

TRAFFIC SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

June 23, 2021

Attendance: Captain Russell Timmons, Chairman; Michelle Mears, Director of Planning & Community Development; Mike Bobinsky, Public Works Director; Amber Ferland, City Engineer; George Kramlinger, Fire Chief; Paul Robidas, Member At-large; Jenne Holmes, Member At-large;

Citizen: Emmett Soldati arrived at 2:10

Absent: Robert Belmore, City Manager; Robert Gadomski, School Superintendent; Ken Vincent, City Councilor Representative

The Chairman called the Meeting to order at 3:00 pm.

1. **Approval of February 23, 2021 Meeting Minutes:** Paul Robidas motioned to approve meeting minutes, 2nd by Mike Bobinsky. Minutes Approved.

2. **Removal of Overhead Traffic Light at Green Street & Indigo Hill Road**

The overhead four corners Traffic Light at the intersection of Green Street at Indigo Hill Road is inoperative. The question is, should the traffic light be repaired or removed. Captain Timmons stated he researched accident data at that intersection starting in 2016. In 2016 there were two accidents reported each year thereafter resulted in 1 accident reported? Paul Robidas asked what the causes of accidents were. Timmons said nose to tail, linear wrecks. Timmons asked Mike and Amber their thoughts on this light. Mike Bobinsky said it was discovered about 6 months that the light was not working, It was determined that the controller failed. The cost to repair the controller was estimated at \$4,300. Mike asked the State DOT if they were willing to share the repair cost. NHDOT was not willing to help with the cost. Chief Kramlinger suggested we should remove some of the shrubbery to open up a better line of sight. Bobinsky indicated DPW would look into trimming some of the shrubs at the intersection. Robidas commented that we really do not need this light based on accident data.

Motion: Paul Robidas motions that the light be removed. Jenne Holmes seconded.

The Vote: All in favor

4. **Request to Allow On-Street Dining, High Street – Teatotaler**

Captain Timmons moved this Agenda item up to accommodate Emmett Soldati, who was in attendance. Mr. Soldati said his request is to accommodate outside dining for non-vaccinated people to make them feel more comfortable. He applied for an obstruction permit to have tables in the 2-parking spots in front of his business, not to extend to bike lane. He is willing to have Jersey Barriers (JB) in place outlining this area. Emmett said his business is booming and this will only benefit the City by bringing in more people to the area. Emmet stated that Somersworth does not have a lot of restaurants and he hopes this will encourage other restaurants. He also believed this would show that Somersworth is willing to work them to benefit the City.

Mike Bobinsky said his concern is from a maintenance aspect, street sweeping, etc...

Emmett said JB's will be removed before winter months and he will make sure the patio area is kept tidy and secure. Items will be brought back in at night or lock down anything that is heavy that will stay outside. Emmett feels that having JB's will help with speeding on High Street. Chief asked how would you connect them? Emmett said he would use the same Barriers that Rochester is using, dressing them up so they stand out.

Robidas noted that Kittery and Rochester on street dining are located on 1-way streets. We have 2-way traffic.

Captain Timmons doesn't think 2 parking spaces will be adequate. He questioned are cars going to be parking right up to the JB's? He also questioned the losing of parking spaces? He also cautioned about the types of vehicles that travel High Street.

Emmett said only 2 spots will be used and these spots are usually used by his customers. Robidas asked the Chief do we have any type of guidance if cars hit the JB's. Chief said no we do not, JB's would have to be aligned to deflect vehicles. I share the same concern. Robidas said what happens when other establishments ask for the same?

Bobinsky asked what is the material. Emmett said it is concrete and we will use the same company as Rochester. We also have the largest parking spots and we would be flexible to make is smaller, taking 1-spot and shortening the other. Captain Timmons said it still comes back to a traffic safety concern and my worry is that the JB's won't be adequate. Before I feel comfortable I would like to see a report on how they work and how the JB's need to be applied.

Emmett noted that safety is also his concern. I can prove this is safe, it is proven that JB's calm traffic and also slows traffic flow. Emmett will reach out to Rochester. Chief Kramlinger states his vote is to say no. Emmett noted the JB's would be parallel to traffic Jenne Holmes asked if parking spaces are City property or do they become an extension of the business? If an accident occurs who's responsible? Bobinsky said we would need certificate of insurance naming the City additionally insured. Emmett stated that his COI naming the City is listed under his policy. Jenne asked how many tables are we talking? Emmett said 4-4tops = 16 seats.

Captain Timmons said we need a recommendation, do we as a Committee support or not support this request? He told Emmett that we need more information on the adequacy of JB's to move forward. Emmett said this is an opportunity to get more business, to accommodate more people. I would be happy to angle JB and lose a few seats. JB's are meant to protect, if your concern is safety maybe you should review why High Street is unsafe? Emmett said I could be sitting in my car in a parking spot and a car could drive into me? JB's are meant to protect. Robidas said my concern in my ignorance to JB's. A car is different than 14-16 people sitting in this area. Bobinsky said this should have been brought to Traffic Safety months ago. Robidas said this is Council's decision it's City property.

Motion: Robidas motions to deny the request, Chief Kramlinger seconded.

The Vote: All in Favor.

Continued conversation...Amber Ferland noted that the manufacturer of JB's have specification on their limitations. Bobinsky said it's City property so Council decision. Emmett said I was never told about the Agenda and what was needed, never given the time to prepare for this. Captain Timmons said the recommendation to deny the request will be sent to the City Council.

3. Request to Change Current Parking on Pleasant Street Area of High Street.

Citizen Ed LeVasseur lives on Pleasant Street and wants to change the current parking. The area in question is on the High Street end of Pleasant Street, when you turn onto Pleasant Street the area immediately south. An ordinance prohibits parking on the Dover side of Pleasant Street, for a distance of 150 feet. Ed suggested allowing parking in that area. He also proposed to Captain Timmons that if this was not possible to consider seasonal parking there, with no winter parking allowed.

A discussion followed as to why parking is prohibited in that area. This included concerns for safe passage of Fire Apparatus and the road width being narrow. The issues were magnified during winter plowing. Paul Robidas said we made that change for those reasons, leave it alone.

Motion: Paul Robidas to deny the request. Chief Kramlinger seconded.

The Vote: All in Favor

Captain Timmons asked if there were any miscellaneous items. Mike Bobinsky asked if there had been speed limit signs on Blackwater RD, the area between Route 108 and the Old Rochester RD. Captain Timmons recalled that there had been signs added to an effort to mediate the accidents at the intersection of Blackwater Rd and Old Rochester RD. It's possible they were removed by contractors or damaged. Captain Timmons concurred with the recommendation to replace the speed limit signs in that area. Bobinsky agreed contractors could have removed the signs.

*Motion: Paul Robidas to Adjourn the meeting, 2nd by Mike Bobinsky,
Vote: All in favor Motion carries meeting adjourned at 3:27 pm*

Respectfully Submitted:
Brenda Ann Breda, Executive Assistant
to the City Manager