

**Public Safety Committee
Draft Meeting Minutes
June 15, 2022
6:00 PM
Council Chambers**

Members Present

Councilor Peter Lachapelle, Chair
Councilor Dana Berlin
Councilor Skip Gilman
Councilor Amy Malone

Others Present

Michael Bezanson, PE, City Engineer
Dan Camara, GIS Asset Mgmt. Technician
Captain Andrew Swanberry, PD
Bob Mayrand, 514 Salmons Falls Road
Todd Berrios, Skele-Tone Records
human, Portland Street

Minutes

Councilor Lachapelle brought the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

1. Approve Minutes from May 18, 2022 Public Safety Meeting.

Councilor Berlin MOVED to approve the minutes from May 18, 2022. Councilor Malone seconded the motion. MOTION CARRIED by a unanimous voice vote.

2. Public Input

Todd Berrios of Skele-Tone Records on North Main Street was present to discuss the speeding problem on North Main Street. A couple of months ago a car hit a parked car, went through a crosswalk, and hit his car. He believes the speed limit was reduced to 25 mph, but should be reduced to 5 mph. He would like to see more police present and flashers. He stated that he almost got hit twice in the last two months. He received letters, which he presented to the members of the Committee, from some other North Main Street store owners that stated their concerns regarding the need for changes as well.

human from Portland Street was present to discuss the dangers of nuclear war; he said that the United States is sending weapons to Ukraine, so they can fight against Russia and said that even a simple release of radiation can affect people on the other side of the world. He stated that the City of Rochester does have an Emergency Operations Plan and a Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan, but although the EOP does contain a Radiological Protection Annex these Plans do not specifically address nuclear war. He stated that the City of Rochester needs to prepare an emergency response plan to address nuclear war. The shelters that the citizens of Rochester are to go to for an emergency are not big enough to accommodate everyone. He said that he has some suggestions and realizes that he has gone over his time limit, so he would be happy to come to another meeting to discuss an emergency response plan for nuclear war.

3. Flat Rock Bridge Road/Salmon Falls Road Intersection Safety Concerns (kept in committee)

Councilor Lachapelle summarized the issue. Mr. Bezanson said that he has no update this month, but he might next month.

4. Salmon Falls Road Traffic Issues (kept in committee)

Councilor Lachapelle summarized the issue. Bob Mayrand of 514 Salmon Falls Road was present to discuss the ongoing traffic issues on Salmon Falls Road; he wanted to thank the Public Safety Committee and the residents of Salmon Falls Road for supporting him with this concern. He states that he sent an email to Councilor Gilman regarding the data from the speed trailer. The speed trailer was put in front of his house for 7 days. He said that the information that was in the Public Safety packet for the speed trailer can be a little confusing and wanted to isolate the information. He said that there were 613 vehicles that were going 45 to 85 mph and 3119 vehicles were going 35 to 45 mph. The speed trailer was 400 feet from the stop sign; the vehicles are well exceeding the speed limit of the road. He said that the noise reduction signs are not popular, but cities are starting to use them. He feels it is important to add some noise reduction signage along with the 25 mph signs. Councilor Lachapelle said that the reduced speed limit signs are not out yet, as the motion just passed last week; he said he wants to see how these signs work before they proceed to the next thing. Mr. Mayrand said there is a rule of the road: you can do anything you want on the road and it's ok. Why is it ok? Because if you don't get caught, you don't break the law. You don't break the law until you get caught and all the drivers know that. Councilor Gilman suggested to put noise reduction signage at each end of Salmon Falls Road. Councilor Berlin suggested to wait until other resolutions are implemented to see if the situation improves. Councilor Lachapelle wants Mr. Bezanson's input on "noise" signs. He stated he doesn't have much experience with "noise" signs and would want to work with the Police Department before proposing any signs. Mr. Bezanson said the Department of Public Works is working with the Police Department for installation of the radar sign and 25 mph speed limit sign; they will be on the same post. Councilor Lachapelle said that they will continue to monitor the safety concerns on Salmon Falls Road and told Mr. Mayrand to keep the Committee posted on how the radar sign and 25 mph signs are working.

5. Safety Issue Crosswalk Columbus Avenue near KFC (Route 125) (request was sent by Councilor Berlin (kept in committee))

Councilor Lachapelle summarized the issue. Mr. Bezanson said that he looked into the solar powered streetlights, he stated that they are not as tall or large as he thought and can't support on the mast arm that is in needed for proper light location on Columbus Avenue; he does not think this particular light would work in this area. Mr. Bezanson said that they could look into having Eversource install a pole and run aerial power lines; they could get a cost for that installation including a cobra head LED streetlight for both sides to compare the cost to an RRFB. Councilor Lachapelle asked if there were any future plans for work this area. Mr. Bezanson

said that they just did work on Upham and May Streets and recently repaved Columbus; no future plans to reconfigure this intersection. Councilor Belin said in his opinion they should go with the least expensive option. This was kept in committee and Mr. Bezanson will get the cost of installing poles with aerial power lines for streetlights.

6. Common Street Safety Concerns

Councilor Lachapelle summarized the issue. An email was sent regarding safety concerns on Common Street; the resident that sent the email regarding noise and traffic speed and had suggested some solutions: an additional crosswalk, speed monitoring, active signage (lights etc.), speed tables (at both ends of the Common Street parking area) and a reduced speed limit. Mr. Bezanson did some quick research and about 20 years ago and the City Engineer at the time was working on a project with curbing and road widths. They were having trouble setting the curbs because of the truck traffic running them over. A memo was sent to the Public Safety Committee and City Council to install “no thru trucks” signs and Mr. Bezanson believes the motion may have passed. A few years ago DPW conducted an inventory of “truck traffic” restriction signs and Common and Hancock were listed as having missing signs; the signs are still missing today. He said he could attempt to verify that a motion for “no thru trucks” signs did pass the Council. Councilor Lachapelle said a motion is not needed at this time, if they were already there. Councilor Berlin said if they are missing, DPW should simply put them back up. Councilor Lachapelle asked if there were any “speed limit” signs in the area; Hancock Street has a 30 mph sign. Councilor Lachapelle asked if there was any accident data in the area. Captain Swanberry said they ran data for the last year on Hancock, Upham, Common and Grants Streets and there were 5 accidents in the area. Councilor Berlin asked if the people of Grant and Common Streets would be respectful to the speed limit reduced to 25 mph. Councilor Lachapelle asked if the speed limit could be lowered more than 25. Mr. Bezanson said that the City is statutorily limited by how low a speed limit can be lowered. ***Councilor Berlin MOVED to reduce the speed limit on Grant and Common Streets to 25 mph with signs placed at the technical discretion of the Public Works Department. Councilor Gilman seconded the motion. MOTION CARRIED by a unanimous voice vote.***

7. Other

Pickering Road Gonic Post Office Crosswalk

Councilor Berlin said he was at the stop sign on Church Street turning left onto Pickering Road and saw a mother and child in the crosswalk on the right side trying to cross the road to the post office side; there was a line of cars parked on the side of the road and the mother waited approximately 5 minutes before walking down the road, as no cars stopped for her to cross. Councilor Berlin suggested extending the “no parking” on the circle side of the road so vehicles can see people in the crosswalk. Councilor Lachapelle said that moving the crosswalk came to the Public Safety Committee around 6 years ago and the next closest one is near St. Leo’s Church. Mr. Bezanson said there is a minimum separation distance for

parking near a crosswalk. Kept in committee so the Public Works Department can take a look at the area.

Spring Street by Ball Field Near Green Street

Councilor Gilman said he received a request for speed limit signs; there are currently no speed limit signs in the area. They are requesting a 25 mph speed limit. ***Councilor Gilman MOVED to install 30 mph speed limit signs on Spring Street. Councilor Malone seconded the motion. MOTION CARRIED by a unanimous voice vote.***

North Main Street Speeding near Skele-Tone Records

Councilor Lachapelle stated this was already brought up under Public Input and he asked if there were any speed limit signs in the area. Kept in committee so more research could be done. Councilor Berlin asked if the one way downtown was 30 mph. Councilor Berlin said it should be at least 25 mph as so many people walk the area.

North Main, Fortier and McDuffee Streets Crosswalks

Councilor Lachapelle said some residents complained near North Main, Fortier and McDuffee Streets. They would like the crosswalks repainted. Councilor Lachapelle said are they doing striping now. Mr. Bezanson said that the contracted long lines and busy areas are usually painted at night, but many crosswalks can be painted during the regular work day; crews are running a little behind right now. He mentioned there are 4 crosswalks between Strafford Square and the Hannaford signal on North Main; crews are scheduled to paint those crosswalks this week.

Chestnut Hill/202 Homeless Encampment

Councilor Lachapelle said he received a call regarding the homeless encampment by Chestnut Hill Road and 202 by the underpass near the State barn. He said it is on State land, but the mess is in our City. He said he couldn't find the location, so he is reaching out to this gentleman. Councilor Malone said she doesn't think it is an active camp anymore if its location was by Lydall.

Councilor Lachapelle said the next meeting is July 20, 2022 at 6pm.

Councilor Lachapelle ADJOURNED the meeting at 6:57 PM.

The minutes were respectfully submitted by Laura J. McDormand, Admin. Assistant II

NOTES

To whom it may concern:

My name is Ellen Christopher and I work at Luxe at 22 N. Main St. I've been in this storefront for almost 3 years, and have been a resident of Rochester for 6.

Through these last 6 years, but esp. the 3 down town, myself, my customers, and coworkers have noticed how dangerous trying to cross Main Street can be. Cars speed down this street. We have even noticed them going the wrong direction! I worry about my customers not from this down who aren't familiar with the flow of traffic.

Possibly having better lit crosswalks could help?

Ellen Christopher

MITCHELL HILL BBQ GRILL & BREW
50 North Main Street
Rochester, NH 03867
(603)-332-2537

06/15/2022

To whom it may concern,

I am writing this letter to bring to your attention the traffic issues we are witnessing and dealing with on Main Street.

As business owners and pedestrians on our Main Street I am witnessing very unsafe drivers! Driving way over the speed limit, cutting of cars to change lanes. Crossing at the crosswalks is dangerous and cars aren't paying any attention to people standing at them.

Our restaurants have had outdoor dining which has been going pretty well. However, Cars driving by too fast, too loud is not a very pleasant atmosphere for any of our guests and staff.

I have spoken to police officers about this several times. We have little to no police presence downtown.

I feel that speed signs, crosswalk plastic signs in every crosswalk as well as more police presence can help a great deal.

I hope that these things will bring action from the board real soon.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Roxanne Benoit". Below the main signature, the name "R. Benoit" is written in a smaller, simpler script.

Roxanne & Bob Benoit,

Owners

June 14, 2022

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Kristin Ebbeson and I own River Stones Custom Framing located at 33 N. Main St. here in Rochester. I have been in this location for eight years.

During this time, I have been very aware that much of the traffic through this one way section of N. Main travels at speeds in excess of 35 MPH. - ~~many~~ ^{some} travel ~~real~~ much faster.

It can be very difficult for pedestrians to cross N. Main and I worry not only about myself, but for my customers as well. Even using the cross walks can be very dangerous. Often cars do not stop for pedestrians in the crosswalks and I am concerned for their safety.

Just last week I was crossing the street to get coffee at Fallen Leaf and ~~at~~ seven cars whizzed by without stopping to let me cross. In fact, five of them accelerated down N. Main!

The City of Rochester needs to make this section safer. I believe lowering (or posting) a speed limit of 25 MPH will help, along w/ the same type of crosswalk warning near Lilac City Grill + at the crossing on Wakefield St. by the square.

Kristin Ebbeson