

TRAFFIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes of February 20, 2015

PRESENT: Commander Geno, Jeffrey Wennberg, Jon Kiernan and Brad Lafaso

ABSENT: Chief Schlachter

GUESTS: Susan Schriebman, Sherri Durgin-Campbell, John Ryan, Dave Coppock and Larry Walter

The meeting was called to order at 9:03 A.M.

A motion to accept the minutes of the December 19, 2014 meeting was made by Jon Kiernan and seconded by Jeffrey Wennberg. All voted in favor.

Today's meeting Agenda was approved.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Complete streets – Kim from RAPAC and Susan Schriebman from Regional Planning Commission

Susan Schriebman and Jill made a presentation about complete streets. They mentioned how they conducted walk audits to help educate towns on complete street plans. There was reference made to a new law in 2011 to ensure that all needs of Vermont system are considered and that it needs to be safe for everyone in terms of mobility and accessibility.

They try to take opportunities when they present themselves, to address all road issues. There are seven steps to Complete Streets that are as follows: 1) Determine that Land Use and Transportation; 2) Determine Potential Users; 3) Assess the Transportation Facilities; 4) Issues Beyond the Roadway; 5) Select Complete Street Tools; 6) Consideration of Cost versus Need and Probable Use and 7) Documentation, Reporting and Maintenance.

They are currently working with Rutland Town, as they applied for a grant to install sidewalk from the School, up Post Road. She mentioned that the shared use path on Route 7 is now to be utilized by bicyclist and pedestrians. It was asked if there was a show of measure done. Susan said that there is a form that needs to be filed with a Town about how it has affected travel. Jeff Wennberg mentioned that Rutland Town has usually opposed sidewalks and asked if this has changed. Susan mentioned that the sidewalk hasn't happened and that they don't have zoning. She's not sure if the sidewalks will be added or maybe the shoulders of the road will be widened. Jeff also mentioned that Rutland Town is reluctant to incur costs. Susan mentioned that they are doing a sidewalk from Adele Stanley apartments to Route 7 and we'll have to wait and see how this turns out.

They asked if Rutland City would have an interest on a complete streets plan and if the City would consider that sidewalks are enhancements as part of road projects.

Commander Geno thanked them for a great presentation and asked Commissioner of Public Works if there is anything else. Jeff Wennberg mentioned that at times we don't have Right of Way or the budget for some projects. If legislature could cover incremental costs to incorporate more of this, it would help. He also mentioned that they have been budgeting about \$70K out of the total roads budget of \$575K, for sidewalk maintenance, etc. He estimated the cost for sidewalk upkeep to be about \$250K per year. He also mentioned that when we did Killington Avenue, it was interesting that the perception of most people was that the street got narrower. The design ended up visually narrowing roadway. Neighbors had concerns there would be more speeders. This new design plan with the curbs has actually slowed people down.

2. Handicap Parking spots – Michael Coppinger

Michael Coppinger was absent from today's meeting and there wasn't a discussion about this issue.

3. Traffic lights/crosswalk at Washington Street and Merchants Row intersection – Sherri Durgin Campbell and John Ryan of Bardwell House Residents Association

John Ryan mentioned that they have had problems with the crosswalk at this intersection. Maybe a 4 way stop sign could be installed here or maybe not allow a right turn on red.

One woman in a wheelchair was hit. He's not sure what the solution is. Commander Geno referred to Brad Lafaso. Brad mentioned that he will try to look into stopping traffic in all directions. Thinks it may cause a conflict. Traffic may back up. He talked with Butch Shaw and the City of Rutland had put pedestrian heads in with time of 20 seconds. Sherri Durgin-Campbell mentioned that this isn't long enough. She offered for Brad to take a walker with groceries and push it across the street and see if it's enough time to do this. She mentioned that 51% of people utilizing this crosswalk are disabled adults now. Brad mentioned that he understood her concerns and mentioned that maybe we could increase the timer. Jeff Wennberg mentioned that the traffic has to cleared and that we can't add more time. We've had other examples, like:

Left turn on Merchants Row, headed West. The engineers mentioned that we couldn't have a left turn there. We tried it. It works fine.

Let's try the stopping of all traffic. When pedestrian button is pushed, there would have to be no turn on red from Merchant's Row to Washington Street and see how it works. Maybe some improvements could be done along the corridor. Build sidewalk out, we could have less sidewalk to cross. Just a thought.

John Ryan mentioned that a lot of people are doing u-turns downtown. He asked what the speed limit is downtown. Commander Geno stated it is 30 miles per hour.

Sherri mentioned that the pedestrian was watching countdown and not traffic. Motorists aren't paying attention to people in the Crosswalk. Brad asked for clarification that when we do all traffic stopped, if a sign is being put up to not turn or if we are looking for an electronically activated sign. He will see if controller can handle all stop. He estimated electronic sign at \$3,500, just for the hardware. He mentioned that there is already a Yield to Pedestrian sign on Washington Street. Commander Geno mentioned a problem for electronic stoplight safety, is the pedestrian pushing the pedestrian button and jumping in the crosswalk, regardless if it's clear or not and also that motorists aren't giving right of way to pedestrians. He also made mention of other pedestrian buttons there were designed well in the downtown area that includes Merchant's Row, West Street, Pine Street and Wales Street.

John Ryan and Sherri Durgin-Campbell thanked everyone for their time.

4. Other new business

Dave Coppock suggested re-striping at the East Street/Woodstock Avenue intersection. There was a brief discussion about how they are trying to encourage crossers to use the Deer Street/Woodstock Avenue intersection. This usually works well, unless someone cuts through the Beauchamp & O'Rourke parking lot.

There was a discussion about walking west from the NE corner (by Jiffy Lube) across Route 7 works well. The traffic is able to clear before the walk signal.

Larry Walter asked the City to look into replacing the electronic NO-Right-Turn light at the Stratton Road/Woodstock Avenue (East). He mentioned that it's very difficult to see when the sun is on it. The sign faces the sun, so this will always be a problem unless we could get the brighter, LED lights installed. Commander Geno asked Brad if he could get us a cost for this.

RAPAC asked what should be done to make downtown a walkable corridor. Could we say "Here's your pedestrian gateway?" What are our bullseyes? Commander Geno mentioned that we are doing some of that with the pedestrian study with NISTSA studying our downtown area in April. Then, we need to educate the pedestrians and Motor vehicle operators.

It was mentioned that there are new utility poles being installed along Temple Street. These poles necessitated replacement, due to rotting. The new ones are taller to allow for additional electronic and communication lines.

Jeff Wennberg spoke briefly about letters that are sent to property owners that the City knows will have problems with their pipes freezing. The City knows when a particular property could have their pipes freeze. A letter will be sent to the homeowner letting them know when they need to continually run water, to avoid a freeze. The City of Rutland has 245 homes they are watching. The city will reimburse them for the period of time they needed to run water. He mentioned that he hasn't seen it this bad since 1994.

Commander Geno mentioned that before Spring settles in, members of this committee should participate in the street lighting in the NW neighborhood. It's important to get on the ground at pedestrian scale level to see if lighting is adequate.

Commander Geno asked if there was any other new business? No.

Old Business

1. Other old business

No other old business was discussed.

Meeting adjourned at 10:00 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Nora J. Moore
Records Clerk

Cc. Mayor
Commander Geno
Police Commission
Board of Alderman
City Clerk
Post