

**PORTSMOUTH
TRAFFIC & SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING
8:00 a.m. – Thursday, June 12, 2008
City Hall – Eileen Dondero Foley Council Chambers**

I. CALL TO ORDER:

Councilor Ken Smith, Chairman called the meeting to order at approximately 8:05 a.m.

II. ROLL CALL: Members Present:

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

Excused absence: Jonathan Bailey

III. ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES:

IT WAS VOTED on a Motion made by Ted Gray to accept the minutes of the May 8, 2008 meeting. Seconded by Asst. Fire Chief Achilles. Motion passed.

III. NEW BUSINESS:

(A) South St. & Clough Drive - Safety Concerns (e-mail dated 6/2/08) – Debbie Finnigan referred to the e-mail requesting traffic calming. Deputy Police Chief DiSesa will check to see if recent stealth stats were done in the area.

Debbie Finnigan referred to Page 3 of the email stating that cars travel 35 MPH or less on this road despite the 20 MPH posted speed. Deputy Police Chief DiSesa will check into this, it seems high.

There is a painted crosswalk there, and John Howe stated when coming to South St. you need to make a right turn and go up 10-12 ft where the crosswalk is and asked why the crosswalk was moved, was it sight lines?

Steve Parkinson responded he was not here at the time it was rebuilt stating the only reason would have been to move it up to have a better presence back around the corner.

Bill Hess, Lincoln Avenue sated that the crossing guard is there in the morning and afternoon for about 15 mins. There are children that stay after school and when going home there is no crossing guard there. Anything that can be done to help enforce that drivers are to yield for pedestrians would be helpful.

Deputy Police Chief DiSesa stated that enforcement has been stepped up at South & Clough to slow people down and will continue to do so along with the stealth stat and suggested that he report back to the Committee next month on results of their stepped up enforcement. A recommendation in the email was to have directive patrol at least 2 or 3 times per week, and we will have the presence of a traffic car there and will also double check the stats for that speed.

Kirsten Barton, Court St. stated that the traffic enforcement does help. Referred to students leaving after school closing with a crossing guard present and suggested cones which seem to slow people down.

John Connors stated the reason the crosswalk was moved is the line of sight coming down the hill on South St. and was easier having it there as opposed to the other corner towards the hillside because of traffic coming down the hill and cars coming out of Elwyn Ave, making a left turn would be on the blind side of cars facing in. This was the safest and basically the only place they could put the crosswalk on South St.

Christina Westfall referred to the cones being their full time and, if not, whose responsibility for placing and removing them.

Kirsten Barton responded the City would be responsible

MOTION made by Christina Westfall to give Police Department opportunity to do stealth stat and report back at the next meeting. Seconded by John Howe. Motion passed.

(B) Daniel St. @ Market Square – Stop sign on Daniel St. (e-mail dated 5/23/08 attached) – Deputy Police Chief DiSesa reported that an officer informed him of issues of increased tourism, lots of foot traffic in the square, Daniel and Market Streets are major arteries into the square and the officer recommended looking at possibility of putting a stop sign at Daniel at the Square, there currently is a stop sign at Market St. and the Square. Cars for the most part stop for pedestrians but with the influx of foot traffic feels that stop signs would go a long way to off set near misses from arising. Deputy Chief DiSesa stated we do have officers there, do crosswalk enforcement and perhaps we need to look at enforcing jaywalking. Deputy Chief DiSesa liked the officer's idea that the stop sign would help vehicles creep into the square.

Steve Parkinson stated he would like to see a stop sign on Daniel, but we need to have Debbie Finnigan do a warrant analysis on whether or not it meets the criteria to install a stop sign. He feels it is warranted there.

MOTION made by Steve Parkinson to request Debbie Finnigan to do a warrant analysis at this location for installation of a stop sign. Seconded by Ted Gray. Motion passed.

Deputy Police Chief DiSesa supports what Steve Parkinson stated and feels a stop sign would reinforce needing to be careful and agrees shifting the Market St. sidewalks and putting the stop sign in a more visible location agrees it will also go along way. The police car space will shift from the right side coming into the square to the left side of the street and the police car will be more visible.

(C) Banfield Rd. – No Truck Ordinance on Banfield Rd. (letter dated 4/4/08, location map and Ordinance attached) – Debbie Finnigan referred to letter asking why traffic was prohibited on Banfield Rd. Ms. Finnigan looking into the Ordinance which stated that Banfield prohibited truck traffic adopted in November 1984. The gentlemen would like to signs taken away and allow truck traffic on Banfield.

Steve Parkinson explained early in the mid eighties with more development occurring on newly constructed Constitution Ave., heritage there awhile, and some of the property at the corner of Heritage and Banfield was slated to be turned into a concrete plant. The neighbors and residents living along Banfield Rd. and when to City Council who passed an Ordinance banning through trucking other than trucks doing business there. Mr. Parkinson's opinion is that it is working well since the 80's and sees no need to change the Ordinance.

Ted Gray stated that trucks were banned also because of the narrowness of the road.

MOTION made by Ted Gray that we uphold the current stipulation of no through truck traffic on Banfield Road as enacted in 1984. Seconded by John Connors. Motion passed.

IV. OLD BUSINESS:

(A) Betty's Dream – Request for “No Parking” on Woodlawn Circle (Letter to Mr. & Mrs. Provost and location map attached) – Debbie Finnigan stated that she sent a letter to Mr. & Mrs. Provost concerning no parking around their property. Steve Parkinson stated that Mr. Provost was upset that we were going to do that and is not interested in having no parking in front of his house.

For the record, the Chair asked if this was tabled last meeting.

MOTION made by Assist. Fire Chief Achilles to take off the table. Seconded by Ted Gray. Motion passed.

Debbie Finnigan explained this came about as she spoke to Director of Betty's Dream and their concern was that when residents try to use that side of the road on occasion it is not the right grade and with cars parked there they have to be in the middle of the road. The Chair stated in may be a paving, maintenance issue rather than an Ordinance change.

MOTION made by Steve Parkinson to table until next month with Public Works coming back with some recommendations. Seconded by Ted Gray. Motion passed.

(B) Livermore Street – No Parking Both Sides of Street (information attached) – Debbie Finnigan referred to a request to possibly consider having no parking on both sides of the street for the reason as the sidewalk continually needs to be repaired because there is no where for people to turn around so they drive over the sidewalk and is also a safety concern as there is not a lot of room.

The Chair stated he receives a lot of complaints from residents of people parking there and feels they would prefer to have no parking there.

Steve Parkinson stated that back in 2006 when this was previously addressed the residents wanted parking. Mr. Parkinson is not in favor of eliminating parking, we need to look to see if there are other ways to keep people off the sidewalk.

MOTION made by Steve Parkinson for a report back from the Public Works Department. Seconded by Asst. Fire Chief Achilles.

John Connors stated that most people parking there were using it for all day free parking and suggested a 2-hour parking limit to deter all day parking.

Steve Parkinson stated if you are suggesting a time frame this would be referred to the Parking Committee.

AMENDED MOTION made by Steve Parkinson for a report back from the Public Works Department and to refer to the Parking Committee for 2 hour parking. Agreed to by the second. Motion passed.

Steve Parkinson stated normally enforcement is Monday through Saturday 9:00 am to 7:00 pm, Sundays and Holidays excluded.

(C) Maplewood/Woodbury Ave. – Safety Issues – Report Back Police Department - Deputy Police Chief DiSesa reported two different issues involving speed and truck traffic. Trucks illegally using Woodbury Ave. to get to the mall area received quite a few

complaints. A traffic car went out there and hand delivered to every store in the strip mall Plaza at junction of Woodbury Ave. and Market St. The Ordinance for truck traffic prohibited on that street and asked the owners and managers to re-enforce that message to delivery trucks in an attempt to try and cut back on truck traffic. We have been monitoring and doing directive patrols on Woodbury. Ran Stealth Stats in two sections, 48 hours each, covered 16,000 cars on one segment in May and 13,000 cars on another day in May. Ran directive patrols on Woodbury and stepped up enforcement, the posted speed limit on the section of Maplewood to Woodbury was 25 MPH and the 85 percentile was around 34 MPH, the minimum speed was 10 with someone going 53 MPH, the average speed was 29 MPH which is not unreasonable speed. The second section of Woodbury and Boyd, 13,000 cars, the speed limit is 20 MPH, the 85 percentile was 30 MPH, maximum speed 45 MPH, minimum was 10 MPH. The speed limit is split on these two sections of roads and Deputy Police Chief DiSesa will check this. Enforcement has been increased and directive patrols are being done. Most people being stopped are residents of Woodbury.

The posted speed on Maplewood is 25 MPH and Stealth stats showed 27,000 monitored cars for a 48 hour period, average speed was 36 MPH and half the cars did 31 MPH and a maximum speed of 54 MPH. A check on traffic accidents at Maplewood and Cutts showed 4 accidents in the last two years, and is not an accident haven. On Maplewood traffic enforcements since January to present were 78 where officers go out there and setup and monitor speed and issue summons and citations. Last month there were 74 summonses. Since April to present there were 21 directive patrols at Maplewood in an attempt to slow vehicles down. We have received feedback thanking us for our presence on the road.

Mr. Parkinson stated the update is to construct Woodlawn Circle to Bartlett St. and to construct basically the northern side of Maplewood Ave. and Woodbury to the intersection of Market St. The intersection area is going to be reviewed by a consultant engineering firm dealing with transportation to evaluate the work we have put forth taking into consideration all public meetings and public comments. We will determine what will be done with that intersection when this is done.

Debbie Finnigan stated there is no Ordinance determining no truck traffic on Maplewood Ave. and need to resolve this issue in going forward.

Deputy Chief DiSesa stated that traffic accidents on Woodbury have gone down significantly 25% over the last 5 years.

The Chair stated specifically to have no trucks from Central Ave. up towards Woodbury. Steve Parkinson stated in our May minutes we basically sent to City Council a recommendation for no trucks on Maplewood from central to Woodbury. The Chair stated he made the motion for this to move forward and should be coming back for first reading.

MOTION made by Steve Parkinson to accept the report of the Police Department. Seconded by Asst. Fire Chief Achilles. Motion passed.

IV. INFORMATIONAL:

(A) **Route 1 By-Pass Bridge Replacement** (e-mail dated 5/23/08 attached) – Debbie Finnigan referred to the e-mail to Alex Vogt asking if there was a proposed schedule of

when the bridge reconstruction will start for each bridge in the bypass corridor and his response.

V. OTHER BUSINESS:

Referrals from City Boards and Commissions

(A) 1950 Lafayette Road – TAC Referral - Review of Driveway Compliance Proposal – Debbie Finnigan reported this was tabled.

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

Dave Holden referred to the discussion at TAC in particular Sketches Plan A and B. Their concern is the tight parking and felt that public safety is important. They are going back to the BOA. Debbie Finnigan is going to work with the applicant on the engineering plans.

Debbie Finnigan stated for the record it is Sketches Plan B and D and the recommendation from TAC was Plan D.

MOTION made by Steve Parkinson that Plan D is the plan we would like to see enacted to correct the problems and once the engineering plans are complete they come back so the Committee can look at them. Seconded by Asst. Fire Chief Achilles. Motion passed.

Debbie Finnigan stated that at TAC the spikes were discussed and if people are going faster than 15 MPH their tires can pop, so the proponent has taken it off the table themselves.

(B) Porter & Ceres Streets – Legal Dept. Referral – Safety Concerns (Memorandum & sketches attached) – Steve Parkinson stated it is a standing problem, businesses downtown need to have deliveries.

Jon Frederick, the City's Parking Director stated that between the two streets there are three unofficial loading zones, one on Ceres St. two on Porter and one on Fleet and in most cases people park illegally and occasionally get a tractor trailer that entirely blocks Porter St. for access and that's where we get issues. They need to unload somewhere, it is tough to enforce and resolve.

Deputy Police Chief DiSesa thought there was an understanding with the business owners that they were not to use tractor trailers, only suppose to use vans or trucks less than 21 ft. and they all agree to that.

Steve Parkinson stated the shipping industry, because of the high cost of fuel, sometimes the restaurant owners don't have control over suppliers of the vehicles they use. The suppliers are trying to haul as much material for the same amount of fuel and some are reverting back to using larger trucks, i.e. tractor trailers to get more commodities to an area.

John Connors stated his main concern is liability and asked where the liability falls.

Asst. Fire Chief Achilles stated that in the last four months there were three fires in that area, two fires and the incident at the Music Hall and have had issues with access.

It seems there may be some places where we would prefer them to unload and places we would prefer them not to unload that would minimize the impact. We had an issue trying to get around, not a delivery truck, but a car. Same thing on Porter within the last month. The chair recommended checking to make sure that all the dumpsters are licensed.

MOTION made by Asst. Fire Chief Achilles to table this until next month, have an on-site, get information on the exact property lines from Public Works Dept. and find out if the dumpsters there are licensed and make sure they are in their proper location and possibility of having a fire vehicle available to us to actually show us the depth and size of these roads and to add Ceres St. as well as Porter Street. Seconded by John Howe. Motion passed.

John Howe asked if there was an Ordinance pertaining to the hours and whether it would have any effect.

The Chair responded this would be good for us to look at. There are not restricted hours along the corner of Bow, Ceres and Market Streets, although early in the morning there is truck movement moving in and out of there and they have their timing pretty well there.

Deputy Police Chief DiSesa referred a letter stating that people are parking in front or near the dumpster on Ceres St. and putting hand made signs on their vehicles saying they “delivery vehicle” and park there all day and asked Jon Frederick if it were possible to have his parking enforcement officers monitor this situation.

Jon Frederick responded this is being monitored, it is an unofficial loading zone against the chain link fence so they treat that as it was a loading zone and need to be actively loading or unloading. Hand made signs are not honored.

The Chair asked that Jon Frederick be present at the on-site and have someone from the Legal department.

Mechanic Street – Ted Gray stated that by the Point of Graves Cemetery there was a “no parking” sign which has disappeared and received a request that it be replaced because there is a problem getting out of Mechanic St. as you can’t see vehicles.

The Chair stated law enforcement and DPW to replace the sign.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Respectfully submitted,
Elaine E. Boucas, Recording Secretary