



CITY OF DOVER

TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMISSION MINUTES

Meeting Type: Regular Meeting
Meeting Location: City Council Chambers, City Hall
Meeting Date: **Monday, May 20, 2013**
Meeting Time: **6:00 pm**

1. ROLL CALL

Weston called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Members present: Councilor Karen Weston (Chair), Marn Speidel (Police), Jeremy LaRose (COAST), Chris Parker (Planning), Ben Clark (Community Services), Dustin Gray, Jack Flick, Maurice Olivier

Members absent: Dennis Munson, Peter Schmidt (Alternate)

Others present: Several residents were present regarding the Watson/Sandpiper issue. Those who spoke are identified below.

Weston appointed Speidel to take meeting minutes in the absence of Munson.

2. OLD BUSINESS

A. Review/approval of minutes from February 25, 2013

Speidel moved to have this item heard at the end of the agenda. Weston concurred. Minutes taken up later in the meeting. Parker moved, Clark seconded, to approve as drafted. Passed 7-0 (Munson, Gray absent).

B. Parking concerns near Watson Road and Sandpiper Drive

Weston asked Speidel whether anyone had evaluated the sight distance. Discussion ensued. Speidel stated that there is adequate line of sight looking to the left from the stop sign, as long as parked cars are off the pavement. Speidel gave overview of NH RSA on yielding, relative to the positioning of the vehicle.

Weston asked the committee whether anyone had opinions on parking restriction. Olivier stated he had visited the site and observed the traffic. Weston stated that brush should be cut back on Watson when looking to the south from stop sign. Parker said there is an issue with speeding on Watson. Weston noted the difference between speed limits on Tolend and County Farm. Clark stated there is room for a car to park off the pavement seasonally. The main issue is in winter. Weston asked about parking too close to an intersection. Speidel stated he concurred with Clark. Gray stated that Watson has an S shape with an awkward hill, and when parked cars are introduced, cars have to gravitate over the the center line in each direction. Gray stated this is a design issue too, and he is in favor of a 30 mph speed limit. Weston stated that trees need to be trimmed back.

Parker moved to have the speed limit on Watson Road reduced from 35 to 30 mph. Flick asked for a time frame on speed limit signs to be changed. Discussion ensued between Flick, Clark and Parker.

Weston asked for further input on the no parking signs. Leah Orton, Sandpiper Drive resident, stated she appreciates the temporary parking signs and wants the parking restriction to be permanent. She stated she agrees with the speed limit reduction, and wants brush to be cleared too.

Weston asked whether the parking lot by the Community Trail head would be paved. Parker stated it would be gravel, and 10 spaces.

Bill Rogers of 26 Sandpiper Drive spoke about the experience of driving northbound on Watson, slowing to turn into Sandpiper, and watching traffic squealing to stop behind you. Speidel spoke about the MUTCD standards and guidance on speed limits, and the probable 85th percentile speed of Watson Road, and stated that a reduced speed limit would make speed violations easier to enforce by the police department.



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LaRose noted that no one from Watson Road is present, only Sandpiper, and while he supports the idea of 30 mph in parts, he does not necessarily think it should apply to the entire length. Discussion ensued on an advisory speed. Parker stated he would like to withdraw his motion, and to separate the speed limit segments between Cardinal to County Farm as one section, and the rest as another. Clark stated that a yellow advisory speed limit sign may have a better effect than simply dropping the posted speed limit on the entire road. Flick asked Speidel about the enforceability of advisory speed limit signs. Discussion ensued.

LaRose proposed dropping the speed limit from 35 to 30 on the segment from Cardinal to County Farm, and recommended that Engineering perform advisory review of the steep downgrade near Sandpiper Drive. Olivier stated this is a complicated issue. Weston referred to trucks using the hill and said she is not in favor of an advisory speed, wants it to be regulatory. Speidel referred to the design speed of the road, and stated that traffic counts could be performed and interpreted in an engineering or traffic study. Such a study is required by statute if a speed limit is reduced to 25 mph, but is not required to drop from 35 to 30. Weston spoke in favor of speed limit reduction.

LaRose moved, Gray seconded, to endorse a reduction of the speed limit on Watson from 35 to 30 on the segment between County Farm and Cardinal. Motion passed 8-0.

Gray departed the meeting at this point to attend another meeting. Discussion continued.

LaRose questioned Speidel about how a seasonal parking restriction would be posted. LaRose asked Parker about the feasibility of creating a parking lot once the bridge is removed. Parker stated that he had checked with the State which expressed that they are amenable to the concept. Weston said she has a copy of a survey from a resident. Olivier said he supports making the parking restriction permanent. Flick stated that a former committee member would support obstructions as a means of speed control.

Parker moved, LaRose seconded, to endorse a seasonal parking restriction on both sides of Watson from Cardinal to County Farm. Discussion ensued. Speidel cautioned against an unnecessary parking restriction across from Sandpiper Drive where there is no sight obstruction. Parker withdrew his motion. Parker suggested a seasonal (winter) parking ban on the Sandpiper side from Cardinal to the north end of the bridge. Flick asked about enforceability of "No Parking on Pavement" signs.

Parker moved, Flick seconded, to request that the Community Services Department post "No Parking Here to Corner" signs in the Watson/Sandpiper area wherever they already apply by ordinance, and to have brush cleared to improve sight distance. Motion passed 8-0.

Flick moved, LaRose seconded, to endorse a restriction of no parking on the pavement from Sandpiper Drive to the Cocheco River bridge. Discussion ensued and the motion was clarified to include only the west side of Watson Road. Discussion ensued on how this would be posted. Motion passed 6-1 (Parker opposed). Speidel clarified the timeline for processing of a new ordinance revision to be forwarded to the City Council. Several residents addressed the committee to express their thanks; some said they wanted even more parking restrictions on both sides.



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C. Crosswalk on Chestnut Street at St. Mary's Church

Parker gave overview of three schematics, labeled as Options A, B and C, showing proposed adjustments to affect pedestrian crosswalks on Chestnut between Third and Fourth Streets and a proposed addition of a sidewalk along the east side. Parker stated that common to all 3 is a proposal to remove a conflict point at Chestnut/Fourth. Option A is what staff would recommend if we were starting today, because mid-block crosswalks are not preferred.

LaRose noted issues with turning movements in and out of Third Street. Weston asked about feasibility of reconfiguring Chestnut/Third to a true, signalized four-way intersection. LaRose stated we should look at Chestnut as a whole package. Flick stated he preferred Option C by process of elimination, but has concern with proximity to RR tracks. LaRose stated that if recommending a short term solution today, B is a better option (also concerned with RR safety). Parker stated that the RR is looking to make some repairs and might be able to pay up to 90% of improvements within this intersection if it is in conjunction with its improvements. Parker stated that he understands the committee's consensus is that Option A can be rejected, and we should continue to look at Options B and C.

Additional discussion ensued. LaRose noted that B is better than C because of the Third Street merge (motorists looking back over their shoulder down the hill). He also noted that trains overhang rails by 3-4 feet, which means not enough room for stacking in the slip lane. Weston said that John Scruton had asked her about bump-outs and neck-downs which are not shown on these schematics. Parker stated that such major changes were not proposed. Weston asked whether new push-button pedestrian warning lights would be purchased. Parker said that this option would be included. Parker stated that staff intended to pursue one of the improvement options by the end of 2013. Staff will refine the choices and return to the June meeting with further. Parker stated he would also bring more feedback from property owners.

3. NEW BUSINESS

A. Parking concerns on New Bellamy Lane

Speidel gave an overview of concerns expressed by residents, through email and in person, about recent increase in on street parking on New Bellamy by Saint Thomas Aquinas High School students. Speidel handed out photos he had taken showing the parked cars. Speidel also noted he had measured the available pavement width and said that while this issue is definitely a nuisance for some residents, the police department does not believe there is a public safety concern serious enough to warrant an emergency parking restriction. Speidel noted that residents have expressed a desire for a parking restriction, since the school has indicated that they cannot resolve this problem administratively. Speidel also noted that these are STA sophomores who are not permitted to drive to school by STA rule, until the seniors have graduated on June 2, because the school's parking lots are full.

Clark moved, LaRose seconded, to recommend that no action be taken. Motion passed 7-0.

B. Petition – bicycle riding on sidewalks outside the compact area

Speidel gave an overview of the reasoning for the petition, signed by several Dover residents in favor of allowing bicycle riding on sidewalks outside the compact area of the City. Speidel stated that despite state and local laws that prohibit bicycle riding on sidewalks, most police officers use discretion enforcing this when there are young children involved. Younger children do not belong in the street. In accordance with



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NH RSA 265:148, municipalities may allow bike riding on sidewalks upon the petition of 5 or more legal voters.

Parker moved, Clark seconded, to endorse this petition as presented and to support amending Dover's ordinance regarding bicycles on sidewalks. Weston asked whether there should be an age restriction. Speidel noted that while this could be considered, it was often customary for parents to take their young children for a bike ride and it would be odd to disallow the parent from leading the way for their young child. Speidel also stated that any amended ordinance would include a provision to mandate that bicyclists on sidewalks yield the right of way to pedestrians.

C. Silver Street reconstruction project

Clark gave an overview of a Silver Street schematic showing proposed improvements with the upcoming reconstruction project. Clark stated that the Community Services Department was looking to hold a public hearing / neighborhood meeting to elicit feedback on the project. Parker stated that some of the highlights of this project include bus pull-offs, bike lanes, way-finding signs with a consistent theme, bump-outs for cross street intersections to maximize traffic calming. Parker stated that a meeting would be held early in the summer, possibly hosted by the TAC. Discussion ensued on a proposed roundabout, and how it would integrate with Exit 8 on ramp and access. Parker stated that this project would have two main goals: to improve the street's poor condition, and to present the street as a showcase entering the City.

4. MEMBER COMMENTS

LaRose expressed a concern about the Knox Marsh/Bellamy/Littleworth intersection, where the pedestrian signals are not configured properly for the existing sidewalks.

LaRose announced that he is leaving COAST in August to attend graduate school. He anticipates the July meeting to be his last with the committee, where his COAST designated replacement may be able to attend as well.

Weston asked for final drawings for the proposed reconfiguring of Washington / Whittier / Tolend. She also asked when the committee should host the Silver Street neighborhood meeting. Discussion ensued on this topic.

5. CONFIRM NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting date was confirmed for June 24, 2013.

6. ADJOURN

Clark moved to adjourn at 8:37 PM, Speidel seconded. Motion passed 7-0.