

City Council Traffic Safety Committee Meeting January 9, 2017

Committee members present were: Chair Rozek, Councilors Morgan Allain and Councilor Otis. Councilors Theberge and Remillard were absent.

Others present included: City Manager Jim Wheeler, Assistant Police Chief Dan Buteau, and Public Works Director Michael Perreault, NH Bureau of Trails Clint Savage, Chief of Police Pete Morency, Mike Couch, and Barbara Tetreault *Berlin Daily Sun* (6:00 p.m.)

Minutes

Chair Rozek opened the meeting at 5:30 p.m. Councilor Otis moved to accept the minutes of the October 24 meeting; Councilor Morgan Allain seconded and the motion carried.

He asked to have Clint Savage from the Bureau of Trails talk about a proposal for the OHRV trail. Councilor Otis so moved with a second from Councilor Morgan Allain. So moved, the motion carried.

Proposed OHRV Change in Use of Roadway

Mr. Clint Savage reported that Steve Binette has asked if the OHRV Trail could be extended further north. The State DOT wants to be sure that the community supports extending a trail before they go ahead with any plans to do so.

Councilor Otis questioned whether the access could be granted to the entrance to Jericho Park. Mr. Savage explained that is beyond the urban compact and the City would have to petition the State to lower the speed limit. DOT would not likely lower the limit to allow OHRV traffic on the road.

Councilor Rozek noted that adding a further extension would complicate matters at this time and it could not be done rapidly. He asked for the Police Chief to comment and Chief Morency said that ultimately, he would like to see all of West Milan Road at 30 miles per hour. He agreed with the current request from the Trails Bureau. Councilor Rozek asked for a vote on the current issue and noted that the other items could be brought up at a later meeting

Councilor Otis moved to recommend to the Council that a letter be sent to State DOT to have the OHRV Trail extended 3/10 of a mile to the 50 mph line; Councilor Morgan Allain seconded and the motion carried. Councilor Rozek indicated that he would get this to the Council as soon as possible.

Request for Street Lights, East Milan Road, Hutchins Street

Mr. Perreault presented the cost of lighting on Hutchins Street to the Committee. The cost of 6 overhead cobra head lamps with installation is \$16,560; and the cost of six LED lights with installation is \$10,460. There was some question about how many people would be serviced by lighting East Milan Road. Mr. Perreault clarified that this section is Page Hill to Arlington Street. Councilor Rozek noted that the costs will be taken under advisement.

Hutchins Street – Turcotte to Napert

Mr. Perreault indicated that the costs would be the same. Councilor Rozek preferred to wait for Councilor Theberge for this discussion and asked to put the item on a future agenda.

Request for Stop Sign at Madison and Memorial

The Committee reviewed a letter from Christine Landry requesting a stop sign at the intersection of Madison Avenue and Memorial Lane. Councilor Rozek confirmed that the Police Department researched how many accidents have occurred at the intersection and found that there were none. Chief Morency noted that this is an “uncontrolled intersection” and there are many in the City. RSA 265:28 indicates that drivers on the left shall Yield the right of way to those on the right. The only additional factor is that it is near the schools. Neither the Public Works Department nor the Police Department recommended a Stop sign at the intersection of Madison and Memorial.

Councilor Otis moved to leave the intersection as is, after a data study by the PD and PWD; Councilor Morgan Allain seconded and the motion carried.

Willard Street Traffic Concern

Mrs. Priscilla Gemmiti expressed concern about parking around the school. Mr. Perreault reported that the traffic in the area is heavy for about 15 minutes at the beginning and end of the school day. In an effort to alleviate the problem with traffic, the school is having the Mini Mounties Preschool Program change their drop off location. Councilor Rozek affirmed that the PD has done a study and there is appropriate signage at the entrance of the school area.

Assistant Chief Buteau stated that there is not enough staff to dedicate an officer to be at the location every morning and afternoon; however there are patrols. Chief Morency added that the school sent out notices to parents on how the traffic should flow. They also have the information on Facebook. He said that the officers are diligent. He also said that every school year it takes time to get new people used to the procedure.

Mr. Perreault indicated that he can do a recurring work order in his system that will e-mail everyone concerned so that an annual education process can take place. Future communication on this subject will be directed to the PW director.

OHRV Ordinance Review

Chief Morency reported that he’s been working with a group in the southern part of the state to standardize rules and regulations for OHRV use throughout the state. He noted that there is currently a study being done on children wearing helmets. The helmets are heavy for them to wear and a bicycle helmet is not appropriate.

The law allowing temporary registrations expires this year and there is an effort to get that reinstated. There is also a bill at the Legislature that would make it the responsibility of the community to manage their OHRV trail. Items that have been discussed at the State level include: a community plan for the restitution of trail connectors; consistent signage on trails, consistent trail openings and closures. There was also some discussion about an authorization process for a function or event; however this falls

under the Police Chief's authority and purview. OHRV registrations will be added to the State data base so that police will have access.

The general consensus of the State group was to have a person at least 25 years of age be responsible for an unlicensed driver. Current registration stickers are too small to be viewed from a distance. Open container and eye protection will be made consistent with motor vehicle laws. Chief Morency stated that the majority of accidents are caused by those renting an OHRV and mandatory training prior to rental is being discussed. If a community allows OHRV's, then they are responsible. Chief Morency promoted staying consistent with the state recommendations.

Councilor Rozek stated that there was a commitment to set rules for this riding season. Chief Morency reported that there are rules being proposed statewide; however he was not sure they would be done this year.

Councilor Rozek asked about the City ordinance and whether it needs to be changed. With regard to the five items previously discussed Chief Morency noted:

1. Noise levels – there is not a great answer because there is so much variance on exhausts. If a bike is found to be an annoyance, the PD would have to prosecute based on the incident. Councilor Rozek added that Fish and Game laws state that the recreational vehicle would need to have an original exhaust which is impractical with an older machine.
2. Impounding – there is no need to modify because the PD has the authority.
3. Unlicensed drivers on the road who have not yet acquired their license or driver training with an OHRV – The intent has always been to allow families to ride together; however the law is being abused by the 14 year old who is accompanied by a 16 or 18 year old and they are not abiding by the rules. This could be addressed by following the State's rule that the person with the authority to supervise a minor has to be at least 25 years old. ***Councilor Rozek asked that the PD have an ordinance ready for review at the next Traffic Safety meeting that will say "unlicensed operators must be accompanied by a person 25 years of age with a driver's license and who is responsible for the unlicensed operator."*** He wanted to have this in place for the next riding season.
4. Allowing valid drivers over 21 to take ATV to work – ***Chief Morency commented that if the ordinance is changed to allow access to businesses it should allow a licensed operator to go to businesses and go to work. He will have something to review for the next meeting.***
5. Shutting down the trail by 9:30 – Chief Morency stated that it's important to set the hours so there is no confusion. We will need to coordinate with other communities to regulate the time.

Ms. Laflamme asked about the connector and the out of date language. With all of the streets open, she questioned the need for the connector trail. Mr. Wheeler stated that the ordinance allows use of

city streets to access the connector trail. ***Councilor Rozek agreed this should be corrected in the ordinance.***

Other – Hillside & 110

Chief Morency asked if there should be a flashing light at the intersection of Hillside and Route 110. Councilor Rozek clarified that the suggestion is to eliminate a crossing guard and put up a blinking light. Councilor Rozek asked for a written letter for the Committee to act and put on the next meeting's agenda. Councilor Morgan Allain said that it would help to know how many kids are at that intersection, suggesting that the crossing guard do a count.

There being no further business, Councilor Otis moved to adjourn; Councilor Morgan Allain seconded and the meeting ended at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Susan Tremblay
Administrative Assistant