

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

Water, Wastewater, Highway, Cemetery, Tree, & Facilities
Scott D. Charpentier, P.E., Director



TOWN OF NORTHBOROUGH

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**Traffic Safety Committee
Meeting minutes- December 12, 2023**

Committee Attendees:

William Pierce
Bryan Cole
Rachael Armstrong
Chris Deceatis
Kate Girard

Other Attendees:

William E. Lyver, Jr., Chief of Police
Scott D. Charpentier, Public Works Director
Meghan Condon, Assistant Public Works Director

Meeting started at 6:00PM.

Bill Pierce read the remote meeting introduction and conducted roll call. All were present.

Approval of November 15, 2023 minutes

Minutes were approved unanimously.

Discuss Citizen Inquiries

Continuing Discussion

- a. Heavy Commercial Vehicle Exclusion (HCVE) for Summer St. - Summer St. meets the criteria for a truck exclusion. The alternate route is South St/Rte. 135 to Rte. 20/Main St. or vice versa. Scott Charpentier reminded the committee that a tractor trailer's turning radius would allow it to make a right turn onto Rte. 20 from Rte. 135, from the left turn lane. However, if a car is waiting to make a left turn onto Rte. 135 from Rte. 20 and is in the left turn lane when the truck is making a right turn onto Rte. 20, the turn may fail and the truck may get stuck. Chris Deceatis pointed out that the truck exclusion submission may get flagged by MassDOT because a right turn onto Rte. 20 East from Rte. 135 requires a truck to be in the left lane to successfully make the right turn.

Kate Girard made a motion to not have a truck exclusion on Summer St., seconded by Rachael Armstrong. The vote was unanimous to not recommend a truck exclusion for Summer St.

Because of the limited number of traffic studies allowed each year and the amount of HCVE requests by residents, Bill Pierce recommended a central file for all traffic studies completed to avoid redundancies. Scott Charpentier said he would create an engineering folder to compile all traffic studies including those from the Planning Board, the TSC and others.

- b. HCVE for segment of Rice Avenue between Whitney St and Allen St. - Rice Ave also met the threshold for a truck exclusion. Due to other truck restrictions in the area (on Whitney St and the height restriction on Hudson St.), a truck exclusion on that section of Rice Ave would necessitate a truck exclusion on Allen St between Rice and Hudson, Winter St. and potentially Colburn St. (or an advanced warning sign). The alternate route would be

Traffic Safety Committee Meeting minutes- December 12, 2023

Bearfoot Rd to I-290 to Church St. or Allen St. to East Main St. to Rte. 20. However, most of the heavy commercial vehicles counted on the road are 2 axle long and 2 axle 6 tire, not tractor trailers or 5 axle and greater trucks.

Chris Deceatis made the motion to not have a truck exclusion on Rice Ave between Whitney and Allen Streets, seconded by Kate Girard. Rachael Armstrong, Kate Girard and Chris Deceatis voted 'aye'. Bryan Cole and Bill Pierce voted 'no'. The motion passed by a 3-2 vote, in favor of not recommending.

- c. HCVE for Lincoln St. - Due to having two schools on Lincoln St., there's heavy foot traffic both during the school year and the summer as students in summer programs walk from Melican Middle School to Lincoln St Elementary. Scott Charpentier recommended that if traffic counts are done on Lincoln St, they're also done on Pleasant St. He will make the request to the CMRPC for counts on both Lincoln and Pleasant St.
- d. Speed bump installation on "cut through" roadways, Winter St. - Several residents have made requests for speed bumps to curtail speeding in residential neighborhoods. Scott Charpentier cautioned against placing them arbitrarily and recommended having an overall policy regarding speed bumps/humps that considers the surroundings and safety implications (ie near a park, school, pedestrian corridor especially downtown). Bill Pierce agreed and suggested that additional officers for speed enforcement would be more effective than arbitrarily installing speed bumps.

Scott Charpentier recommended reaching out to the same peer communities that the temporary Traffic Safety Community did regarding speed bumps. He will forward the spreadsheet and the TSC can submit other potential questions to deliberate on at the next meeting.

- e. Stop sign request on Thoreau Road at intersection with Emerson Road - The intersection doesn't meet the MUTCD warrant for a stop sign, including sight distance limitations and necessary crash count number. A formal memorandum will be put on record that discusses reasons for not installing a stop sign at that intersection. However, there may be other intersections in Northgate or other locations that may warrant a stop sign.

New Items

- f. Heavy Commercial Vehicle Exclusion (HCVE) for Brigham St. – A resident contacted the DPW concerned about increased truck traffic on Brigham St. The type of heavy commercial vehicle traffic was not indicated (ie, service vehicles, landscape trucks vs. tractor trailers). Due to the limited number of traffic studies that can be executed each year, Bill Pierce recommended holding onto HCVE requests, including Brigham St., for continued discussion.
- g. Centerline Installation on Crawford St. - MUTCD warrants a minimum road width, traffic count and road classification to qualify for a double yellow line. A local road needs over 3000 vehicles per day and 18 feet width to qualify for a centerline. Crawford St. does not meet the traffic load standards and doesn't warrant a double yellow line.
- h. Excessive Speed on Green St. Can speed be monitored or speed bumps installed? - Bill Pierce suggested that additional traffic enforcement officers would enable more traffic enforcement and speed monitoring. Scott Charpentier recommended that if speeding is a continuous issue, rather than placing an arbitrary speed bump, the police department places

Traffic Safety Committee
Meeting minutes- December 12, 2023

a portable radar sign to collect data. Bryan Cole requested a memorandum be posted to indicate that the TSC responded to the inquiry.

3. Provide dedicated traffic enforcement officers – Chief Lyver explained that a Selective Traffic Enforcement Program could target areas to enforce based on complaints, traffic data and accidents. The STEP program would enable the police department to act upon data received, including data from the 2 radar trailers and 7 portable radar signs the department utilizes. Some of the portable radar signs can operate in stealth mode which counts and records the speed of cars passing by but don't display the speed. The signs record speeds and time of day to give an idea of when and where to place resources. More citations written reduces accidents.

Bryan Cole recommended that the TSC ask about dedicated traffic enforcement officers when it reaches out to peer communities.

- a. Memo to the Select Board in support of hiring two additional officers. - Kate Girard made a motion to approve the memo, seconded by Rachael Armstrong. Rachael Armstrong, Kate Girard, Chris Deacitis and Bill Pierce voted 'aye.' Bryan Cole voted 'no'. The motion passed 4-1. Scott Charpentier and Chief Lyver will prepare the memo and forward to the town administrator's office for presentation to the Select Board.

4. Review of Traffic Safety webpage - previous comments were incorporated. The TSC page and the Public Works Traffic Safety webpage were linked, the mission statement was added to the TSC page and residents will now have a copy of their submissions.

5. Public comments - none

6. Schedule future meeting(s) - the next meeting is scheduled for January 9, 2024 @ 6:30pm.

7. Adjournment - Bryan Cole made the motion to adjourn, seconded by Rachael Armstrong. All were in favor. Meeting adjourned at 8:10pm.

Materials Used

1. Summer Street Heavy Vehicle Exclusion Request Engineering Study
2. Rice Avenue Heavy Vehicle Exclusion Request Engineering Study

Meeting Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jQBSXVPoHHs>