

**Public Safety Committee
Meeting Minutes
May 18, 2022
6:00 PM
Council Chambers**

Members Present

Councilor Peter Lachapelle, Chair
Councilor Dana Berlin
Councilor Skip Gilman
Councilor Amy Malone

Others Present

Councilor Steve Beaudoin
Michael Bezanson, PE, City Engineer
Deputy Chief Jason Thomas, PD
Assistant Chief Tim Wilder, FD
Dan Camara, GIS Asset Mgmt. Technician
Bob Mayrand, 514 Salmons Falls Road
Jeffrey Olson, 508 Salmon Falls Road
Florence Alley, 534 Salmon Falls Road
Bryan Cuddihee, 99 Estes Road
Kevin Ryan, State Farm, 197 Columbus Ave.

Minutes

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

1. Approve Minutes from April 20, 2022 Public Safety Meeting.

Councilor Berlin MOVED to approve the minutes from April 20, 2022. Councilor Malone seconded the motion. MOTION CARRIED by a unanimous voice vote.

2. Public Input

There were members of Salmon Falls Road present to discuss Item # 5, so it was moved up on the agenda. Bob Mayrand of 514 Salmon Falls Road discussed the ongoing issues with traffic and noise on the road. He said that he contacted Kennebunkport, Maine Police Department about their “please ride quietly” signs installed around the town. A twenty year veteran of the department gave Mr. Mayrand some history on the signs. In 2008, the signs were installed due to issues with loud motorcycles; and, for the first two years the signs were aggressively enforced. The signs are still in place and require much less enforcement now. Mr. Mayrand also addressed speed limits in the area; there are some City and highway roads around that have the speed limit reduced to 25 mph as you approach a “stop” sign. He stated as you go from Salmon Falls Road into Berwick Maine the speed limit is reduced to 25 mph as you approach a stop sign. He also said that jake brakes use by truck drivers is an issue. Although there are not a lot of signs addressing jake brake use as examples, Portsmouth is very proactive with noise restrictions and they have signs installed. He also discussed electronic radar speed limit signs and camera surveillance being used more these days. Councilor Gilman asked Deputy Chief Thomas the results of the speed trailer being

placed on Salmon Falls Road. Deputy Chief Thomas said the speed trailer was placed out on April 28 through May 5, 2022; there were 5,251 vehicles that passed through. Out of that total number of vehicles, 1,676 were compliant, 2,962 were low risk, 584 were medium risk, and 29 were high risk. Average speed was 34.5 mph. Councilor Berlin asked if anyone knew the cost of a speed limit sign with radar that shows motorists their speed. Deputy Chief Thomas mentioned that the Police Department had received 2 of the portable pole-mounted signs and are assembling them now; the total cost for the pair was between \$5,000 and \$6,000. He said they would be used as portable signs in various locations around the City; not for one fixed location. Councilor Berlin made a motion to purchase 2 of the speed limit signs with radar and place one on Salmon Falls Road. Councilor Gilman seconded the motion. Deputy Chief Thomas suspected that there are different models that do not collect data that may be less expensive, which may be desired for a permanent installation. Councilor Berlin withdrew his motion and Councilor Gilman withdrew his second to the motion. ***Councilor Berlin MOVED to purchase 2 lesser expensive radar signs for fixed installation that do not collect data and to place one permanently on Salmon Falls Road. Councilor Gilman seconded the motion. MOTION CARRIED by a unanimous voice vote.*** Florence Alley of Salmon Falls Road wanted to know where the City would install these signs; she lives 7 houses away from the “stop” sign at Portland Street. She said the speed trailer was located too close to the “stop” sign and that these proposed signs really need to be installed farther down. Councilor Lachapelle said that the signs would be placed at the discretion of DPW. ***Councilor Gilman MOVED to reduce the speed limit to 25 mph 2,000 feet prior to the “stop” sign on Salmon Falls Road. Councilor Malone seconded the motion. MOTION CARRIED by a unanimous voice vote.*** Jeffrey Olson of 508 Salmon Falls Road stated that the speed trailer did not capture the true picture of traffic speed in the corridor due to where it was placed. Councilor Lachapelle said that when the speed trailer was available again they could place it again in a different location on Salmon Falls Road. Councilor Gilman asked that the Committee look into motorcycle signs.

3. Estes Road Cost of Guardrail (kept in committee)

Councilor Lachapelle summarized the issue. Mr. Bezanson reported that the delineators had been installed on Estes Road (a photo was shown to the Committee), and that roadway paving will be scheduled in the coming months. He also reported that the average cost of a guardrail is between \$45 and \$70 per linear foot for installation. The cost range varies depending on the length of guardrail needed; usually the shorter the length, the more it will cost per foot. Councilor Berlin said that if guardrail were installed each time a car went off the roadway, a lot of guardrail would be put up. Brian Cuddihee of 99 Estes Road was present to discuss his guardrail request. He stated that the request was not as a result of one accident, but numerous accidents; he tried to get the crash reports, but due to privacy reasons they could not be released to him. Deputy Chief Thomas said he looked up the accidents for the last 3 years on Estes Road between Washington Street and Howard Brook Drive. There were 5 accidents including the one in March

of this year, which involved a DWI; November 2019 at 98 Estes Road, a vehicle versus a deer; 2020 at 85 Estes Road, a single car into a snow bank; 2020 a single car off the road into a rock; 2021 at 95 Estes Road, a two vehicle crash of which one was summonsed for going over the yellow line. Councilor Berlin said that the City should give the delineators some time to evaluate and this issue can be revisited after it is repaved. Councilor Lachapelle stated that the City Council also lowered the posted speed limit along that portion of Estes Road; Mr. Bezanson confirmed that the new 30 mph speed limit signs had been installed. Mr. Cuddihee did say that addressing the crown in the road during paving may provide a benefit as motorists negotiate the curve.

4. Flat Bridge Road/Salmon Falls Road Intersection Safety Concerns

Councilor Lachapelle summarized the issue. Mr. Bezanson discussed the 2011 Salmon Falls Road Improvement Study; he shared a figure from that Study which shows a conceptual intersection layout that DPW is considering. DPW still plans to engage a surveyor in the new fiscal year and would incorporate any changes into future repaving efforts on Flat Rock Bridge Road. **(kept in committee)**

5. Safety Issue Crosswalk Columbus Avenue near KFC (Route 125) (kept in committee)

Councilor Lachapelle summarized the issue. Mr. Bezanson said DPW has contacted a vendor regarding solar-powered street lights; prices vary by location because each location has different solar panel and battery needs depending hours of sunlight anticipated. Along with a cost for solar-powered street lights, a price will be sought for wired street lights. Councilor Berlin discussed how close power lines were to the crosswalk area. Councilor Berlin said now that the pedestrian warning sign is installed closer to the crosswalk, we may only need to have the area lit up rather than install RRFB's. Kept in committee to wait for the price of the solar-powered street lights.

6. Magic Street Crosswalk Request

Councilor Lachapelle summarized the issue. Nina Doyle of 12 Hickey Street has requested a crosswalk across Portland Street at the end of Magic Avenue. Mr. Bezanson said this request seems to be about school age children and reminded the Committee about previous discussions regarding school routes. When the Committee discussed the East Rochester School, it was mentioned that a crosswalk would be installed in the future coinciding with the development of Carole Court. Since that discussion, in recent months, the City Council approved painting a crosswalk across Portland Street at Carole Court that would serve school children and other pedestrian walking to/from the school from the northeast direction. The crosswalk has been painted (a photo was shown to the Committee); and, school crossing signs are on order. Mr. Bezanson said that he would not recommend another mid-block crosswalk across Portland Street at Magic Avenue. Councilor Beaudoin said there really isn't a proper location for a curb ramp for a midblock crosswalk, as it would be in someone's driveway. No action was taken.

7. 197 Columbus Avenue Request to Remove “2 Hour Parking Limit” Sign

Councilor Lachapelle summarized the issue. Kevin Ryan of State Farm Insurance who has a place of business at 197 Columbus Avenue is requesting the removal of the “2 hour parking” sign restricting on-street parking in front of the building. Mr. Bezanson said that the sale of the municipal parking lot on Columbus Avenue will result in the loss of 20 parking spaces, including 1 handicap space. In response to that sale, the City Council has removed the restrictions on half of the Hanson Street on-street parking, which results in unrestricted parking for 19 spaces, including 3 handicap spaces. Mr. Bezanson also pointed out the unrestricted parking at the municipal parking lot on the corner of Portland and Columbus. Mr. Ryan was present to discuss his request for removal of the posted “2 hour parking” restriction for the people that work in the building at 197 Columbus Avenue. Councilor Lachapelle asked about the parking lot close to the building; Mr. Ryan said they leave that for the customers of the building and it is extremely limited. Councilor Beaudoin said he attended a recent Parking Review Group meeting last month. One of the recommendations that came out of the recent Parking Study was to restrict parking closer downtown and remove restrictions on parking further away from downtown. He believes that seemed to be the direction that the Parking Review Group may go in, which would result in removal of restrictions in this area. ***Councilor Berlin MOVED to remove the “2 Hour Parking” sign at 197 Columbus Avenue. Councilor Malone seconded the motion. MOTION CARRIED by a unanimous voice vote.***

8. E911 Update

No update

9. Emergency Management Update

No update

10. Other

Columbus Avenue Pedestrian Sign

Councilor Berlin wanted to say thank you to staff for moving the pedestrian warning sign out of the trees, so people can know to stop for people in the crosswalk on Columbus Avenue.

3 Tuttle Court Requesting a “Dead End” Sign

Donna Watson of 3 Tuttle Court has requested a “dead end” sign or something similar to be put up at the beginning of the road. She said that there are many vehicles going by at night and believes they do not realize it is a dead end. ***Councilor Berlin MOVED to place a “dead end” sign on Tuttle Court. Councilor Malone seconded the motion. MOTION CARRIED by a unanimous voice vote.***

85 Stillwater Circle Removal of Handicap Sign

Mr. Pinierio of 85 Stillwater Circle called DPW regarding removal of the handicap

sign located on Stillwater Circle. He said the handicap person moved out of the neighborhood a few years ago. Mr. Bezanson said that the person that requested the sign back in 2015 lived at 1 Stillwater Circle, and the property has changed owners at least once and is on the market now for sale. ***Councilor Berlin MOVED to remove the handicap sign on Stillwater Circle. Councilor Malone seconded the motion. MOTION CARRIED by a unanimous voice vote.***

Common Street

An email came in with concerns at 24-26 Common Street. There is traffic noise pollution that is becoming intolerable, traffic speed is dangerous. They have suggested an additional crosswalk, speed monitoring, active signage (lights etc.), speed tables (at both ends of the Common Street parking area) and a reduced speed limit. Councilor Lachapelle said he wanted to bring this up and talk about it at next month's meeting. **(kept in committee)**

Strafford Square Roundabout

Mr. Bezanson wanted to share a couple of project updates with the Committee; the first was regarding Strafford Square Roundabout. He said the project has been advertised for bids; this is the second phase of the project, which is the actual construction of the roundabout. The first phase is scheduled to be completed by the end of June; that phase includes construction of the infrastructure for relocating aerial utilities underground.

Betts Road/Cross Road Intersection

Mr. Bezanson stated that the second project update was regarding the Betts Road/Cross Road Intersection. This project will make safety improvements to the intersection, including realignment of Betts Road. At some point during the construction it is likely that traffic will need to be detoured from Betts Road to Route 125 and Cross Road. This project is scheduled to be advertised for bids within the next week.

Pickering Road

Councilor Lachapelle asked Deputy Chief Thomas about the speed trailer on Pickering Road and asked if he could bring the data with him next month.

Councilor Lachapelle ADJOURNED the meeting at 7:10 PM.

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