



TOWN OF MERRIMACK, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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HIGHWAY SAFETY COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes

May 27, 2020

Location: Police Department-Zoom Virtual Meeting

Members Present: Police Chief Denise Roy, Public Works Director Kyle Fox, Deputy Police Chief Brian Levesque, Town Councilor Finlay Rothhaus, Community Development Director Tim Thompson, Public Works Deputy Director/Town Engineer Dawn Tuomala, Tom Touseau, Merrimack School District, Resident Glenn Wallace, Esquire, Resident Paul Konieczka, Resident Bob L'Heureux, and Resident Fran L'Heureux.

Members Absent: Interim Fire Chief Matthew Duke and Resident Dan Bantham.

Guest/s: None

Moderator: Chief Roy

Recording Secretary: Kerry Tarleton

1. **Call to Order:** Chief Roy called the meeting to order at 1:03 p.m.
2. **Pledge of Allegiance.**
3. **Approval of Minutes:** Minutes from the December 9, 2019, meeting were approved unanimously by the committee.
4. **Comments from the Press or Public:** None
5. **Old Business:**
 - Issues of Hadley Road (parking along roadway) and Church Street (closing bottom of street) have not yet been brought before the Town Council due to the COVID-19 pandemic and related issues. Chief Roy advised that it is intended to discuss the Church Street issue with residents of that road and bring both issues before the Council over the summer. Dawn Tuomala advised that she has submitted to the Council for a public hearing on the Hadley Road issue. Kyle Fox further advised that a public information meeting was held several years earlier with the Church Street residents and, at that time, the Council elected not to close the road until the anticipated sidewalk project. He will look into his notes on the issue from that meeting.



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6. New Business:

- Parking issues related to Wildcat Falls and surrounding neighborhoods, specifically the end of Currier Road and adjacent roadways. The Conservation Committee conducted a meeting on the issue the previous week. Chief Roy gave a brief synopsis of the issue: Ever since the State has closed everything due to the pandemic, including parks and beaches, during the nice weather there is increased traffic which causes parking along the roadways as the parking lot is small and only holds approximately 15-20 vehicles. Parking in that area is legal. However, at the direction of the Town Council and Town Manager, in order to attempt to alleviate some of the neighborhood parking issues, no parking signs were erected in various areas throughout that neighborhood. Those signs are not enforceable, and neighborhood complaints continued. Chief Roy further advised that she believes a parking lot expansion would rectify most of the ongoing issues in the area. Despite reports that it's mayhem in that area, the police have not found it to be when patrolling and/or responding to calls for service in that area. The parking is the biggest issue. Chief Roy also spoke about the resident complaints of speeding in the area, but the SpeedSpy results indicate that 85% of the vehicles were at or below the speed limit and, although there were some vehicles driving too fast, unfortunately, you'll get that on any of the roads in town. The SpeedSpy numbers indicate that speeding isn't as much a factor in that area as may be perceived by others. Concerns for potential safety issues related to fire and rescue equipment being able to travel those roads with cars parked along the roadways, as well as the issue of litter in the area was discussed by the Committee. An inquiry as to whether or not there are plans to expand the parking lot was addressed by Kyle Fox. He advised that there weren't any plans at the moment and that would depend upon the direction the Town Council gives on that subject. Further, the Conservation Committee addressed that issue at its recent meeting, but it was believed that they were divided on the issue of expanding the parking lot and were unable to come to a consensus as to how to proceed. Deputy Chief Levesque further addressed the concerns of enforcing parking restrictions in that area and the potential for subsequent requests to restrict parking in other neighborhoods in town. He further expressed his agreement with the Chief's position that no definitive action be taken until such time as the pandemic concludes and traffic in the Wildcat Falls area potentially returns to previous levels. The issue of expanded parking at Horse Hill Nature Preserve having remedied previous parking issues in that area was discussed, as was the effect expanded parking may have on the Wildcat Falls area. The Conservation Committee's mention at its meeting of another possible entrance to the Wildcat Falls area through the school property is a separate issue to be addressed with the school district. There are already other ways to access this property, but the



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majority of people appear to be presently using the Currier Road access point. Chief Roy suggested letting the traffic and parking issues play out as they may subside once other parks

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and outside areas are reopened. The temporary no parking signs on one side of the road seem to be helping to widen the area by Currier Road and Hemlock Drive to ensure emergency vehicles are able to have access if needed. The issue of permanent no parking signs along the left corner was also discussed. ***It was decided that the Committee would recommend to the Town Council that traffic counts in the area of Currier Road/Wildcat Falls be conducted to determine how many cars park along the roads and in the parking lot and an appropriately sized parking lot be designed by Department of Public Works (including surveying and wetland delineations) to accommodate the number of vehicles utilizing the lot and the roadways so as to alleviate the parking issues in the neighborhood. The motion was made by Bob L'Heureux and seconded by Tim Thompson. The motion passed unanimously.***

- Discussion continued as to erecting no parking signs along the roadway from the corner of Currier Road along the left side of Hemlock Drive. The Committee was able to view a photo of the area provided by Kyle Fox. See Attachment 1. It was decided to table the issue until the police department and fire department have had an opportunity to meet to discuss the issue.

7. Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 1:40 p.m.

ATTACHMENT 1

Currier Lane/Hemlock Drive



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Sources: Esri, HERE