rebecca Emerson.

The Chair wasn't sure what the difference is between Councilor Raynolds' Motion and Jonathan Bailey's Motion.

Councilor Raynolds stated what he said "accept as presented". Words matter in a motion, you need to say "John, was the Motion to accept what the City Traffic Engineer's recommendation for a sign, an application for a sign that has certain characteristics.

C. Travel Plan: Education/Encouragement - Gather information regarding Children's Day and Criterium as possible SRTS partnership events.

1. Barbara Massar, Pro Portsmouth, Children's Day information – The Chair welcomed Barbara Massar, Executive Director of Pro Portsmouth and stated we are looking to partner with the event as a kick-off and supplement to our program. Ms. Massar discussed the Children's Museum 5K on Saturday, May 3rd which Pro Portsmouth promotes. Sunday, May 4th is their event from noon until 4:00 p.m. which happens downtown with events at Isles of Shoals Steamship parking lot where characters come in by boat in the morning and from there flows into town with Pleasant St. being closed for block party. Ms. Massar then thought about what you would like to do to incorporate into Children's Day. One end of Pleasant St. is the stage for musical performances at State St. end and the rest of the block we reach out to non-profits, YMCA, Family First etc. where they have a presence there and activity to bring the kids out, have their brochures, whatever information they have going on and the street becomes very busy with families. Ms. Massar invited SRTS to have a presence there with whatever materials they wish to distribute. There are about 15-20,000 people in town and roughly about half of the people are from Portsmouth and the Seacoast, and feels you would target Portsmouth and a lot of families. Another thing to think about is the event we do within the large event which is the bike safety event and wondering whether that will happen this year. It appears that SABER will not be available to host this and Pro Portsmouth is presently looking at other groups that might want to host this. They check bikes and show kids how to check their bikes to make sure they are safe and this is done on the Bank of America parking lot and probably the most popular thing is the Kiwanis Club giving out free helmets. This is still up in the air and would welcome you to be with us and have your presence. Barbara Massar suggested that SRTS be with the other non-profits at Pleasant St. and needs to know roughly by the 1st or 2nd week in April as they produce a map that the kids follow from A to Z and you would want to be on that map.

Another thought is figuring a 5K being finished by noon, you could look at that Sat. afternoon as people will be in town and go from the 5K to SRTS activity.

MOTION made by Councilor Raynolds proposing that SRTS establish a sub-committee of this committee to plan, organize and execute the SRTS Committee's presence and involvement in Children's Day 2008. Seconded by Jonathan Bailey.

For information Councilor Raynolds offered to chair this Sub-committee.

Councilor Raynolds does not propose that the sub-committee be limited and would expect and propose that we invite other members of the community to be involved in the planning. The sub-committee would serve as a vehicle for planning, executing and involvement for anybody that had something to offer.

The Chair asked if there were any questions for Barbara Massar.

The chair asked Ms. Massar if Kiwanis was still giving out bike helmets?
Ms. Massar responded "yes".

The chair stated so there is no bike safety event happening at this particular moment?

Ms. Massar responded we are planning on having it happen and are working with a couple of different groups to come together and make it happen, we have all the equipment, just need to have someone set up and execute.

The Chair then asked Barbara Massar if it was possible if we could be part of that and have a presence at the bicycle rally safety at Pleasant St.

Barbara Massar responded "yes" the bank is nice enough to allow us to use that whole parking lot, so Kiwanis gets a part of it and would certainly be able to setup logistically for you and is open to whatever you'd like to do and your involvement, set up your tables, your information, whatever and then you would breakdown at 4p.m. so in terms of what a committee might be responsible for at our event, and wherever you want to be we would certainly want you to be there. The City will also have an additional presence downtown as we're working together to do recycling at all our events.

The Chair asked if there were any more questions for Barbara and thanked Barbara for coming.

The chair stated that not everyone here realizes that it was not concrete that we were going to pair up with Children's Day so we need to make that determination.

Councilor Raynolds - that was my motion, I made a motion, we'll vote on it.

The Chair responded to Councilor Raynolds she understood his Motion for a sub-committee, we need to vote on whether we partner or be present at this event,

that's what the purpose of Ms. Massar's presence here today was, and if you'd like to amend your Motion that we're going to be part of children's Day,

MOTION by Councilor Raynolds is to establish a sub-committee for the purposes of being involved and thus, planning, organizing and executing the SRTS Committee's presence and involvement in Children's Day 2008, to include the liaison with SABER, Kiwanis, local bike shops, and drawing on Portsmouth Seacoast Area Resident expertise.

The Chair asked if this was agreeable to the second?

Jonathan Bailey stated all of those are intemperable to him, but thinks we should have presence at Children's Day, feels it is important for us to be represented at Children's Day but thinks it very important that we not lock ourselves into our event being on that same weekend.

Jonathan Bailey, I withdraw my second.

The Chair – That Motion is done.

Councilor Raynolds – Could the maker of the Motion ask to have the Motion read back?

Elaine read back the **MOTION** to establish a subcommittee for the purpose of being involved for planning, organizing and executing the SRTS Committee's involvement at Children's Day 2008, to include the liaison with SABER, Kiwanis, bike shops and Seacoast residents.

Councilor Raynolds - Did everybody get that? Could you read that back Elaine one more time.

Elaine reread the MOTION to establish a sub-committee for the purpose of being involved for planning, organizing and executing SRTS involvement in Children's Day 2008 to include liaison with SABER, Kiwanis, local bike shops and Seacoast residents. Seconded by Rebecca Emerson.

Rebecca Emerson stated she feels we all want the same thing and we're getting off track, before we make a motion to create the sub-committee, I think as a Committee we need to decide is this something we want to do, if we do which I think we all want to, then, excuse me Ned, I think for the purpose of clarification we need to decide if we want to do this which I believe we all do, then part 2 would be to create the sub-committee to actually work with Barbara, Seacoast area residents, SABER, Kiwanis, etc.

The Chair agreed, but that's not the Motion right now.

Councilor Raynolds – I think my Motion actually puts your two things in one.

Rebecca Emerson – I think we need to decide first.

The Chair, The Motion is moved and seconded, let's call the question.

MOTION made by Rebecca Emerson for a roll call vote to determine whether or not we would like to have a presence at Children's Day. Seconded by John Golumb. Motion passed.

Councilor Raynolds yes, John Golumb yes, Rebecca Emerson, yes, Christina Westfall, yes, Jonathan Bailey, yes

MOTION made by Rebecca Emerson that at this time we review Councilor Raynolds' Motion to create a sub-committee to establish our involvement working with Pro Portsmouth, SABER, Kiwanis, bike shops, residents, etc. Seconded by John Golumb. Motion passed.

Councilor Raynolds, For the record I volunteer to chair that Committee, but if someone else wants to Chair it, that's fine.

2. Steve Parkinson, DPW, Criterium information – We will not be reviewing or providing this information about the Criterium at this time because the information is incomplete.

V. OLD BUSINESS:

A. Travel Plan: Encouragement - reiterate tentative dates for kickoff – The date we had from the last meeting October 8th as the National Kick-off Day, another important date is May 12th the deadline for the travel plan and are lacking, we now have a commitment with Children's Day so that will go under our encouragement piece and the other part of it is education and hopefully that will encompass that as well. That is something Rebecca we were looking at as far as what we can do in the Schools as far as what kind of teaching we can do, rules of the road, that type of thing.

Rebecca Hester commented that they do a bike safety class now to each of the grades in the elementary schools.

The Chair stated that will finalize and encouragement and education, our evaluation of the surveys which Dr. Lister has, Debbie Finnigan and I will take care of these.

Our member list is still incomplete.

Debbie Finnigan's recollection is there was a first reading and is scheduled to be read at tomorrow's City Council meeting.

The Chair stated this is not on the Agenda and asked if it should be put on next month's Agenda for the time of the meeting. There was discussion about changing time from 7:30 to a later time and for purposes of discussion put on next month's Agenda or discuss now.

Rebecca Emerson suggested putting on next month's Agenda and discuss when next month's will be.

The Chair stated it is scheduled for Monday, April 14th at 7:30.

MOTION made by Rebecca Emerson to move the time to 9:00 a.m. Seconded by John Golumb. Motion passed.

Jonathan Bailey asked that we consider our sub-committee and our event, our time is very short and asked if there was a way we could work on this before next month's meeting. Should we pick the sub-committee so they can get to work?

The Chair stated that she and Debbie Finnigan will put together another meeting before then and will e-mail out dates to see if it works for everybody.

- B. PUBLIC COMMENT** (As time allows) – In the future we will be signing up with Debbie Finnigan for public comment and asked if anyone had anything to say.

Barbara Massar stated that she really likes the sign, driving to work in Portsmouth on South St. finds that the flashing light is eye opening and tactful, and not having it on at all times makes you more aware when it is.

Dr. Lister thanked Barbara Massar for being here this morning and also recommend coming out of SRTS, that he and Rebecca look at the School Board for a discussion with the Police and Traffic & Safety about the front end of New Franklin School. It is a very big safety issue and the neighborhood is concerned about that as well.

Jonathan Bailey stated both ends of Woodbury are going to be worked on.

Debbie Finnigan stated there are suggestions that the State had and the Department of Public Works will look to see if there is any validity to them. One idea is to put a roundabout there and onto their property. The issue with that is it is expensive and does not know if it will work based on

the criteria but will look at this. The other is vehicular circulation for the school.

Kirsten Barton, 300 Court Street asked if in the next round of grant funding, will you be considering pedestrians.

Debbie Finnigan responded “yes” and suggested she would like either an e-mail or letter to either myself or the Chair.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Respectfully submitted

Elaine Boucas
Recording Secretary