

PARKING and TRAFFIC SAFETY COMMITTEE
ACTION SHEET

8:00 A.M. – January 6th, 2022
Conference Room A

PRESENT: City Manager Karen Conard (temporary Chair), Public Works Director Peter Rice

Members: Mary Lou McElwain (zoom), Steve Pesci (Zoom), Mark Syracuse, Harold Whitehouse, Fire Chief Todd Germain, Police Captain Mike Maloney, Erica Wygonik

CITY STAFF: Parking Director Benjamin Fletcher

ACTION ITEMS FOR CITY COUNCIL

- None
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1. **Financial Report:** Accepted and placed on file Financial Report dated November 30, 2021
2. **Public Comment Session:** There were 2 speakers: Lenore Weiss-Bronson (Traffic Calming on Woodbury Ave); Robin Rousseau (NPP for downtown residents)
3. **Request for RRFB Just West of Islington and Vine:** **Voted to** have Staff review traffic activity in Spring 2022 and report back
4. **Request for No U-Turn at Market St. Extension and Nobles Island:** **Voted to** have Staff research and report back with regard to traffic data, accident data, standard parameters for disallowing U-turns
5. **Request for 4-way Stop at Intersection of State St. and Union:** **Voted to** have Staff study and report back with regard to traffic volumes, layout and industry standards
6. **Request to add LED Accent Lighting to New Stop Signs on Banfield Road:** **Voted to** approve and install four (4) LED-Accented Stop Signs on Banfield Road
7. **Formation of Sub-committee to study Portsmouth Street Inventory and Make Speed Limit Recommendations:** **Voted to** have Staff work to develop a draft Portsmouth Street inventory, share it with a working group, the byproduct of which will come to before PTS Committee for consideration
8. **Request for RRFB at South and Broad:** **Voted to have Staff review traffic:**
Informational; no action required

9. **Monthly Accident Report from Police:**
Informational; no action required
10. **Bike and Vehicular Traffic Volume Data:**
Informational; no action required
11. **Middle/Miller Street presentation by Derek Caldwell from Sebago Technics:**
Informational; no action required
12. **Bartlett Street Public Meeting Review Presentation:**
Informational; no action required
13. **Borthwick and Rte. 1 Update:**
Informational; no action required
14. **Letter from Liz Bratter:**
Voted to place on file
15. **Update on 273 Austin Street Request to Reduce Parking**
Voted to place on February New Business Agenda
16. **Letter from Lenore Weiss-Bronson:**
Voted to place on file
17. **Adjournment:** 09:30:55am: **Voted to** adjourn

Respectfully submitted by: Benjamin Fletcher

MEETING MINUTES

PARKING and TRAFFIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

Portsmouth, NH

CONFERENCE ROOM A

CITY HALL, MUNICIPAL COMPLEX, 1 JUNKINS AVENUE

*Members of the public also have the option to join the meeting over Zoom
(See below for more details)**

8:00 AM

MINUTES

January 6, 2021

I. CALL TO ORDER

City Manager Conard called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

II. ATTENDANCE

Members Present:

City Manager Karen Conard
Public Works Director Peter Rice
Fire Chief Todd Germain
Police Captain Mike Maloney
Mary Lou McElwain
Steve Pesci
Mark Syracuse
Harold Whitehouse
Erica Wygonik (Alternate)

Absent

City Staff Present:

Parking Director Ben Fletcher

III. FINANCIAL REPORT

Parking Director Ben Fletcher commented that they were doing better than what they budgeted for in almost every category except one, which is on target.

Harold Whitehouse moved to accept the Financial Report dated November 30, 2021, and place it on file, seconded Public Works Director Peter Rice. On a unanimous roll call, motion passed 9-0.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT (15 MINUTES)

Lenore Weiss Bronson of 828 Woodbury Ave. spoke to the traffic calming request submitted by the Frank Jones Farm Neighborhood for Woodbury Ave. There have been traffic calming requests for this area since the '90s. There have been multiple requests for stop signs and speed bumps to be installed along Woodbury Ave. Ms. Weiss Bronson was told that the request was submitted to the CIP. It was reviewed by the PTS, and it was put on file or is not being dealt with at this point. There is no stop sign between Granite St. and Bartlett St. Action has been promised in the past, but nothing has ever come of it. This area has a history of horrendous accidents. Cars come through this area to get to Home Depot and other shopping areas. However, they should access that shopping area from the traffic circle and Brady Dr. Traffic is being diverted into a residential neighborhood. This problem needs to be addressed. They did install sidewalks, but it's still unsafe. There are no crossing guards in this area for kids getting on the bus. Nobody uses the crosswalk because it's not in a place where they would normally cross. There are 250 homes in this neighborhood and this speeding problem needs to be addressed. This neighborhood should be closed like Echo Ave. was. The City needs to stop deprioritizing this area. It is not an expensive project to put in stop signs. The Committee should propose a concrete solution that is not put on file.

Public Works Director Peter Rice responded that the concerns have been heard. The process of coming up with solutions started last fall with the collection of data. There is a project in the CIP that speaks to traffic calming measures. There are ideas being developed to move forward. The concern that has been raised and has been heard. It has not been ignored. The process is underway and there are funds identified in the CIP for traffic calming. This project was not specifically called out in the CIP because it's funding for a series of projects. Stop signs have come before the Committee many times in the past and have not been deemed warranted.

City Manager Karen Conard commented that they would schedule a meeting about Woodbury Ave. and other traffic calming efforts. It will be properly noticed and there can be a larger discussion at that time. For now, the Committee will take Ms. Weiss Bronson's letter.

Robin Russo supported Ms. Weiss Bronson's comments. Ms. Russo sat in the breakout committee for the pilot parking program for the Islington Creek Neighborhood. More people were supporting the program than not supporting it. The program has been an overwhelming success. Ms. Russo lives in the McIntosh Building and requested that their neighborhood be considered next for a permit parking program. This neighborhood takes the the brunt of tourism. It is their turn for a parking program. Ms. Russo requested that these meetings happen in the evenings instead of the morning, so more people could attend.

V. SITE VISITS: None

VI. NEW BUSINESS

(No public comment during Committee discussion without Committee approval.)

- A.** Request for crosswalk with RRFB, just west of the intersection of Islington St. at Vine Street

Public Works Director Peter Rice moved to have Staff review traffic activity in Spring 2022 and report back, seconded by Harold Whitehouse.

Parking Director Ben Fletcher commented that this was a citizen request. There will be more traffic in the spring and summer than now, so they will evaluate then.

On a unanimous roll call, motion passed 9-0.

- B.** Request for No U-Turn sign request at Market St. Extension and Nobles Island

Parking Director Ben Fletcher commented that this was another citizen request. The picture shows where the U turn would be located. They need to discuss whether or not it is warranted.

Public Works Director Peter Rice commented that it was unclear on how big of a problem this really was. There have been no prior complaints about this. Public Works Director Peter Rice had not reviewed the MUTCD requirements about when it is appropriate. They needed to do more research to understand how big of a problem this was and when a U-turn was warranted.

Harold Whitehouse questioned if any part of that road was State controlled. Public Works Director Peter Rice responded that it was not.

Parking Director Ben Fletcher commented that they do have traffic counts for that area already. They can add a camera to observe how many U-turns are happening.

Public Works Director Peter Rice moved to have Staff research and report back with regard to traffic data, accident data, standard parameters for disallowing U-turns, seconded by Harold Whitehouse.

Mark Syracuse commented that a lot of people heading outbound realize that they don't want to go all the way down, so people make illegal moves.

Erika Wygonik commented that a warranted U-turn may be based on crash history.

Steve Pesci commented that unless there have been accidents there in the past, then they should keep the U-turn as long as there is engineering capacity. It would be good to have that flexibility if it can be maintained safely.

On a unanimous roll call, motion passed 9-0.

C. Request for 4-way Stop at the Intersection of State Street and Union

Parking Director Ben Fletcher commented that this as another citizen request. The requesting party believes it would be beneficial to have a 4 way stop here.

Erika Wygonik moved have Staff study and report back with regard to traffic volumes, layout and industry standards, seconded by Public Works Director Peter Rice.

Harold Whitehouse questioned if they should add a timeframe for the report back. City Manager Karen Conard responded that they currently had limited staffing resources so, they would work as fast as possible. Public Works Director Peter Rice added that they were working with a contract engineer right now. This would require a warrant evaluation and they would have to collect traffic counts. This will take a few months.

On a unanimous roll call, motion passed 9-0.

D. Request to add LED Accent Lighting to New Stop Signs on Banfield Road

Public Works Director Peter Rice moved to approve and install four (4) LED-Accented Stop Signs on Banfield Road, seconded by Mary Lou McElwain.

Public Works Director Peter Rice commented that this proposal was brought forward by DPW after looking at the new stop signs along Banfield Rd. and the crash history in the area. People are not aware of the stop signs as they are going down the road. The LED lighting will help bring awareness.

Police Captain Mike Maloney commented that the Police Department would see this as a benefit. People are running these new stop signs in excess of 25-30 mph. City Manager Karen Conard questioned how many stop signs this would apply to. Public Works Director Peter Rice responded four.

Harold Whitehouse questioned how they would be powered. Public Works Director Peter Rice responded that they would be solar powered LED lights.

Erika Wygonik suggested adding a sign about a new intersection control ahead. It might be good to put up a temporary sign to alert people.

Mark Syracuse questioned if the word new was effective on the stop signs. Police Captain Mike Maloney responded that they were effective and working in the sense that the stop sign is clearly visible. People have been driving the street 20-30 years and are not used to stopping. Public Works Director Peter Rice added that the word “new” is on there to tell people that it hasn’t always been there. It’s not a traffic control element; it’s informational.

Steve Pesci commented that he supported introducing the LED signs. However, they should use them judiciously and develop a threshold for appropriate use because of the cost. They should not have these all over town. Public Works Director Peter Rice responded that this decision came down to police monitoring and accidents. That was the justification to add it.

Erika Wygonik suggested that they could add the LED for a medium-term duration then move them to another part of the City after people got used to it. Public Works Director Peter Rice did not agree because it would be problematic. If they were doing a temporary sign, then it should be separate from the stop sign.

On a unanimous roll call, motion passed 9-0.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

- A.** Confirmation of formation of Sub committee to study Portsmouth Street Inventory and make speed limit recommendations. (NB 11.16.21)

Public Works Director Peter Rice commented that they were concerned that they forced this through without confirming if Erika Wygonik and Steve Pesci were interested in participating in this. Staff can take the lead or support them in this effort.

City Manager Conard commented that staff should come up with the initial plan and then consult Erika Wygonik and Steve Pesci.

Erika Wygonik confirmed that she would be happy to participate and support the effort. Public Works Director Peter Rice confirmed that staff would put the plan together and take the lead. Then they can report back. Steve Pesci agreed that he would be happy to participate and work with staff.

City Manager Conard commented that they could form a subcommittee to review what staff comes up with. Public Works Director Peter Rice noted that it would be better to start this as a working group and report to the committee in a public format after some work has been done.

City Manager Karen Conard moved to have Staff work to develop a draft Portsmouth Street inventory, share it with a working group, the byproduct of which will come to before PTS Committee for consideration, seconded by Mark Syracuse.

Steve Pesci noted that there were a couple items about minimum speed limits going through the legislature right now. They should keep an eye on that.

On a unanimous roll call, motion passed 9-0.

**B. Request for RRFB at the Intersection of South Street and Broad Street (NB 11.16.21)
Sample Motion: Staff to Place Traffic Camera in Spring 2022 and Report Back**

Public Works Director Peter Rice commented that this was just informational. There was no motion needed for this.

Harold Whitehouse commented that they talked about putting in a blinking light at the corner of Broad St. and South St. but those are not effective. Harold Whitehouse questioned if raised pavement would be more effective. Public Works Director Peter Rice responded that the issue wasn't speeding as much as pedestrian crossing visibility. A raised table would not address that concern. It was not a blinking light that was proposed. It was an RRFB.

Steve Pesci commented that this falls into the category of being judicious about introducing electronic signage in the City. This looks like a safe crosswalk. It will be good to see a report back.

VIII. INFORMATIONAL

A. Monthly Accident Report from Police

Police Captain Mike Maloney commented that there were 70 crashes total and 40 in the month of November. They are tacking around average.

Harold Whitehouse questioned if they could stencil the words "look up" in the crosswalk to encourage people to look up from their phones and be aware of the cars. Public Works Director Peter Rice responded that there were very specific things that they can and cannot put in the crosswalk, so it may not be possible. Harold Whitehouse questioned how they could educate people to look up. City Manager Karen Conard responded that it was just common sense.

B. Bike and Vehicular Traffic Data

Parking Director Ben Fletcher commented that the counts were considerably higher and closer to the 2019 numbers in both Noble's Island and the South St. locations.

C. Middle/Miller Street presentation by Derek Caldwell from Sebago Technics
12.9.2021

Traffic Engineer Derek Caldwell and Project Manager Brad Lyon from Sebago Technics spoke to the redesign proposal for this intersection. Mr. Caldwell commented that the purpose of the project is to modernize the signal and increase mobility for vehicles, pedestrians, and bikes. The intersection is at Middle St., Miller Ave., and Summer St. Today the four-way signal operates on a fixed time setting. There is no detection for vehicles, so the signal runs regardless of the vehicle demand. The existing pedestrian crossings will be maintained, and the curb ramps will be upgraded. There are no separate bike facilities out there today. The concept designs show opportunity for a more formal bike lane. There is no emergency vehicle preemption today, and this design will incorporate that. Today there is one traffic signal on a mast arm and the rest are on posts. Overhead traffic lights are better for visibility. Traffic volumes are based on traffic counts taken this past summer and adjusted for Covid. Middle St. had the major movement and northbound had the highest. Miller Ave. had a heavy right turn movement. The first option would maintain the existing lane configuration. One change would include new signal equipment and they would implement a left turn green arrow to allow for a protective left from Middle St. to Miller Ave. This option would also pull the curb lines to create a shorter pedestrian crossing and defined bike lanes. The other alternative would put in a left turn on both Middle St. approaches. For both alternatives all signal equipment will be replaced at the intersection and there would be curb reconstruction to meet ADA compliance. The exclusive crosswalk pedestrian phase will be maintained. If they keep only one lane in each direction for option 1, then there will be excess shoulder space. That would give the opportunity to create a defined bike lane too. The concern with this configuration is that there would not be a defined turn lane for the protective left onto Miller Ave., so the protective phase would come up each cycle. It could be turned off for certain times. The benefit of this layout is that the on street parking can pretty much remain the same. The second option would have a dedicated left turn on Middle St. in both ways. The curb lines would stay the same. They can put in some form of bike lanes, but it comes at the expense of on street parking. This provides protected phasing for left hand turns and an area to queue up. Operationally the intersection would be more efficient. The turn lane would only activate if a vehicle was there to turn. The left turn lane onto Summer St. would not have as high of a volume, but they would have to mirror the left lane on both sides. The vehicle capacity analysis outlines the level of service. The option without a dedicated left turn shows that the northbound approach would suffer. The second option has a better level of service. Today cars can bypass a vehicle. That may not be an option if the curb lines are brought in. There would be 20

spaces to the south and 7 to the north of the intersection with option 1. The second option would have 6 on street parking to the south and 4 spaces to the north.

Public Works Director Peter Rice commented that this presentation was the start of a public discussion. The intent was to bring this to the Committee then they will have a public input discussion. This will come back to the Committee with a recommendation after that. The goal of today was to get any feedback.

Harold Whitehouse commented that people were complaining that the current ADA mats get slippery. Derek Caldwell responded that the panels are required. The material of them can be different. Plastic can be more slippery. Brad Lyon commented that the mats were required to let blind people know they were entering traffic. They can steepen the slope while staying ADA compliant to help make sure water slides off before freezing.

Mary Lou McElwain commented that this project was a long time coming. This intersection is very unsafe and needs major changes. The no turn on red signs should remain. They should not lose any parking spaces.

Steve Pesci questioned if there was a possibility of a hybrid that would allow the southbound side of Middle St. to have a dedicated left turn only lane. Option two doesn't quite fit the neighborhood. It is important to look at the level of service and account for pedestrian safety with the shorter crosswalks. Derek Caldwell responded that if they provided a left lane for the south, then they would have to mirror it on the other side in some fashion on the northbound side. It could be a painted island. Steve Pesci commented that option one was a better fit at this point.

Erika Wygonik agreed with Steve Pesci's comments. It will be good to upgrade the signal. The protected left should have its own lane. It would be good to look at a hybrid that could have a taper and save some parking. Pedestrian safety is important. Improving the intersection to help facilitate bike lanes is an important factor. The level of service results are reasonable.

Mark Syracuse questioned when the public session was. Public Works Director Peter Rice responded that it was not scheduled yet, but it will be advertised. Mark Syracuse commented that it is important to notify abutters because parking would be impacted. Public Works Director Peter Rice agreed. They would not make changes without informing abutting properties.

City Manager Karen Conard questioned when the last time this intersection was comprehensively studied. Public Works Director Peter Rice responded that 15

years ago they made effort but had an issue with easements. They were unable to move forward. That has been resolved now.

Mark Syracuse questioned if there was an increase in accidents in that intersection. Police Captain Mike Maloney responded that there was not.

Mary Lou McElwain commented that they need to consider the bus and emergency routes at this intersection.

Erika Wygonik commented that they should try to pull the curbing in to better align Miller Ave. and Summer St. as much as possible.

D. Bartlett St public meeting review presentation, by Staff Engineer Tyler Reese

Tyler Reese commented that staff had a public input session with the residents of Bartlett St. for planned improvements. Bartlett St. is in need of a full roadway reconstruction and replacement of underground utilities. They are in the fact finding and data collection phase and seeking input from PTS as well as the community. Bartlett St. has substandard crosswalks and sidewalks. The speed on Bartlett St. is 29 mph for the 85th percentile and the average was 25 mph. This project will try to bring the speeds more in line with posted 20 mph. The pavement on Thornton St. is fair but the lane widths are wide. That can lead to speeding. Narrowing the lane width will help to reduce speed through the intersection. Morning St. is a quiet low volume street, and the pavement will be resurfaced. There are three potential layouts that were presented to the public for comment. These improvements for Bartlett St. would go from the Thornton St. intersection to the Woodbury Ave. section. The other section of Bartlett St. has further constraints and will remain largely unchanged. Option 1 is similar to Dennett St. It will create 2 marked lanes and parking on both sides of the road. That is how Bartlett St. is currently, so it is the no build option. Option 2 is similar to Aldrich Rd. There would be two designated lanes of travel and parking on one side. That would be a reduction in parking from the existing condition. Option 3 would be an alternate yield similar to Cass St. This option would slow traffic and push cars to use Cate St. Lower Bartlett St. will remain largely unchanged, but they will add a sidewalk on the eastern side. Thornton St. will remain largely unchanged with the addition of delineated parking on one side of the street. Morning St. will be largely unchanged. Because it is a low volume and speed street, the residents did not feel that sidewalks were necessary. There was a large amount of public interest on lowering traffic volume and speed on Bartlett St. There was a large interest in adding more trees and greenery and pedestrian improvements on Bartlett St. The public preferred option 3. The yield traffic model will slow speeds and discourage traffic. There are valid concerns about using this design on a high-volume road. It may not work correctly. There is a

COAST bus stop on the street that may cause difficulties as well. There is emergency vehicle access concern as well.

Steve Pesci commented that the public meeting was well run and there were good comments. They should look at any 2021 volume or speed data they have after Hodgson Way was opened. That would be important data to consider. Bartlett St. is an important arterial street, and it will remain that way. The public positively received option 3 but Steve Pesci's professional opinion was that it was not workable for the volume of the street. There are two transit systems that use that corridor. Steve Pesci questioned where the plans would be posted for the public to view. Public Works Director Peter Rice responded that it would be posted at the DPW and on the web site.

Erika Wygonik questioned how many people were currently parking on Bartlett St. Public Works Director Peter Rice did not have an exact number, but it is congested. Erika Wygonik commented that the yield wouldn't work if there was not enough on street parking demand. Public Works Director Peter Rice commented that they would monitor that.

Fire Chief Todd Germain commented that option 3 was less desirable from an emergency response perspective. It is hard to get vehicles down Cass St. especially in the winter. If option 3 is the design, then they will need to work with engineers to get some concession on the width. It is not an often traveled route emergency response.

Police Captain Mike Maloney agreed that option 3 was not his first choice because of the traffic volume on the street. It works on Lincoln Ave. because it is low volume. It doesn't work as well on Cass St. because there is more volume.

Public Works Director Peter Rice commented that this was the start of the discussion. They have not evaluated the possibility of improving intersection safety by potentially creating one-way streets. There are a number of streets where it is dangerous coming out onto Bartlett St. It may make sense to look at making some of them one-way streets. That would be well vetted through the public and this Committee before it happened. The neighborhood wants wider sidewalks and more amenities. Given the width of the road option 3 is the only way to accommodate that. It is not great to take a high-volume road and choke it down to a yield. They need to look at traffic data and functionality. There could be an option to pilot something to see how it works before making a permanent change.

Steve Pesci commented that they could consider making a three way stop at Pine St. and Bartlett St. That was raised at the public session.

Erika Wygonik commented that it looked like total paved area was similar between options 2 and 3. That gives flexibility parking demand and switching between the two options if option 3 is not working. Erika Wygonik noted that it looked like there was an extra 4 feet of space on the side and questioned what the plan was for that. Public Works Director Peter Rice responded that this was just a rough design to present some initial options. A 6-foot sidewalk is the minimum and additional green space for a buffer is good.

Harold Whitehouse commented that these streets were designed in the horse and buggy days and sometimes a change they want is not practical.

Public Works Director Peter Rice commented that they will take this feedback and apply it to the proposal. This will come back with an updated presentation in the upcoming months.

- E. Borthwick Update: East Coast signal will be onsite at the Intersection of Borthwick and Rte 1 Bypass around Christmas to install the wiring. The new Mast Arms/Signals and Cabinet are due to be installed between Jan 15th and the 21st.

City Manager Karen Conard requested an update on the Borthwick Ave. item.

Public Works Director Peter Rice responded that they were out there for wiring and the mast arm installation was scheduled for next week.

IX. MISCELLANEOUS

- A. NPP Letter from Liz Bratter

Public Works Director Peter Rice moved to place the letter on file, seconded by Harold Whitehouse. On a unanimous roll call, motion passed 9-0.

Public Works Director Peter Rice moved to place on February New Business Agenda, seconded by Harold Whitehouse. On a unanimous roll call, motion passed 9-0.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Public Works Director Peter Rice moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:30 a.m., seconded by Mark Syracuse. On a unanimous roll call, motion passed 9-0.

**Members of the public also have the option to join the meeting over Zoom, a unique meeting ID and password will be provided once you register. To register, click on the link below or copy and paste this into your web browser:*

https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_bFS4wpRISeCWhwnzvki6w

PARKING and TRAFFIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

ACTION SHEET

8:00 A.M. – February 3rd, 2022
Conference Room A

PRESENT: City Manager Karen Conard (temporary Chair), Public Works Director Peter Rice

Members: Mary Lou McElwain, Steve Pesci (Zoom), Fire Chief Todd Germain,
Police Captain Mike Maloney, Erica Wygonik, Councilor Andrew Bagley

CITY STAFF: Parking Director Benjamin Fletcher

ACTION ITEMS FOR CITY COUNCIL

- None
-

1. **Financial Report:** Accepted and placed on file Financial Report dated December 31, 2021
2. **Public Comment Session:** There were five speakers: Liza Hewett (speeds on Middle); Ken Goldman (Cornwall and Rockingham both one way in same direction – pls consider switching one); Johnathon Sandberg (Cate/Bartlett observations); Robin Rousseau (staff on PTS; ADA compliance); Jess Lozan (271 Austin – Restrict Parking)
3. **Request for Reduced Parking Across from 273 Austin Street:** Voted to have Staff measure dimensions and report back with options
4. **Request for Discussion on Times of Future PTS Meetings:** Voted to move regularly-scheduled Thursday meetings to 8:30am, and choose up to two times annually to switch to evening meeting to enable public input on larger-scale items
5. **Request for Additional Parking Signage at 21 Brewster:** Voted to table this item and place on file
6. **Request to add RRFB System at Dennett and Maplewood:** Voted to have staff place traffic camera and collect data starting 4.15.22
7. **Discussion on Traffic Graphs:** Voted to have Staff work to develop recommended data reporting as the 2019/2021 comparison comes to an end.
8. **Citizen Letter received 1.6.22 re: Woodbury Speed Assessment and Calming:** Voted to place on file

9. **Monthly Accident Report from Police:**
Informational; no action required
10. **Bike and Vehicular Traffic Volume Data:**
Informational; no action required
11. **Adjournment:** 09:27am **Voted to adjourn**

Respectfully submitted by: Benjamin Fletcher

PARKING and TRAFFIC SAFETY COMMITTEE
PORTSMOUTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE

CONFERENCE ROOM A
CITY HALL, MUNICIPAL COMPLEX, 1 JUNKINS AVENUE

*Members of the public also have the option to join the meeting over Zoom
(See below for more details)**

8:00 AM

February 3rd, 2022

MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER

City Manager Conard called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

II. ATTENDANCE

Members Present:

Chairman Andrew Bagley
Vice Chairman Steve Pesci (via Zoom)
City Manager Karen Conard
Public Works Director Peter Rice
Fire Chief Todd Germain
Police Captain Mike Maloney
Mary Lou McElwain
Erica Wygonik (Alternate)

Absent

Mark Syracuse
Harold Whitehouse

City Staff Present:

Parking Director Ben Fletcher

Public Works Director Peter Rice moved to bring agenda item 6a forward, seconded by City Manager Conard. On a unanimous roll call, motion passed 8-0.

Public Works Director Peter Rice moved to nominate Councilor Andrew Bagley for Chair, seconded by City Manager Karen Conard. On a roll call vote, motion passed 7-0-1. Councilor Andrew Bagley abstained.

Public Works Director Peter Rice moved to nominate Steve Pesci for Vice Chair, seconded by City Manager Karen Conard.

Mary Lou McElwain commented that the position should be defined because they haven't had a Vice Chair recently. Public Works Director Peter Rice commented that the role would be to act as Chair and facilitate the meeting if the Chair is absent.

Councilor Andrew Bagley noted that he requested a Vice Chairman because he travels for work, so it would be appropriate to have a backup. It will also be good to have someone who has been on the committee for a while to provide that institutional knowledge as a support. Mary Lou McElwain agreed.

Steve Pesci commented that he was happy to step in and help the Committee.

On a roll call vote, motion passed 7-0-1. Steve Pesci abstained.

III. FINANCIAL REPORT

Parking Director Ben Fletcher commented that the year is 50% over and 62% of the budget funds are in. Most of the line items are ahead of schedule and if they are not ahead, then they are right on schedule.

Public Works Director Peter Rice moved to accept the Financial Report dated December 31, 2021, and place it on file, seconded by City Manager Karen Conard. On a unanimous roll call, motion passed 8-0.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT (15 MINUTES)

Liza Hewett of 726 Middle Rd. commented on the speeds on Middle Rd. Ms. Hewett came before the Committee in 2020 and requested that the speed limit be lowered to 25 mph as well as other traffic calming measures be put into place. No action was taken, so she submitted a petition to lower the speed limit to 25 mph. The City decided to pilot traffic calming measures that were put in last spring. There was not a review of the traffic calming measure success before they were removed for winter. It looks like the traffic calming for Middle Rd. was pushed to 2026 in the CIP. Cars travel this road with speeds over 40 mph. No speed on residential roads should be over 25 mph. Ms. Hewett has been told that this is an arterial road, and 30 mph is appropriate. This is a neighborhood. There are other gateway roads that are 25 mph. It is understood that they are studying the speed limits in the City and coming up with a plan. Middle Rd., Islington St., and Sagamore Ave. should be 25 mph.

Public Works Director Peter Rice clarified that the traffic calming was not pushed to 2026. It is slated for 2023. It was slated for 2024 in the CIP last year, but was pulled forward to 2023 for this CIP. The City's Traffic Engineer left, so they are understaffed. Additional data has been collected. The City is not ignoring this request.

Ken Goldman of 271 Islington St. commented that he lives between Cornwall St. and Rockingham St. Today they are both one-way streets going in the same direction. It would be convenient for the people who live there to have one go one way and the other go the other way. Mr. Goldman requested that the Committee consider making that change.

Johnathon Sandberg of 160 Bartlett St. commented on the Cate St./Bartlett St. intersection. A lot of improvements could be easily made. The stop bar coming from Cate St. is after the crosswalk. The cars block the crosswalk when they are stopped there. The slip lane coming up Bartlett St. is unsafe. They are for emphasizing flow over safety. They are not common in the City. The slip lane is preventing queuing, but it is sacrificing safety. Cars should take a hard right instead of a soft right.

Coming down Bartlett St. the road is three lanes wide. That is unnecessary because almost no cars turn right there. The road could be changed to better accommodate pedestrians or bikes. 105 Bartlett St. won the appeal, so it will be developed and they will create the path along North Mill Pond. That creates an opportunity to connect Cate St. to this trail. It would be best to create a multi-use path up the road and create a crosswalk at the driveways instead of having people make a crossing at Cate St. and then Bartlett St.

Robin Rousseau of 90 Fleet St. commented that she was shocked that City management had voting positions on this Committee and requested that Chairman Bagley look into if that was appropriate. Ms. Rousseau commented that Portsmouth was not in compliance with parking privileges for those with handicap placards. In October there was a parking change with a three-hour limit for those with handicap placards. The RSA says they should have double the time limit that a regular vehicle would have. The City should change that rule immediately and issue any refunds to those who were impacted. This Committee should meet on a weeknight and not at 8 a.m. on a weekday. Ms. Rousseau requested that Market Square neighborhood be next in the permit parking pilot programs.

Jess Lozan of 273 Austin St. commented that she measured the width of Austin St. and it is 17 feet wide. [A Chevy] Tahoe is 7 feet. That gives them less than 10 feet to make any car switch arounds. It is understood there are a lot of small streets in Portsmouth but not all of them have parking. Ms. Lozan's neighbor suggested adding a sign that says "do not block driveway" which would prevent losing any parking. It may be good to add paint too. It would be helpful to add a notification device to prevent cars from blocking the driveway.

Michael Millikan of 284 New Castle Ave. commented on the traffic calming on Middle Rd. In 2019 Mr. Millikan had a conversation with Eric Eby about New Castle Ave. because there was a lot of speeding. That justified a speed limit feedback sign, which has been helpful. However, Eric Eby also said that New Castle Ave. is an arterial road and was not eligible for traffic calming beyond a speed feedback sign and enforcement. Mr. Millikan requested clarification on what arterial routes were in Portsmouth and what traffic calming they were eligible for.

Chairman Andrew Bagley closed the public comment session.

V. SITE VISITS

273 Austin Street; Tuesday, February 1st, 8am

Chairman Andrew Bagley commented that City Officials and Committee Members were present to evaluate the site and gave credit to the City for that level of involvement. Residents may not always be happy with decisions that are made, but this shows the level of care, effort, and communication this City takes pride in.

Public Works Director Peter Rice commented that they have looked at the site a couple times before and they understood the challenge of navigating a narrow driveway and street. The question comes down to a balance of access and parking. The setbacks show there is room for one parking spot. One option is to put in a painted triangle across the street from the driveway to prevent parking there. Another option is putting up a "do not block driveway" sign. The last option would be to stripe out the

spot and add signage saying do not park at the stop sign or driveway. There was not a consensus at the site walk.

Vice Chairman Steve Pesci commented that the triangle would address the majority of concerns. They have to balance the convenience of the private property owner with the public right to park in legally designated areas. The hope is that the staff would work to create a compromise without putting up a lot of signage.

Vice Chairman Steve Pesci moved to have Staff measure dimensions and report back with options, seconded by Public Works Director Peter Rice.

Mary Lou McElwain agreed with Vice Chairman Steve Pesci and noted that it was important to hear from residents who were parking in that area as well.

Chairman Andrew Bagley commented they should send out abutter notices when they are ready to propose a change. It may be better received if people are notified.

Public Works Director Peter Rice amended the motion to include abutter notification, Vice Chairman Steve Pesci agreed to the amendment.

On a unanimous roll call, motion passed 8-0.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

(No public comment during Committee discussion without Committee approval.)

A. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

This was addressed at the beginning of the meeting.

B. PTS Schedule Discussion **Sample Motion: Discuss options for upcoming calendar**

Chairman Andrew Bagley commented that 8 a.m. was hard for people to attend. An afternoon meeting may be easier for City Staff and the public to attend. They can have special meetings, for example a neighborhood parking meeting, in the evenings to allow for even more attendance.

Mary Lou McElwain commented that there was not an ideal time. They have done afternoon meetings before, and the attendance was not different. This is the start of the staff's day, so it is easier for them to attend.

Erika Wygonik agreed that there was not an ideal time. 8 a.m. is tricky but she appreciated that it was at the beginning of the day and at a time when children were occupied. 8:15 a.m. would be easier to do drop off and then come to this meeting. Occasional night meetings for particular public matters do make sense.

Vice Chairman Steve Pesci commented that the meeting should be either at the beginning of the day or the end of the day. 8 a.m. can be a little stressful to make family logistics work, so 8:30 may work better.

Chairman Andrew Bagley commented that it was important to have the Fire Chief and Police Captain attend and requested their feedback.

Fire Chief Todd Germain commented that he had a conflict in the evening on the first Thursday of the month. Any other time during the day would work.

Police Captain Mike Maloney commented that evenings could be tricky, but if he could not attend someone else from the police force could. These meetings can run 1-2 hours. If they start in the afternoon, then they can run into the early evening.

City Manager Karen Conard commented that member Mark Syracuse wrote in that the afternoon was his preference. City Manager Karen Conard added that City Staff would make themselves available for the meeting.

Chairman Andrew Bagley commented that the consensus seemed that a morning meeting at 8:15 or 8:30 was preferred. It's unrealistic to schedule every meeting in the evening because of staff requirements and other City meeting conflicts. However, they could consider having a couple regular meetings a year in the evening.

Mary Lou McElwain commented that they do have Zoom capabilities, so the public can participate that way as well.

Erika Wygonik moved to move regularly-scheduled Thursday meetings to 8:30am, and choose up to two times annually to switch to evening meeting to enable public input on larger-scale items, seconded by Public Works Director Peter Rice. On a unanimous roll call, motion passed 8-0.

C. 273 Austin Street- Request for Reduced Parking Across from 273 Austin

This was addressed under the site walk agenda item.

D. 21 Brewster Street- Request for improved parking signage to denote only one available space (as painted)

Parking Director Ben Fletcher commented that this was a space that sometimes houses two vehicles but it is only striped for one. It is difficult for people to see that when the snow is on the ground, so people will double park. There is a request to put in signage to prevent double parking.

Public Works Peter Rice commented that he was concerned about additional signage on a tight sidewalk. The snow removal and paint on the road should be adequate to show there is only one parking spot. This is a single parking space in the ordinance. There is no

additional action needed by the Committee. If staff finds that signage is needed after observing it, then staff can take that action.

Public Works Director Peter Rice moved to table this item and place it on file, seconded by Mary Lou McElwain.

Mary Lou McElwain commented that when residents have a request like this, they should come to the meeting to discuss it. That would help to provide some additional background to the Committee.

Erika Wygonik commented that this comes up frequently. It is understood that they don't want additional signage, but the public may not be as familiar with parking setbacks. It may be helpful to put messaging on the City's social media to remind the public about the requirements.

Vice Chairman Steve Pesci agree with Erika Wygonik and commented that signage can become a long-term maintenance issue. As long as the paint is on the ground, then awareness should be there.

On a unanimous roll call, motion passed 8-0.

Public Works Director Peter Rice commented that they would have staff and enforcement observe that area.

E. Request for RRFB at Dennett and Maplewood

Parking Director Ben Fletcher commented that this was a neighbor request. Typically, they put out a camera to monitor foot traffic. There are guidelines that show when an RRFB is warranted. This discussion should be about what timeframe would be appropriate to put this out. The numbers in the spring and summer may be more active than putting a camera out now.

Vice Chairman Steve Pesci moved to have staff place traffic camera and collect data starting 4.15.22, seconded by Mary Lou McElwain.

Vice Chairman Steve Pesci commented that they have talked about setting up criteria around when to install an RRFB in Portsmouth, and hopefully this will help facilitate that.

Chairman Andrew Bagley commented that these started appearing a few years ago and it seems like a lot of people have been requesting these. It would be good to have a set of criteria to guide them to prevent oversaturating the City with these. Parking Director Ben Fletcher confirmed that they would include the existing guidelines in the presentation when this comes back.

Public Works Director Peter Rice commented that they will present that information to the Committee and post it to their web site. There is a lot more than pedestrian counts with this intersection. Sight lines are part of the consideration. An RRFB does increase visibility,

but it does not automatically make this a safer crossing. This intersection needs to be viewed as a whole. Staff will look at this more thoroughly and report back.

On a unanimous roll call, motion passed 8-0.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

None

VIII. INFORMATIONAL

A. Monthly Accident Report from Police

Police Captain Mike Maloney commented that December had 99 total crashes and 71 of those were reportable. There were no accidents that involved pedestrians or bikes. A reportable crash is when the damage is \$1,000 or more. Last month's meeting there was talk about crash data at Market St. at Noble's Island involving a U-turn. In the past 5 years there were no accidents at that intersection resulting from a U-turn. There was discussion about putting in a 4 way stop at State St. and Union St. In the past 5 years there were no reportable crashes at State St. and Union St.

Chairman Andrew Bagley commented that the City was about to undergo a project on Union St. Public Works Director commented that it was about a year out.

B. Bike and Vehicular Traffic Data

Parking Director Ben Fletcher showed the traffic data for Market St. and Noble's Island. It has a typical down curve for winter. The numbers compared to last year are significantly higher. The data from South St. and Middle St. showed that the numbers were becoming similar to the 2019 numbers. It may or may not make sense to continue to show this report.

Public Works Director Peter Rice commented that they would continue to collect the data, but the Committee can decide if they want to continue to see this report. Parking Director Ben Fletcher commented that they could continue to show it monthly or pull a specific date range.

Erika Wygonik commented that she liked seeing the report. It is helpful to see where they compare to 2019. They can just say a percentage on how they compare to 2019. Parking Director Ben Fletcher commented that they had parking data that can speak to that as well. They have daily data to show where traffic is for parking as well.

Public Works Director Peter Rice commented that Staff will work to develop recommended data reporting as the 2019/2021 comparison comes to an end.

C. PTS Action Items

Vice Chairman Steve Pesci questioned where they were on the Bartlett St. and Hodgson Way intersection work. Public Works Director Peter Rice responded that the stop bar and

crosswalk were going to be relocated. The engineering reports and reviews have continued to show the value of the slip lane. The area as configured is not final there will be additional signage and crosswalk adjustments to improve visibility. It will be completed in the spring.

Vice Chairman Steve Pesci commented that they had talked earlier about setting up a group to discuss speed limits in the City, and questioned if it was appropriate to set up a work group to discuss this before bringing it to the Committee. Parking Director Ben Fletcher responded that they have a presentation planned for the March meeting and will continue to move forward from there. Public Works Director Peter Rice added that staff was more than willing to include a working group discussion prior to that meeting. The City's web site has good information around complete streets program. There is a lot of good documentation there for anyone to review. They are living documents that need to be brought up to speed, and they warrant a revisit.

Parking Director Ben Fletcher presented a spreadsheet of the PTS open action items that they keep to help ensure that projects stay in queue.

Chairman Andrew Bagley questioned if they should make this available on the web site. Public Works Director Peter Rice responded that it was accessible online because it is in the meeting packet. It would make sense to add a column explaining why something may get dropped off or delayed. Parking Director Ben Fletcher confirmed they would continue to make it available.

IX. MISCELLANEOUS

A. Woodbury Traffic Calming Request Letter Submitted 1.6.2022

Parking Director Ben Fletcher commented that this was from a resident that came in to speak about traffic calming on Woodbury Ave. at the last meeting, and she requested that this be entered into the record.

Public Works Director Peter Rice commented that this was a project that they have been working on. They are preparing to take action this summer and have identified a number of locations for speed tables. They will continue to collect data as they move forward. The area has not been ignored.

Public Works Director Peter Rice moved to place the correspondence on file, seconded by Mary Lou McElwain. On a unanimous roll call, motion passed 8-0.

Mary Lou McElwain commented that she was concerned about the skateboard park and 105 Bartlett St. and the impact that they will have on traffic. The biggest concern is access and egress to the skateboard park. This should be put on the agenda, and they should discuss whether a traffic study is warranted.

Public Works Director Peter Rice responded that it was not the purview of this Committee to be directing those types of studies to be done. There is a Technical Advisory Committee that does those reviews. The changes and configurations of that roadway are acceptable to

come back to this Committee for input. There are traffic studies being done for those projects. The 105 Bartlett St. should have been completed already and should be part of public record.

Mary Lou McElwain commented that she was concerned about access to skateboard park. Public Works Director Peter Rice responded that they have not entered the design phase for that yet. The concern is noted and there are studies being done for that project. Mary Lou McElwain questioned if that study could come to this Committee.

Erika Wygonik commented that a development has to get approval from the Planning Board and typically a traffic study is part of that approval especially if it is a larger development. Erika Wygonik questioned what the best way was for them to be interact with that review and approval. One option would be to speak as private citizens in the public hearing. Another could be to try to create a formal relationship with the Planning Board and this Committee for those items. It does not make sense to have two different Boards review the same thing separately. The City already has a mechanism to review traffic studies through the Planning Board. Erika Wygonik questioned if the skate park would go through the Planning Board process. Public Works Director Peter Rice responded that they have not completed the design for this project yet, but they will most likely have to go through the Planning Board process.

Erika Wygonik questioned if it would be helpful to have an alert on the agenda for items to pay attention to. The question is how they can best support the Planning Board with their knowledge of traffic and safety. Mary Lou McElwain agreed. Sometimes they get a resident's perspective who may not have shown up at a Planning Board Meeting.

Chairman Andrew Bagley commented that this Committee addresses problems as they came up and set the rules of the road. The Planning Board is a quasi-judicial Board. If this Committee feels the Planning Board is approving things that are unsafe, then they should address the policy. They should not be looking at individual projects as a Committee, but they can speak as private residents. Mary Lou McElwain commented that she was trying to understand how to best give feedback when there are specific safety concerns. Public Works Director Peter Rice responded that the Chairman summarized it well. The concerns can be voiced as a private citizen. They receive referrals from the Planning Board when changes to the ordinance are required. The individual projects already have a mechanism to review traffic impact.

City Manager Karen Conard added that there was overlap by City Staff on the Boards. It may make sense to provide updates by staff under miscellaneous.

Public Works Director Peter Rice commented that they would be coming before this Committee next month to talk about the Bridge St. Lot because they will be removing parking spaces. It has tree impacts as well and will need to go to the Tree and Greenery Committee. It does not trigger the land use process because it is an existing space. Mary Lou McElwain noted that as a resident it was confusing to figure out which Board has the final say and where to express concerns.

Vice Chairman Steve Pesci commented that contrary to public opinion they heard, it is important to have City Staff on the Committee because they are a liaison to other Committees. A project specific review is a Planning Board purview.

Chairman Andrew Bagley commented that in public comment there was concern about having City Staff as voting members. That is allowed under the ordinance, and it would be hard to make decisions without their expertise on the City and traffic.

X. ADJOURNMENT

City Manager Karen Conard moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:27 am, seconded by Mary Lou McElwain. On a unanimous roll call, motion passed 8-0.

**Members of the public also have the option to join the meeting over Zoom, a unique meeting ID and password will be provided once you register. To register, click on the link below or copy and paste this into your web browser:*

https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_rCwDO7_ORMy4IW9MrVn1YQ