

**Public Safety Committee
Meeting Minutes
February 16, 2022
6:00 PM
Council Chambers**

Members Present

Councilor Chris Rice, Chair
Councilor Peter Lachapelle, Vice Chair
Councilor Dana Berlin
Councilor Skip Gilman
Councilor Amy Malone

Others Present

Councilor John LaRochelle
Councilor Steve Beaudoin
Deputy Chief Jason Thomas, PD
Interim Fire Chief Perry Plummer, FD
Michael Bezanson, PE, City Engineer
Dan Camara, GIS Asset Mgmt. Technician
Bob Mayrand, 514 Salmon Falls Road
Ken Partridge, 7 Katie Lane
Steven Heon, 507 Salmon Falls Road
Larry Cossette, 93 Chestnut Hill Road

Minutes

Councilor Rice brought the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

1. **Approve Minutes from January 19, 2022 Public Safety Meeting.**
Councilor Lachapelle made a motion to approve the minutes from January 19, 2022. The motion was seconded by Councilor Malone. Unanimous voice vote carried the motion.

2. **Public Input**

Members of the public were present for items that were on the agenda.

3. **Salmon Falls Road Traffic Issues**

Councilor Rice asked the Committee if Item 5 could be moved up on the agenda, as members of the public were present for this item. Mr. Mayrand of 514 Salmon Falls Road was present to talk about the traffic issues in this area. He stated that he lives 3 houses from Portland Street and is at the corner of Katie Lane. He presented the Committee with a short video of the ongoing issues, which included a proposal consisting of three parts, a description of the offensive drivers with video examples, recommended solutions with examples and illustrations and cost effective way to monitor traffic conditions that provides compliance to posted speed limits and local City ordinances. Mr. Mayrand stated that there is excessive motorcycle noise and speed violations. From the stop sign at the intersection of Salmon Falls Road and Portland Street defiant motorcycle riders purposely rev their engines with their loud illegal exhaust pipes on a regular basis. They also sprint off the stop line and blast off like vehicles on a drag strip. He stated this was against the law and he referenced some local ordinances.

61.7 (revised to Chapter 254-8) Unnecessary Noise:

No person shall operate any vehicle on any traveled way so as to make any loud, unusual or other unnecessary noise as hereinafter defined.

61.8 (revised to Chapter 254-9) Misuse of Power:

No person shall operate any vehicle on any traveled way so as to misuse the power of that vehicle as hereinafter defined.

61.9 (revised to Chapter 254-10) Definitions:

The words "loud unusual or other unnecessary noise" or "misuse of power" [are defined as]... C. Rapid acceleration by means of quick shifting of transmission gears with either a clutch and manual transmission or automatic transmission; D. Rapid deceleration by means of quick downshifting of transmission gears with either a clutch and manual transmission or automatic transmission; E. Racing of engines by manipulation of the accelerator, gas pedal, carburetor, or gear selector, whether the vehicle is either in motion or standing still.

Mr. Mayrand said that Boston common was having trouble and a commissioner was hired; enforcement of the law and the noise problem did get better. He said the primary concern is to bring attention to the traffic conditions, not argue speed and noise calculations. Some of his suggestions were to lower the speed limit from 35 to 25 for the first mile of Salmon Falls Road from Portland Street south and install warning signs for motorcycles to drive quietly. Install warning signs one mile south of Portland Street on Salmon Falls Road in the north bound lane announcing the 25 mph speed limit which includes warning signs for tractor trailer trucks prohibiting jake brake usage in residential areas and signs that say caution do not tailgate. Mr. Mayrand said that Highway regulations RSA 236:130 is a state regulation that needs to be changed; it prohibits video surveillance and New Hampshire is 1 of 6 States that it is prohibited in, but they do have video surveillance at toll booths. He said they can do it in Rochester they said there is a line in the ordinance that will allow it "on a case-by-case basis in the investigation of a particular violation, misdemeanor, or felony"; he said that Salmon Falls Road meets this criteria. Councilor Rice said he understands this is a serious issue, not just for this neighborhood, but others as well like Ten Rod Road. Ken Partridge of 7 Katie Lane was also present to talk about this issue; he said that the sound you heard on the video doesn't do it justice, and that this is the sound from inside the house. Councilor Lachapelle said thank you to Mr. Mayrand for summarizing this; and, he sympathizes with him. He said it happens in other places as well. He said the presentation he put together is great. Councilor Lachapelle also stated that signs will help a little for good people, but for the people breaking the law they won't help. Police presence will help, but right now the Police Department is down 8 officers; he also said that certain requests would have to go to the State House. Councilor Beaudoin said that having been a State legislator when that statute was actually enacted, it is exactly that, a case by case basis if someone is being investigated; so, going to the State Legislature is the right thing to do. Councilor LaRochelle asked if he could have the presentation sent to him. Steven Heon of 507 Salmon Falls Road said he lives across the street from Mr. Mayrand and he said he knows right from wrong; and, what is happening on Salmon Falls Road is wrong and unsafe and something needs to be done. Vehicles are using the area

as a runway and something needs to be done. Councilor Rice said in January the Police Department briefed them on the trailer-mounted portable signs. He reiterated that the Police Department is down officers. Councilor Berlin asked about the removal speed bumps. Councilor Lachapelle said this has come up on a number of occasions and said other neighborhoods would want them; DPW would have to install and then remove them in the fall and that takes time. Councilor Rice said he looked into this issue and said ½ of the road is considered 1 section and 1 section cost approximately \$5,000 and you would need 2 sections so that would be \$10,000; and, if one street gets it, others will want it as well. Councilor Lachapelle sympathizes with the issue and besides directed patrols he would like to get the perspective of the Chief and talk to the City's Legal Department about what can be done. Councilor Rice asked if there is anything in the MUCTD that would help. Mr. Bezanson said he would look into it and see if there are any signs that would pertain to this issue. Councilor Berlin asked at what point you may have to do something; just because other neighborhoods may want it shouldn't keep the City from acting. If there is an issue, something needs to be done and it should be done on a case-by-case basis. Councilor Rice said this will be kept in committee and do some research and everyone come back with possible solutions. Councilor Rice thanked the citizens for coming to the meeting; the Committee often doesn't know about these sorts of issues until they are brought to their attention.

4. Flat Rock Bride Road/ Salmon Falls Road Intersection Safety Concerns (kept in committee)

Councilor Rice summarized the issue. Mr. Bezanson said there was no update this month. Councilor Rice asked if there was any call for service regarding snow piles or anything like that. Deputy Chief Thomas said they have not received any calls for service in this area.

5. 197 Columbus Avenue-Requesting Handicap Spot (kept in committee)

Councilor Rice summarized the issue. He said that he drafted a letter to be sent to the property owner requesting them install a handicap sign on their property.

6. Q4 Frisbie Report

Councilor Rice said that he wanted to include this information in the agenda packet, so if anybody had any questions he would like questions to be written down and forwarded through the Fire Chief back to Frisbie to address.

7. Concern of Traffic around William Allen School (resident sent email to City Manager)

Councilor Rice summarized the issue. An email was sent to the City Manager regarding traffic issues near the William Allen School. Coming down Charles Street from the TD Bank intersection end and as they approached Granite Street, there was a long line of cars in the middle of the road waiting to turn down Granite Street once William Allen School let out. This line of cars was blocking the roadway and they could not go around them because there was a car legally parked along

the street to the right-hand side. Councilor Rice said this issue has been dealt with many times. A couple of things that were discussed in the Committee were addressed with to the Superintendent of Schools and the Principal. Councilor Lachapelle said there is a project happening in the area. He said that this school was not designed for this vehicle traffic. There is a joint committee with School Board and councilors. If you close the little schools and build one good sized one, it will alleviate some of the issues like this and what has happened at Maple Street School. Mr. Bezanson said the City has just received bids for a project in this area on streets such as Charles, Woodman and Myrtle Streets. A couple of aspects to this project are to address some parking issues and change the traffic flow on some roadways to one-way only. Councilor Rice asked if these changes had been made already. Mr. Bezanson said that the traffic flow changes had come before the Public Safety Committee previously and would be implemented with this project. This project won't necessarily solve the problem of vehicles lining up for school drop off and pick up, though. Councilor Rice said he went to the area of 38 Charles Street and he witnessed people lining up on Charles Street at 2:15 PM and school doesn't get out until 3:00 PM. The vehicles were blocking driveways, fire hydrants and crosswalks. The vehicles were standing on Charles Street, blinkers on, in park, foot off the brakes, and that was preventing busses from getting by to get to the school. One of the options talked about previously was the "nuclear option", in which the Police Department would issue summons; he said he personally wouldn't want to see that right off the bat. Councilor Rice said that he is working on a project; he has been in touch with the Superintendent and School Board Chair to set up meeting with the PTA to go over some of the concerns with the neighbors in the area and will report back to the Committee. Councilor Lachapelle asked when construction will begin. Mr. Bezanson said construction will probably begin by early summer and will have a duration of a couple of years. Councilor Beaudoin said he brought this issue up when he was first elected. He said the short term solution would be to post "no parking" on the southbound and northbound sides to accommodate traffic around the standing vehicles. Councilor Lachapelle said they tried "no parking" on Granite and the residents were affected. Councilor Berlin said maybe a lottery for different drop off and pick up times would work. Councilor Rice said this was explored before, but the problem is that the parents may have more than one child; and the other problem is teacher unions and contract language regarding work hours. Councilor Berlin envisioned a scenario that wouldn't increase the amount of time that teachers needed to be at the school. Councilor Rice said you can't tell the parents what to do, if they want to bring their kids to school. This was kept in committee and Councilor Rice will pursue a meeting with the PTA.

8. Sidewalk Request on Hansonville Road (email was sent to Councilor Lachapelle)

Councilor Rice summarized the issue. Councilor Lachapelle asked how far down on Oak Street with the sidewalk. Mr. Bezanson said they will be going all the way to Tessier with the sidewalk rehabilitation of existing sidewalk. Mr. Bezanson said there is a TAP Grant project for a Portland Street sidewalk connection included in

the draft State Ten Year Plan that should be approved later this year. He said that the Department has requested funding in the FY23 Budget for extending sidewalks where there currently are none; the Budget is currently being reviewed by the City Manager. Councilor Lachapelle asked if Hansonville Road would warrant a sidewalk. Mr. Bezanson said that with the increased number of housing units in the area it is now used more heavily by pedestrians and there is not a lot of space along the road shoulder to get out of the traveled way; it is certainly a candidate. DPW would have to evaluate the roadway for drainage, and ledge removal would be costly. (kept in committee)

9. Safety Issue Crosswalk Columbus Avenue near KFC (Route 125) (request was sent by Councilor Berlin)

Councilor Rice summarized the issue. Councilor Berlin said he has observed an issue with the crosswalk across Columbus Avenue; it sneaks up on you in either direction especially at night. There are streetlights beyond the crosswalk, but not at the crosswalk. The closest streetlight is near May Street. He asked what would be less expensive, streetlights or a flashing pedestrian sign. Mr. Bezanson said proper lighting is important at a crosswalk; the proper lighting would be installed on the approach to the crosswalk in both directions. Councilor Berlin questioned whether there were lights out along the pedestrian pathway. Councilor Rice said he went out to look and there are lights in the parking lot, but there is a stretch from the walkway to Village Pizza with no lights; there are no utility poles on that side of the street. Mr. Bezanson made a comparison to the crosswalk at 105 North Main Street. The original design for the North Main Street crossing was proper lighting and hardwired rectangular rapid flashing beacons (RRFB); due to budget constraints, solar RRFBs ended up being installed at this location. He stated that solar RRFBs would probably be the most cost effective solution on Columbus Avenue as well. Councilor Rice said he would like a policy, or document in place as the Committee considers installation of RRFBs around the City in the future to give the Committee something to go by. This was kept in committee for Mr. Bezanson to research crosswalk safety policies and get back to the Committee. Mr. Bezanson said that the Department had also requested funding in the FY23 Budget for pedestrian safety improvements, suggesting a program with regular funding every year.

10. E911 Update

There was no E911 update this month.

11. Emergency Management Update

Interim Fire Chief Plummer said they participated in the drill for Seabrook Nuclear Power Plant with the 13 communities, emergency planning zone and 3 host communities and for 1 day in participation of a graded drill. Councilor Rice explained to the new members what the host communities do. . Rochester is a host community and takes in towns that are affected if there is a problem with the plant. Interim Chief Plummer said there are 3 host communities, Rochester, Dover and Manchester.

12. Other

Councilor Rice said before they get to “other” on the agenda they wanted to take a vote to see if the committee wanted to keep “other” on the Agenda. ***Councilor Lachapelle made a motion to keep “other” as an agenda item. The motion was seconded by Councilor Malone. Unanimous voice vote carried the motion.***

141 Columbus Avenue Parking

Councilor Beaudoin said that he had constituent come to him about the sale of 141 Columbus Avenue with 38 Hanson Street the commercial building; people use that municipal lot for parking, but now it has been sold. It was suggested to remove the 2 hour parking restriction on Hanson Street. Councilor Rice suggested to have cards placed in the cars for permission to park in the spaces, they would be in the businesses to pass out. Councilor Malone said that would be added responsibility for the businesses and it should be kept simple. ***Councilor Lachapelle made a motion to remove the “two hour parking” restriction on Hanson Street from Columbus Avenue to 38 Hanson Street. Councilor Berlin seconded the motion. Unanimous voice vote carried the motion.***

93 Chestnut Hill Road Speeding Concerns

Councilor Rice summarized the issue, as he had an email submitted. Larry Cossette of 93 Chestnut Hill Road was also present to discuss his concerns. He stated that he has lived there for around 50 years; and, for the last three years there have been 3 or 4 trucks a day hauling loads of gravel and they make a loud noise with every manhole cover that is hit. It is difficult to hold a conversation with all of the traffic noise. There is also excessive speed and the noise is no longer tolerable. Another issue is young drivers driving to school, jobs, and sports activities with excessive speed and turning “doughnuts” on the road near the turnpike overpass, as well as modified exhaust systems that may not meet regulations. Councilor Lachapelle said there will be more police presence up and down the road because of the new DPW facility where they will be fueling up. Councilor Rice said the Police Department personnel work awfully hard and they will make sure the speed trailer is placed on this roadway in the spring. Councilor Rice reiterated that there will be more police presence due to the new DPW facility that is on Chestnut Hill Road and that is where the police fill up and they are on 24 hours a day. Deputy Chief Thomas also said that in the spring they will have the speed trailer placed in the area.

Councilor Rice adjourned the meeting at 7:31 PM.

The minutes were respectfully submitted by Laura J. McDormand, Admin. Assistant II.