

Traffic Safety Committee

April 10, 2017

Committee members present were: Chair Rozek, Councilors Morgan Allain, Theberge, and Remillard

Others present included: City Manager Jim Wheeler, Assistant Police Chief Dan Buteau, and Public Works Director Michael Perreault

Minutes

Chair Rozek opened the meeting at 5:30 p.m. Councilor Theberge moved to accept the minutes of the January 9, 2017 meeting; Councilor Morgan Allain seconded and the motion carried.

Request for Street Lights, Hutchins Street

Councilor Rozek referred to a letter from Don Valliere about lighting a section of roadway from Page Hill to White Mountain Lumber. Six overhead cobra head lamps with installation would cost \$16,560; LED lights with installation would cost \$10,460. In discussion, it was said that there is not enough traffic to warrant the cost of lighting that section of roadway.

Councilor Remillard moved to deny the request; Councilor Morgan Allain seconded and the motion carried with all in favor.

Proposed Flashing Yellow Light Hillside/Route 110

In a letter from the Police Commission, Chairman Jerry Nault asked for a blinking yellow light at Wight Street and Hillside Avenue stating that it would enhance pedestrian safety. Chair Rozek stated that a constant yellow blinking light loses its effectiveness. Mr. Perreault estimated the cost of such a light at \$9,504.

Mr. Wheeler stated that the light would have to conform to the manual for uniform traffic control devices. Councilor Remillard advocated for having a light since it is a very busy intersection. Mr. Wheeler added that there is a "Safe Routes to School" grant program that may have funding.

Councilor Remillard moved to forward the communication to the City Manager for review of the availability of grant funding and a report back at the next traffic safety meeting; Councilor Morgan Allain seconded and the motion carried.

Proposed OHRV Ordinance Change

Chair Rozek indicated that the changes in the OHRV ordinance are primarily to cover unlicensed operators to be accompanied by a driver 25 or older; to allow access to trails to go to work; to make changes to the connector trail; and it was proposed to change the closing time for trails to 9:30 p.m. due to noise. Councilor Remillard thought 9:30 was too early for closure.

Assistant Chief Buteau questioned what effect removing the connector trail from the ordinance would have on coverage by the state liability insurance. Mr. Wheeler noted that a description of the connector needs to be in the ordinance if we are going to keep it. Councilor Remillard confirmed that there is

insurance provided by the State to land owners who allow their land to be used for trails. It was proposed to remove the strike on the “Connector Trail” language.

Raising the appropriate age for youth riding on City streets was discussed at length. Councilor Remillard suggested that minors should not be allowed to drive off trail; they should be restricted to the connector trail. Assistant Chief Buteau noted that the proposed language to raise the age of those supervising a youth operator is taken from the statute for youth operators. Councilor Remillard stated that the new rules can be tried for a season and if they don’t work, they can be changed.

Councilor Theberge established that the rules are different on dirt trails where the age is 18. The problem being addressed is that youth are driving on the streets without a responsible adult. Assistant Chief Buteau acknowledged that on dirt trails, a youth can operate; however when they arrive on the City street, it is proposed that they will need to have someone who is 25 or older with them. Chair Rozek noted that there will be another meeting in two weeks to further discuss the changes.

Councilor Remillard asked if it is worth collaborating with Gorham to make them aware of what the city is proposing. Assistant Chief Buteau indicated that it would be nice to have something in place when the trails open. Chair Rozek said that it is one of the goals to get communities to have the same rules. Councilor Theberge said that Gorham follows the State rules using age 18 as adults and the trails close ½ hour after sunset. Assistant Chief Buteau commented that he will share with the Police Chief in Gorham.

Chair Rozek affirmed that licensed drivers can use their ATV to go to work and that is covered under Section 1d of the ordinance where it states riding is allowed, “going to business or services.”

Councilor Morgan Allain moved to forward the ordinance to the April 24 traffic safety meeting for final review; Councilor Remillard seconded and the motion carried.

Chair Rozek noted that the intent of Chief Morency was to simplify the ordinance for the officers so there would not be gray areas. Age is open to further discussion. Mr. Wheeler stated that having two different ages, 25 on streets and 18 on the connector, will be confusing. ***All were in favor of the motion.***

Proposed “No Parking Here to Corner”

The Committee reviewed a letter from Lise Barrette stating that cars parked along Hillside Avenue impede visibility of cars at the stop sign on Willard Street. Assistant Chief Buteau indicated that there is a yellow marker on the road; however supplementing that with a sign is recommended.

Councilor Remillard moved to have a sign installed depicting “no parking here to corner” to make the no parking area more noticeable; Councilor Theberge seconded and the motion carried.

Proposed Yield Sign at Madison/Memorial

Councilor Remillard suggested a Yield sign going up Memorial Lane. Councilor Morgan Allain questioned whether fire trucks would have difficulty with the “yield”. It would also be difficult, because

of the hill, to yield on a slippery day. Assistant Chief Buteau agreed that it is a busy corner and it is difficult to measure close calls. Mr. Wheeler noted that this is the only intersection along there with no stop sign. Councilor Remillard made the point that the locals know; however there are a lot of people in Berlin from elsewhere. Two stop signs on Madison Avenue were suggested. Chair Rozek asked to table the issue to discuss in two weeks. He asked the Assistant Chief to check with the Fire Department to see if there is a preference.

Councilor Morgan Allain moved to adjourn; Councilor Remillard seconded and the motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Tremblay
Administrative Assistant