

MINUTES
SELECT BOARD
TOWN OF PETERBOROUGH
Tuesday, November 5, 2019 – 4:55 PM
1 Grove Street, Peterborough, New Hampshire

Present: Tyler Ward, Karen Hatcher, Bill Taylor

Also Present: Rodney Bartlett, Nicole MacStay, Alison Kreutz

The meeting was called to order at 4:55 PM.

Motion: Ms. Hatcher made a motion to enter Non-Public Session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3 II(c) (reputation)

Roll Call Vote:

Chair Ward Yes

Ms. Hatcher: Yes

Mr. Taylor: Yes

Motion: Mr. Taylor made a motion to adjourn the Non-Public Session

Roll Call Vote:

Chair Ward Yes

Ms. Hatcher: Yes

Mr. Taylor: Yes

Select Board meeting resumed at 4:58 PM

Motion: Chair Ward made a motion to seal the minutes of the non-public session.

Vote: Mr. Taylor seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.

Appointment of Rob Fox to the Recreation Committee

Mr. Robert Fox introduced himself to the Board. He said he was approached by Kate Coon, a fellow pickle ball player, about joining the Rec Committee.

Motion: Ms. Hatcher made a motion to appoint Rob Fox to the Recreation Committee.

Vote: Mr. Taylor seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.

Mr. Bartlett said the next Rec Committee meeting would be tomorrow night at 6:30 PM.

Request for Support of Hunger & Homelessness Awareness Week – Lisa Rogers & Griffin Fletcher, ConVal

Mr. Fletcher read a heart-felt letter written by ConVal student Elizabeth Guptil, who has long been working on the Hunger & Homelessness Awareness Week (November 17th-23rd), which is a large scale project centered around bringing attention to homelessness and hunger, especially on the local level. Miss Guptil wrote that she knew she wanted to be involved when she found out that roughly 200 kids in the ConVal district took home bags of donated food to feed themselves and their families. In order to educate people and offer support, there will be a community dinner held in a public place, open to everyone. There will be brochures, pamphlets, and other information about where to go for help or how to be further involved. Ms. Guptil is asking the Town to consider waiving the fee of the Rec Center facilities to be used for the dinner.

Mr. Fletcher said that they've reached out to several entities in town including churches and local business who want to be involved, so it's becoming a larger, community-centered project. He said Ms. Guptil is a truly remarkable student.

Mr. Ward asked what grade Ms. Guptil is in. Mr. Fletcher said she's a senior. Ms. Hatcher noted that her HOBY attendance indicates she's doing leadership work.

Mr. Ward asked if this was a world-wide event or purely local. Ms. Kathy Boss (a volunteer at the Food Pantry) said it's a national event. Mr. Ward asked if there will be events covering the causes of homelessness and hunger. Mr. Fletcher said there will be a number of events leading up to the dinner, including discussions on food security and eviction, and film showings. Ms. Lisa Rogers handed out flyers to the audience, and said Hunger & Homelessness Awareness Week will be covered extensively by the Ledger, and there will also be a piece in ELF.

Ms. Hatcher asked about the involvement of End 68 Hours of Hunger, and how are folks being invited to the dinner. Mr. Fletcher said they were looking to invite people in as many ways as possible. Ms. Rogers said the event has a Facebook page so they can track interest and attendance. The Library and Toadstool are also promoting the event. Ms. Boss said they'll have flyers at the Food Pantry, and Steele's and Nonie's will have flyers up as well. "It's for anyone who wants to come." Ms. Rogers said donations can be accepted at the Food Pantry or MATS.

Ms. Hatcher asked how people can go about volunteering. Mr. Rogers said there's contact information on all the promotional materials.

Motion: Ms. Hatcher made a motion to waive the usual fees incurred for the rental of the Community Center in support of Hunger & Homelessness Awareness Week

Vote: Mr. Taylor seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.

Mr. Bartlett he would let the Rec Committee know about the decision at tomorrow's meeting.

PUBLIC HEARING: Amendments to §195 Vehicles and Traffic of the Code of the Town of Peterborough pertaining to Stop Signs on High Street and MacDowell Road (§195-26); and Parking Limits on Concord Street (§195-29)

Chair Ward said there was a previous discussion (at the September 3rd Select Board meeting) with High Street residents concerning speeding on High Street, and Chief Guinard has the results of the resulting traffic studies, as well as some recommendations.

Chief Guinard said traffic data was collected over the span of a week (September 13-20), and he presented a graph of the vehicle counts by day, which indicated total number of vehicles and number of violators (violators defined as drivers speeding at more than 30 MPH). Another graph indicated daily average speed, and yet another indicated the 85th percentile speeds. The last graph indicated that 1% of drivers on High Street were. The Chief said we could lower the speed limit to 25 MPH (as authorized under NH RSA 265:63 entitled Alteration of Limits) and post it as such, which would make enforcement easier. They could then post the school zone as 15 MPH, which could be enforced 15 minutes prior to school open to 45 minutes after school closing. Two stop signs could be installed to create a three-way stop at the intersection of MacDowell and High Street. Chief Guinard said a few residents had voiced that they were concerned about the stop-and-go noises resulting from more stop signs, and suggested speed tables. Mr. Taylor said those could be pretty noisy too, and the Chief agreed.

Ms. Leenie Gravlin of Woodland Heights asked where the stop signs would be placed. Chief Guinard said they would be placed on High Street, at the intersection of MacDowell and High Street, creating a three way stop.

Ms. Paula Sennett of 5 MacDowell Road said it was very awkward taking the right turn (going down from High Street to take the right onto MacDowell) towards town, and asked if there was a way to incorporate the grassy/rocky area there into the road, making it a wider turn to make it easier. Chief Guinard said that was private property.

Ms. Jean Connelly of High Street said the two proposed stop signs would be right in front of her house, and she wasn't sure were needed right there. She asked why speed bumps were not considered, when there are parts of High Street that don't have houses on either side and so noise wouldn't impact anybody.

Mr. Bartlett added it was too late in the year to build a speed table, but we could try the Chief's recommendations, and then revisit in late spring to see if a speed table would be appropriate.

Ms. Sarah Steinberg-Heller, who lives at the fork, said she doesn't understand how a two-month period results in two stops signs, which are not traffic calming. She said she was frustrated that the Town went right to stop signs without considering traffic calming measures first. She said that at the previous meeting where High Street traffic was discussed, another resident had referenced that two cars that had slammed into the stone wall on Ms. Steinberg-Heller's property, but Ms. Steinberg Heller wanted it noted that speed was not the only factor in those accidents (one driver was on her phone at the time and another was not in his right mind).

Mr. Al Lennis of MacDowell Road asked if lane markings could be done at the turn where drivers have to travel over the other lane. He said it helps at the bottom of High Street where the sharp turn is.

Mr. Bartlett said in other locations, adding to a 50-foot section of white line from the end of the stop bar back into the road so it gets the driver's in front of the stop bar when they do stop. If we do use the new stop signs, we could do stop bars with a center line marking to get the cars where they're supposed to be.

Mr. Phil Runyon said he lives on High Street and appreciates the recommendation for reducing the speed limits, but on the issue of the stop signs, he felt the most important one would be the one for traffic heading towards town. As far as putting it outbound, drivers going uphill are already past the school and most of the residences. He said he was sensitive to the concerns of residents who fear that drivers stopping and then accelerating will be an annoyance due to the noise. His recommendation would be one stop sign for downtown traffic and not one for the other direction.

Mr. Taylor said the Town has ordered solar-powered radar signs, which are coming soon, and those work well for traffic calming. He said that if one of those was installed before the proposed stop signs, we could track how effective it is.

Chair Ward said the reason for 2 stop signs was a safety concern, and asked Mr. Bartlett to explain. Mr. Bartlett explained that one of the expectations that drivers have when approaching an intersection with a stop sign is that the drivers from other directions will also have a stop sign. Recommendation is that High Street goes without, or has a stop sign in both directions.

Ms. Hatcher said she lives on Old Street Road, and has noticed that traffic is slower since the radar sign was installed. She asked if yield signs can be considered. The Chief said it would be difficult

Ms. Steinberg-Heller pointed out that there are other intersections in town where not all drivers have a stop sign, as in the instances of Vine, Elm and Main, and Sandhill and Old Street Road. She said she has no problem with the noise, but she thinks it's unfortunate that we're not trying traffic calming before installing stop signs. She said she thought what Mr. Taylor was talking about could be effective, and that that and other options should be considered before "creating a hectic intersection going into winter."

Mr. Greg Connolly said he lives across from Ms. Steinberg Heller and he agrees with Mr. Taylor's suggestion about the radar signs. He thinks the three way stop would back traffic up in front of his house, and "is a little draconian."

There was a brief discussion about stop signs versus yield signs.

Chair Ward thanked the Chief for the quick turn around, and said he didn't believe both issues (speed limit change and stop signs) needed to be addressed in the same motion.

Motion: Ms. Hatcher made a motion to accept Chief Guinard's recommendation regarding lowering the speed limit on High Street to 25 MPH.

Vote: Mr. Ward seconded all in favor. All in favor. Motion carried.

Mr. Taylor said a radar sign and the reduction in the speed limit could be good first steps towards fixing the issue. Ms. Hatcher added it could then be revisited if there continues to be a problem after those changes have been made.

Mr. Connelly asked if the radar signs collect data, and Chief Guinard confirmed.

Mr. Rob Fox of Union Street asked if the new signs flashed the speed limit or the traveling speed. Mr. Taylor said they displayed both.

Mr. Bill Kennedy of Pine Street said there were postings for speed limit at the school zone for 20 MPH with no time limit on them. He asked if those signs would be replaced after the Town reduces the speed limit. Chief Guinard confirmed.

Mr. Connelly thanked the Board, the Chief, and Administration for responding so quickly.

Concord Street

Mr. Bartlett said that during the reconstruction of Concord Street there was much discussion about travel lane and shoulder widths, and how those should be painted after the paving. Many talks between NHDOT (as it is a federal highway), DPW, Administration and Representative Ivy Vann, who is big proponent of Complete Streets (bicycle lanes, on-street parking, traffic calming, etc.). As a result, there was concurrence with DOT to narrow the white fog line on the east side (church side) of Concord Street to 2-3 feet, and on the west side (river side) place the fog line 8 feet from the curb, which has afforded opportunity to allow parking on the west side of the street. The current signage has parking only allowed on Sundays. The removal of those signs would allow on-street parking 24-7 (excepting snow events). If that worked well during a trial period, parking spaces could be painted. Incidence of sideview mirror accidents would increase, but there would be an opportunity to see if people would park on the street (there has been concern that we don't have enough parking downtown).

Chair Ward said the same issues that are seen on High Street and elsewhere in town are also seen on Concord Street, and he gets email all the time from people concerned about the speed of traffic.

Chief Guinard said between January 1st and September 27th of this year, 329 vehicles were stopped for speeding violations on Concord Street alone.

Ms. Hatcher said she has biked down Concord Street, and there is no marking for bikes but there is now the wider lane on the one side, which made it more bike-friendly. If we park cars there, are cyclists then riding in traffic? "If it's Complete Streets issue, and we want to be more bike-friendly and sustainable as a community, how do we accommodate bicyclists?" Chief Guinard said allowing parking in that wider lane would put the cyclists into traffic, or up onto the sidewalk, which would be the safer option for cyclists.

Mr. Don Parkhurst of Concord Street said speeding drivers don't slow down until after they pass the cemetery. He said decades ago there used to be parking on both sides of the street, and he was curious why it had changed. He said there may be issues with fire trucks navigating Concord Street with the narrower lanes, since a bottleneck could be formed.

Ron McIntire asked if overnight parking would be permitted and what the situation would be with snow emergencies. The Chief said there would be no overnight parking allowed during the winter parking ban (between November 1st and April 1st). He noted there are fewer commercial vehicles (school buses, garbage trucks, etc.) during the weekend as compared to the week.

Ms. Hatcher asked if the new All Saints parking lot alleviated the previous parking issues on Concord Street. Mr. Taylor noted that there are several other churches on Concord Street.

Mr. Parkhurst said it's difficult navigating a fire truck around the dummy that was installed by the new crosswalk across from All Saints.

Mr. Kennedy asked who the town was trying to accommodate with on-street parking, other than church-goers. Mr. Ward said the Library project should increase attendance at the library, and there are residents of Concord Street that have visitors.

Chair Ward asked if a decision had to be made tonight. Mr. Bartlett said "additional homework" could be done, followed by a workshop to dig into the options. Chair Ward said that could give Representative Vann an opportunity to speak to the issue as well.

Mr. Lennis asked if the bike path along Summer Street could be accessed from Concord Street, and said a bike bridge over the river could make that access easier.

Ms. Colleen Stone said she walks down Concord Street with children, some of them in strollers, and "it's a scary walk," and she didn't think making the sidewalk narrower by pushing cyclists up onto it was friendly to anyone.

Ms. Judy Wilson Ferstenberg said she thought a decision should be made and that she thinks cyclists deserve to have a safe way to travel.

Chair Ward asked how many people would be willing to go with him to petition the NHDOT to lower the speed limit on Concord Street. Ms. Hatcher asked if a NHDOT representative could come to a meeting here in Peterborough to discuss lowering the speed limit. Mr. Bartlett said once we get to the point of awarding the contract for the Main Street Bridge Project, he has committed the DOT to sitting down and talking about the long term maintenance and management of Route 202 from Sand Hill Road down to Route 101, and that could be addressed during those discussions.

Motion: Mr. Taylor made a motion to leave Concord Street the way it is for the time being.
Vote: Ms. Hatcher seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.

Review and Approval of the Minutes of October 1st and October 29th, 2019

Motion: Ms. Hatcher made a motion to approve the Minutes of October 1st and October 29th, 2019

Vote: Mr. Taylor seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.

Ms. Hatcher made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:04. Mr. Taylor seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,
Alison Kreutz, Department Assistant

PETERBOROUGH
SELECT BOARD:

Tyler Ward



Karen Hatcher



Bill Taylor

ACTION ITEM PENDING LIST

- 1.