



## HIGHWAY SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

**MAY 10, 2017**

**1:00 PM**

**POLICE DEPARTMENT – BRAD CROSS  
ROOM**

**Attendees:** Chief Mark E. Doyle, Fran L’Heureux, Bob L’Heureux, Paul Konieczka, ,  
Tim Thompson, Dawn Tuomala, Tom Touseau, and Bill Godfrey.

**Excused Absence:** Chief Michael Currier, Kyle Fox, Glenn Wallace and Finlay Rothhaus.

**Guest:** Captain Denise Roy

**Recording Secretary:** Claire Rioux

Chairman Doyle called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

Chairman Doyle called for the Pledge of Allegiance.

### ***Meeting Minutes:***

*A motion to approve the minutes of June 7, 2016 was made by **Tim Thompson** and seconded by **Bob L’Heureux** and carried unanimously.*

***Motion passes 8-0-0***

Introduction of the Committee

### ***Comments from the Press and Public:***

Introduction and welcome: Lynn Randel, Steve Miller, Mr. & Mrs. Footer, Gregg Stinson and Michelle Bancroft, Student Transportation, Tom Zajac, and Stephen Perna, the projects traffic engineer, Hayner/ Swanson, Inc.

Mr. Steve Miller presented his concerns regarding the proposed school bus facility. Mr. Miller stated that he was a resident of Merrimack for 37 years. His concerns are listed below:

1. Student Transportation has a 2.5M/year contract with the school district expiring in 2021.
2. The Star Drive location has 4 lanes with a left turn lane. All buses take a right turn exiting this facility. There has never been a problem at this location.
3. Shaw’s North was the last major project on this section of DW HWY. It was approved in 2002 and opened on April 25, 2003. It has 2 entrances and 1 exit with a light.
4. Most buses servicing the District go south when exiting William St. On the return side going north they need to make a left turn on a narrow 2 lane road. The caravan of buses

will effectively block DW Hwy until all the buses complete their turns. Impatient drivers will attempt to use the narrow breakdown lane if they make it thru the Front St Light. This is dangerous if anyone is walking or riding a bike in the subject lane. Compounding the problem are bus drivers who swing wide to the right to make the tight left turn. These buses are around 42 ft. long.

5. Emergency vehicles will be impeded by all this additional traffic. This is a major concern for the public living in the north end of town. Some accident scenes may actually be at or near the proposed site.
6. I see only 3 conditions that may help alleviate some but not the entire location problem. Widen the road from Bedford Rd to Baboosic. Have a police detail officer to direct traffic in the AM and after school. Install a Red light.
7. The Everett Tpke has major accidents periodically. DW Hwy turns into a parking lot when it happens. I see no way DW Hwy can handle the AM buses and a traffic snarl. I haven't even mentioned what happens during inclement weather.
8. Also a concern with snow and ice weather.

**Tom Zajac**, Engineer Hayner/Swanson, Inc. representing Student Transportation:

There have been a number of issues raised through comments from town staff, town meeting, Planning Board as well as the police department. Michelle Bancroft will speak detailing some of the time issues regarding the times the buses will be coming in and out. Stephen Pernaw will be speaking regarding the traffic related items

**Gregg Stinson:**

Student Transportation of America (STA) has partnered with the Merrimack School district since 2012 extended to 2021 presently. Since the extension of the contract we have been looking around town for the best place to operate. Safety prospective Railroad Ave. we have skirted away from that because of the population. Because of the neighbors, flooding and traffic issues. After we moved in the current lot the owner misrepresented the size of the lot, the neighbor informed us of a different boundary line which imposes significant constraints on the yard, parking of the buses, fuel line and washing of the buses was affected. The current location, 14 Star Dr. is less than 1 1/2 acres; the proposed location at 534 DW is over 4 acres. The reason we selected a new site is because we need more room, we want it to be a full service site. The new site is 4 acres, and the line of sight is much better and the new site will have a low impact for a residential area. Low impact to the neighbors and the route saves both time and miles. The new fleet, 2018 model, is a "new generation bus" clean diesel. We ordered 10 new 2018 buses which will arrive in the fall. From the meetings the concern from the neighbors is how will we manage our routes. We do not want to be a public nuisance; we are more than willing to make accommodations.

**Michelle Bancroft**, assistant manager with STA

I have been with the school district since 2009, 9 1/2 years. It is important that we work with the community, we transport children. We need to be efficient, the space we have now is just not big enough. I create the bus routes, I have the ability to stagger buses, and have buses pull over for a couple of minutes if need be. There is only one time in the day that the buses are not staggered which is in the afternoon and at that time there is not that much traffic. Each elementary school has different drop off times, they also have a staggered return times. We want to work with the community it is very important to us. Whatever you need and recommend I think I can make happen.

#### **OLD BUSINESS:**

---

- Stop Sign on the Corner of Island Dr. and DW drive/ Installed
- Handicap Sign request on Laurel St / Installed

#### **Chairman Chief Doyle:**

Stop sign was installed on the Corner of Island Dr. and DW Drive.

The handicap sign on Laurel St. was approved by the Town Council and installed with the stipulation that the signage will be reviewed every 2 years.

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

---

- **Re-appointments to the Committee/ Chief Doyle**

#### **Chairman Chief Doyle:**

Stated that the Highway Safety Committee has 4 positions for reappointment, and requested any discussion needed relative to any of the members. Since there was no discussion regarding the reappointments the nominations were voted on one at a time.

1. Paul Konieczka re-appointment term will expire 6/30/2018. ( one year term)

*All present in favor with 1 abstention, Paul Konieczka 7-0-1.*

2. Glenn Wallace, re-appointment term will expire 6/30/2018. (one year term)

*All present in favor with 1 abstention, Glenn Wallace 7-0-1.*

3. Bob L'Heureux, re-appointment term will expire 6/30/2020. (three year term)

*All present in favor with 1 abstentions Bob L'Heureux 7-0-1*

4. William Godfrey, re-appointment term will expire 6/30/2020. (three year term)

*All present in favor with 1 abstentions William Godfrey 7-0-1*

- 
- **Request for a stop sign to be installed at West Chamberlain and Rutherford St./ Submission Lynn Randel**

**Chairman Chief Doyle:**

I checked out this area and noticed that there was a sign on Rutherford.

**Lynn Randel**

My husband and I have lived in this area for 26 years. From our living room we can see this intersection. When you are coming down West Chamberlain from Rutherford it is hard to see what is coming towards you. People tend to hug the middle of the road, we thought if there was a stop sign in this area it would give the driver the time to see what is coming. We have seen near accidents from our house. When you are coming down West Chamberlain it is obstructed, it is not a clean view.

**Chairman Chief Doyle:**

In these types of cases we defer to DPW engineers to see if this road warrants an addition of a stop sign due to, traffic counts, road design, visibility and etc.

**Bob L'Heureux**

Do you have any traffic accident information for this area?

**Chairman Chief Doyle**

There have been no traffic accidents for that last 3 years in this area.

**Fran L'Heureux**

Any traffic counts in this area?

**Chairman Chief Doyle**

We have not done any traffic counts in this area.

**Dawn Tuomala:**

Director Fox informed me that this area is well under the 2,000 vehicles that is required.

Dawn handed out a map of the West Chamberlain and Rutherford St. area. She explained the configuration of the road.

The stop sign that is on Rutherford is listed under Chapter 183, which it does require a stop sign. The MUTCD (Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices) determines whether stop signs are warranted, this is how we base our decision. Volume should be 2000 vehicles per day or more and this area is well under 2000. Speed out there is 30 mph and not excessive, site distance good and reported crashes (none). Basically a stop sign is not warranted. Our recommendation is that a yield sign also is not warranted, you are able to see around the corner.

**Lynn Randel**

Looking at the picture as you are approaching the intersection at Rutherford you do not have a clear view, the road seems to disappear.

**Dawn Tuomala:**

At that point you are well behind any stop sign

**Chairman Chief Doyle**

I know what you are saying, when we have looked into stop sign requests we have found that usually it is a speed issue, accidents have not occurred because of people crashing but because people are not complying with the speed limit. Having a stop sign there could complicate the matter in my opinion.

**Lynn Randel**

We avoid this area when we go home.

**Bob L'Heureux**

Since speed may be an issue, I do not believe there is a speed sign posted in this area, would it be feasible to place a speed limit sign in this area or stripe the road, this would force the vehicle to stay to the right? Can this be done?

**Tim Thompson**

I am not sure that the volume of traffic is significant enough to meet the warrants.

**Lynn Randel**

This is a feeder road to the Birches and the Condos. They widen this road because of the increase of traffic.

**Bob L'Heureux**

I am not saying to stripe the entire road.

**Fran L'Heureux**

Where is the closest speed limit sign in that area?

**Chairman Chief Doyle**

I do not think there are any on West Chamberlain Road.

**Tim Thompson**

This falls under the general town speed limit, if speed limit is not posted the limit is 30 miles an hr.

**Chairman Chief Doyle**

Suggestion that Dawn and or DPW can look into this area to see if it warrants a stripe and the inclusion of speed limit sign on that section of the road, maybe in both directions.

**Dawn Tuomala**

A stop sign is not warranted in that area but I will check into it.

**Motion:**

*A motion to move agenda item for follow up at the next meeting “Request for a stop sign to be installed at West Chamberlain and Rutherford St: by Tim Thompson, seconded by Fran L’Heureux carried unanimously.*

---

- Street Light to be erected between #6 & #8 Glenwood./ Submission by Katie Gagnon

**Chairman Chief Doyle**

I spoke to Kyle Fox, Director of DPW; he stated street lights generally do not go up in neighborhoods; they are erected at major intersections. Mrs. Gagnon’s concern is that there are a lot of kids in that area and many people cut through to get to Joppa Road

**Dawn Tuomala**

Passed out a supplement where proposed street lights can be approved. This area is not identified in the regulations, the Director of Public Works does not approve this site.

**Chairman Chief Doyle**

We will reach out to Mrs. Gagnon let her know this is something that will be recommended by the committee. We did some research regarding accident data in this area, corner of Glenwood and Evergreen would not require us do anything more than what we are presently doing.

**Motion:**

*Tim Thompson moved to table indefinitely due to lack of jurisdiction, seconded by Bob L'Heureux . Motion carried unanimously.*

**Action Item**

*Chairman of the committee will reach out to Debbie Hawkins to inform her of the findings of the Highway Safety Com.*

- STA Proposal for a Bus Transportation Hub to be re-located at the Summit Building on DW Highway / submission by Carol Footer,

**Chairman Chief Doyle**

Mr. & Mrs. Footer and I discussed the STA proposal for the bus transportation hub. At that time the Planning Board did not have a chance to review the proposed plan. At this time the Planning Board has had a chance to look at the proposal; I will have Tim Thompson give a report of the meeting findings.

**Tim Thompson**

Planning Board had a meeting on May 2<sup>nd</sup>. The Board accepted the jurisdiction of the plan which means they have 65 days to make the final decision unless the applicant agrees to go further. The Planning Board did raise some concerns and indicated an interest in finding out what the highway safety committee thought and what their potential recommendations would be. Their ultimate decision would be that the STA proposal would be going back to the Board on June 6<sup>th</sup>, there has been a willingness expressed by the applicants to mediate the terms and conditions as much as possible. The report from the consultant was received Tuesday May 9, 2017. Yesterday we received our peer review which included Paul Konieczka comments on traffic from our consultants. The Planning Board is interested in the Highway Safety Committees thoughts. Tim wanted everyone to be aware that Paul is a member of the Highway Safety Committee as well as a peer review consultant for the Town on this project.

**Chairman Chief Doyle**

I sent a letter to the Planning Board concerning the PD concerns: Listed below are just a few:

1. buses leaving the hub could cause a substantial back up on DW Highway,
2. since there is not a dedicated lane for buses (afternoon flow) could stack up at the light,
3. accident on turnpike could cause a delay on the road
4. Buses do not turn on red

**Michelle Bancroft**

Stated that the buses do now turn right on red.

**Bob L'Heureux**

The memo does not state all of the committees concerns.

**Tim Thompson**

This memo is a Staff recommendation for that meeting, if they choose to move forward there will be another memo rewritten for the meeting in June with a new set of recommendations.

**Bob L'Heureux**

Will what we discuss today will be part of the revised memo to the Planning Board.

**Tim Thompson**

Yes, absolutely this meeting comment will be part of the memo.

**Steve Pernaw**

Review of the traffic evaluation was submitted to the Planning Board

The site has a southern site driveway which will be used by the bus drivers. The commercial site was also accounted for in this traffic evaluation. DOT Researching Feb. 2017 data north of Tilton drive. Monday- Friday is usual the high volume days .The flow of traffic is important to us, traffic peaks in the evening and morning and a reduced amount on weekends. We found that the buses leave and return during a non-peak time

**Chairman Chief Doyle**

Discussion took place relative to the presentations. Chief Doyle stated that the concerns of the PD and the committee where submitted to the town Planning Board, they will be making the decision. The committee will reserve the right to review the plan if needed.

**Bob L'Heureux**

Reiterated his concerns to the committee:

- Traffic count at Hilton Drive. Very misleading.
- Traffic from Bedford Rd.
  - The Commons
  - Mallard Point
  - Development behind Post Office
  - Lake Road School
  - Lake Rd
- Delays 90 minutes or 2 hours matrix done in good weather.



- Drivers arrive during peak traffic.
- Buses leaving during peak hours.
- RT. 3 Traffic back up from DD light prevents busses from exiting Williams St. What happens to schedules pickups?
- Break Down Lane
- Accident on Rt. stopping traffic.
- Turnpike expansion RT 3 becomes a bypass several year project.
- RT 3 bridge construction.
- Lake rd. bridge construction.
- Wire Rd. bridge construction.
- No right turn without going into North Lane.
- Fuel delivery normal business hours who's hours?
- Bus schedule, office schedule fuel, deliver schedule.
- 2 buses stopped at DD light block McGaw Bridge Rd. Blocked to traffic trying to enter.

#### **ADJOURNMENT:**

---

*There being no further business, the meeting was voted to adjourn on a motion made by **Paul Konieczka**: and seconded by **Fran L'Heureux**. Motion carries*

Meeting Adjourned 2:40 P.M.