



CITY OF DOVER

TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMISSION - MINUTES

Meeting Type: Regular Meeting
Meeting Location: Police Department community room, 46 Chestnut Street
Meeting Date: **Monday, April 29, 2024**
Meeting Time: **6:00 pm**

Members present: Maurice Olivier, Elizabeth Goldman, Susan Tremblay, Michael Williams (Chair, COAST), Marn Speidel (Police), Jill Semprini (Community Services), Donna Benton (Planning), Kean McDermott (Alternate), April Richer (City Council)

Members Not Present (Excused): Dennis Munson, Peter Schmidt (Alternate)

Members Not Present (Unexcused): None

1. ROLL CALL

Chairman Williams called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

A. Welcome newly appointed members – City Council liaison, alternate positions

Speidel recognized Kean McDermott as newly appointed alternate to the committee, and Councilor April Richer, who was a late arrival to the meeting.

2. OLD BUSINESS

A. Review/approval of minutes from April 29, 2024

Motion: Olivier moved, Goldman seconded, to approve with no amendments.

Vote: Motion passed 7-0 (Benton abstained, Richer not present for the vote).

B. Silver/Locust intersection – citizen concerns

Semprini stated that Sebago Technics is still looking at the signal timings at the City's request. They are also looking at the feasibility of adding a left turn lane westbound. Semprini stated that Community Services staff met with Portsmouth staff.

Portsmouth has a neighborhood traffic calming program that is generally divided into three phases. The first phase involves City staff collecting data with City equipment; Phase 2 is implementation, and phase 3 is evaluation. The City has budgeted \$50,000 annually specifically for traffic calming measures. Examples from Portsmouth include: Woodbury Avenue, which was up for repaving, was used as a pilot program. Speed cushions were implemented here, but vetoed by the fire department due to International Building Code. Another example was Bartlett Street, where a mini-roundabout was implemented. Then, residents asked for that not to become permanent. The likely permanent measure for Bartlett Street is for an all-way stop to be implemented.

Semprini stated that the issue was discussed extensively internally with CS staff. There is no staff or budget to begin data collection. \$15,000 is budgeted annually for traffic calming; some uses for this funding have included the Community Trail crossing (Washington Street), and RRFB hardware for downtown crosswalks. If exceeding \$15K, implementation of many projects would likely require inclusion in the CIP.



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Goldman asked about neck-downs - in light of a citizen's opinion that they don't work – and asked if it was a wise investment. Discussion ensued. Semprini stated that Community Services is not currently budgeting for addition of neck-downs. Williams asked whether the Dover Fire Department has yet been consulted about speed cushions/speed tables in the Locust/Silver area. Semprini said they had not yet. Williams opened the discussion to citizens.

Liz Whelan, Lexington Street resident, asked what a \$25,000 project might look like. Semprini explained that \$25K is the threshold for CIP. Whelan thanked the committee for keeping Lexington and Cushing Street concerns in mind, and reiterated that she feels it is just not safe. She expressed frustration with what she perceived to be a lack of action.

C. Portland Avenue retaining wall project – staff update

Semprini gave an update on this project. The contractor will start this week. Traffic will revert to temporary one lane alternating, with temporary signals scheduled to be installed in mid-June. The signal control is estimated to last for at least 5 months, with an estimated project completion date of December 2024.

D. Fifth and Grove reconstruction project – staff update

Semprini noted that a neighborhood meeting for this project is scheduled for April 30. The bulk of the project is expected to last through December, with a base coat of pavement before winter and final paving of the affected streets scheduled for 2025.

E. Old Rollinsford Road pedestrian crossing – WDH request

Speidel stated that staff had yet to evaluate this request and asked for it to be tabled to a future meeting.

3. NEW BUSINESS

A. Middle Road traffic concern – citizen request

Speidel gave overview of correspondence from a citizen (who was not present) expressing concerns about traffic speeds on Middle Road, suggesting traffic calming measures and asking about adding sidewalks along Middle Road. McDermott asked whether any projects are in the works. Semprini stated that Community Services is focused on maintaining existing sidewalks, and that a sidewalk project of this magnitude is not currently planned but would need to be added to a future CIP. McDermott suggested narrowing the lane lines to create wider shoulders.



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B. Central/First and 400 Central Ave crosswalk proposal

Speidel introduced Aaron Daniel Williams, who had requested to speak to the committee representing a Strong Towns, Local Conversations group in the Seacoast region. Several other unidentified citizens were present, also representing this group. Williams gave a visual presentation to the committee. Williams noted that the implementation of the Dover Downtown Access and Streetscape Plan has been temporarily suspended due to lack of continued funding. He stated that his group has been discussing and examining low-cost alternatives, and specifically highlighted two locations where pedestrian crossing safety is a concern.

Williams referred to a “tactical urbanism” strategy, whereby communities try out some designs before making them permanent. He showed schematics of the Central/First intersection, with overview and street view images modified to block out areas in a manner to reduce the crossing distance from 54’ to 30’. He noted that the idea is to convert the unused space to be more comfortable for pedestrians. He also noted this would adversely impact the availability of the loading zone at this corner. Williams also showed schematics of the crosswalk at 400 Central Avenue (near Waldron Court) with similar strategies. He showed pictures from New York City where such areas were converted with marking paint, rocks, and bollards. He suggested involving the Dover Arts Commission. He showed other examples from the State of Vermont and from Portsmouth NH where delineator posts and paint were used.

Williams also referred to “daylighting,” a term used to describe the removal of obstacles that block motorists’ view of crosswalks. The biggest issue impeding drivers view is adjacent on-street parking spaces. Showed video demonstrating how reaction distance is severely limited even for drivers at 25 mph. Suggested that the loss of parking could be made up elsewhere.

Tremblay stated she supports the ideas as presented. Williams stated he is also supportive. Goldman asked Speidel for input. Speidel spoke about crashworthiness of any objects that are placed in proximity to the traveled way. Goldman asked who from City staff could run with this. Semprini stated she likes the idea of using paint and delineators. Williams noted that generally, curbs are all that protect pedestrians from vehicles. Richer noted that she liked the image showing boulders and wooden pallets which adds a level of appeal for drivers to slow down and look, as compared to jersey barriers. Richer said we need people to start interacting more in public spaces, and noted there is an opportunity to open up Central Avenue to be more of a hangout place.



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Benton stated she likes what she sees as a planner. She noted that some aspects of these ideas were looked at when the courthouse project came forward. She referred to the Bloomberg Asphalt grant, and noted a priority of not losing public parking. Discussion ensued.

A citizen asked Semprini whether the solid color crosswalks would remain in Dover. Cited examples from other communities where solid crosswalks were readily visible. Discussion ensued. Speidel noted that the City's crosswalk policy is being updated by staff, and referred to our typical crosswalk design types.

Motion: McDermott moved to endorse the concept of the ideas presented by Aaron Williams, and formally requested that City staff review and study the possible implementation of some of these strategies and have a formal conversation about these ideas. Goldman seconded.

Vote: Motion passed 9-0.

C. Discussion regarding potential anti-idling policy

Goldman said she brought this from a recent school board meeting due to parent concerns raised there. The EPA has some robust data and rules regarding idling, cited example in Colorado. Williams noted that diesel idling is regulated, but straddled based on temperature. Richer asked what percentage of school children get dropped off. At elementary schools, lines form which require almost continuous movement that would deter stopping/starting of cars. Discussion of staggering or expanded carpooling. Goldman said it was stated that there is evidence that younger children are at increased risk of emissions. Discussion ensued, but no specific motions were put forth. Goldman said she would return the issue to the school department.

4. CITIZENS FORUM

A citizen asked who is responsible for the Broadway bridge. Semprini noted that the bridge is owned by the railroad (CSX). Semprini noted that the Community Services Department is working to improve signage on the bridge approaches. Speidel noted that by agreement dated many years ago, the City is solely responsible for signage and any warning measures to alert motorists to the 9'6" low clearance. Speidel noted that the City experience between 12 and 24 crashes at the bridge per year, with most involving non-professional drivers of trucks such as box trucks. Discussion ensued. A citizen suggested improving the signage. A suggestion was made for a laser that detects at a height threshold, and activates beacons only when a truck is approaching.

Jeff Bernstein, Silver Street resident, noted a pattern of people failing to pay heed to signs. Suggested we create an environment with these proposals to slow traffic down.



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Another citizen stated she was from Massachusetts, where her previous community placed a traffic island in the street which slowed drivers down to go around it.

5. MEMBER COMMENTS

McDermott stated that we are going into National Bike Awareness Month in May. On May 18, there is a scheduled “Eat, Bike, Shop Dover” event. He also proposed a mapping project of all existing bike racks in the City (many initially donated by the Dover Rotary). McDermott spoke about the Seacoast Area Bicycle Riders group, SABR being a non-profit, volunteer organization with the mission of making the Seacoast better for biking. The group hosts an Event page which details upcoming events in the area.

6. CONFIRM NEXT MEETING DATE

Discussed ensued regarding potential member conflicts with June. The next meeting date was identified as July 22, 2024 at 6:00 PM.

7. ADJOURN

Benton moved, Goldman seconded, to adjourn at 7:27 PM. Motion passed unanimously.