

**Public Safety Committee
Meeting Minutes
October 19, 2022
6:00 PM
Council Chambers**

Members Present

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

Members Absent

Councilor Alexander de Geofroy (excused)

Others Present

Michael Bezanson, PE, City Engineer
Dan Camara, GIS Asset Mgmt. Coordinator
Deputy Chief Jason Thomas, PD
Bob Murphy, owner of 52 & 58 Pickering Road
Bryan Pugsley, 42 Pickering Road

Minutes

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

1. **Approve Minutes from September 21, 2022 Public Safety Meeting.**
Councilor Malone MOVED to approve the minutes from September 21, 2022. Councilor Berlin seconded the motion. MOTION CARRIED by a unanimous voice vote.

2. **Public Input**

Bryan Pugsley was present to discuss the issues on Pickering Road. He stated he has lived on Pickering Road for 20 years and said the speeding in the area is terrible and way out of hand; there are 18-wheelers and dump trucks that go way too fast on Pickering Road. Mr. Pugsley said there was a hole dug in the road near his house; the roadway patch is now depressed and when big trucks go over it, it makes a loud noise and shakes his house. Some kids in the neighborhood are afraid to walk to school because it's dangerous; the vehicles are going too fast. He suggested a speed bump or a 25 mph speed limit sign. He said people run right through the stop signs. Councilor Lachapelle said there are a number of issues in that corridor from Route 125 to Colby Street to Pickering Road, and coming up Pickering Road from the bridge. He said some steps have been taken; there is a 25 mph speed limit sign coming from Route 125, another 25 mph speed limit sign on Church Street, and a third 25 mph speed limit sign at the urban compact zone sign before the bridge. City Council recently voted to install a radar feedback flashing speed limit sign that will be placed by the bridge. Councilor Lachapelle said the speed trailer was out in the area in May. Deputy Chief Thomas said in May the speed trailer was out on Pickering Road between Colby Street and the post office; he said most of the cars were in compliance and only 3 were in the high risk category, meaning 20 mph over the speed limit or more. He also stated that just this year PD has stopped 349 cars on Pickering Road; they do try to regularly patrol the area.

Councilor Lachapelle asked Mr. Bezanson to have Public Works look at the depressed roadway patch by this gentleman's house. Councilor Berlin asked if the speed trailer was recording cars coming from Colby to the Church Street intersection or the other direction. Councilor Lachapelle said the speed trailer was recording cars traveling south from Route 125/Colby toward downtown Gonic. Councilor Berlin suggested that the speed trailer could be positioned in the other direction; he said the speed issues seem to be coming around the corner. Deputy Chief Thomas said they could do that and that is the direction that the permanent speed sign will be installed. Councilor Lachapelle said speed bumps aren't really an option because they wreak havoc on the plow trucks. Councilor Berlin asked Mr. Pugsley if he felt that the removal of the parking spaces was beneficial for people in the crosswalk. Mrs. Pugsley said yes, that she can now cross the street to the post office and not be afraid. Mr. Pugsley said you can see the cars now that the parking spaces were removed.

3. Temporary No Parking on Pickering Road Discussion

There were members of the public present for item #9; this item was moved up on the agenda. Mr. Bob Murphy, the owner of 52 Pickering Road, was present to discuss the temporary "no parking" signs that were placed on Pickering Road. He stated that he and his wife have owned this property for 40 years and there has always been on-street parking in this area. He said it is a speeding issue not a parking problem; to solve the problem you have to slow the traffic down. There is no problem crossing the crosswalk from the post office to the other side of the street; crossing towards post office is the problem. He said the solution would be to stop the speeding or move the crosswalk. Mr. Murphy said those 4 to 5 spaces being temporarily taken away are generally parking for his building and always has been. No one will want to rent an apartment without parking. He stated that taking the parking away only gives them a better line-of-sight to go faster. He said taking the parking away will hurt him. Councilor Lachapelle said they are not looking to hurt anyone; it is beyond just the parking. To install a new crosswalk would require curb cuts, so the crosswalk would need to be eliminated and people would have to walk down by the church or where Phagin's use to be. Councilor Berlin said there are more issues than trying to cross one way. He said he was trying to turn left from Pickering onto Church for 15 minutes while a woman and a child were trying to cross towards the post office. He said that speed isn't really the issue; it's because they can't be seen on the crosswalk. Councilor Berlin said these are public parking spaces and the City can do as they choose with those spots; in this instance the safety of the crosswalk was more important. Councilor Lachapelle said they are not trying to take things away from people; if he lived there, he would be upset. He asked Mr. Murphy where the tenants park during the winter. Mr. Murphy said down below by the bridge. Councilor Malone said the change in the visibility since eliminating the parking spaces is like night and day; now you can see much better. Councilor Lachapelle asked Deputy Chief Thomas if he had anything to add. Deputy Chief Thomas said he has had positive feedback regarding eliminating the parking in the area and he stated they are trying to

address the speed as much as they can; having the flashing speed limit sign placed in the area will help. Councilor Lachapelle said he put this issue back on the agenda because it was a pilot program and it has been more than 30 days. He said they have heard people for the no parking and people against the no parking. ***Councilor Berlin MOVED to recommend to full council to change the temporary “no parking” area on Pickering Road to be permanently signed “no parking”. Councilor Malone seconded the motion. MOTION CARRIED by unanimous voice vote.***

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

Councilor Lachapelle summarized the issue. Mr. Bezanson said the only update he has is that last year it looked like Flat Rock Bridge Road was coming up on the paving list, but the new roadway condition data and analysis is now not showing Flat Rock Bridge Road on the 5-year paving list at current funding levels. Rather than fund the survey effort with paving funds, Mr. Bezanson said they will have to move forward in a different fashion and will discuss using funds from the other professional services O&M account line. Councilor Lachapelle asked how much a survey might cost. Mr. Bezanson said thousands of dollars and in this case they would be looking at more than \$5,000.

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 he has had some discussion with Eversource, but is having a hard time getting formal cost estimates.

6. Colby Street-One Way Traffic (kept in committee)

Councilor Lachapelle summarized the issue. Mr. Bezanson said he communicated with some folks with NHDOT. NHDOT is looking to make some improvements at the Church Street/Route 125 intersection and in preparation for that some analysis of the intersection will need to be completed. Mr. Bezanson asked them to incorporate the 2 signalized intersections to north in the same analysis. NHDOT agreed to do that, but not sure when. Councilor Lachapelle said he saw the traffic counter on the road. Mr. Bezanson said Strafford Regional Planning Commission helps NHDOT with traffic counts and usually collect them every 3 years. **(kept in committee)**

7. Emergency Call Boxes (Request from Councilor Berlin) (kept in committee)

Councilor Lachapelle summarized the issue. Councilor Berlin provided information in the packet regarding the dome cameras. Wire tower and solar tower both have dome cameras. He said as far as he aware they can do landline and cellular; might be easier to put in places where there is no landlines. He got rough estimate on costs for the standard white with blue text on overhead dome camera run \$8,000 per unit and the 125 volt with overhead

dome cameras run \$5,000 per unit. The wired tower can do landline, cellular, VoIP and WiFi VoIP. The cellular version also had landline features, VoIP and cellular capabilities. Mr. Bezanson suggested that if the City wanted to move forward, the Union Street Municipal Parking Lot project could be used as a pilot program. Councilor Berlin said maybe near the Riverwalk. Mr. Bezanson said they are in the conceptual design phase of the Union Street Parking Lot project and getting ready to move into final design. Councilor Lachapelle said he likes the solar option. He asked Mr. Bezanson if he could see if they could fit this into the Union Street conceptual design. Mr. Bezanson said the project is incorporating innovative ideas and one of them is looking at electric vehicle charging stations. Councilor Berlin will give Mr. Bezanson the contact information on the dome cameras. Deputy Chief Thomas asked who would be incurring the cellular or landline recurring costs. Councilor Lachapelle said that is another factor that needs to be looked at. **(kept in committee)**

8. Hospital Signs-Whitehall Road to the right

Councilor Lachapelle summarized the issue. Councilor Berlin said there is a sign on Salmon Falls Road coming from Dover indicating a left turn down Whitehall for the hospital, but not one in the other direction for the right turn. Councilor Lachapelle asked who pays for these signs. Mr. Bezanson said he wasn't sure and he would have to do some research. This was kept in committee for next month.

9. Whitehall Road Speeding Issues (Request from Councilor Lachapelle)

Councilor Lachapelle summarized the issue. An email was sent to Councilor Lachapelle regarding the speed limit on Whitehall Road. He suggested a few ideas that might help, install speed cameras that photograph the driver and vehicle along with the speed, change the speed in the area of 56 Whitehall Road, Jack & Jill Daycare/School to 15 mph (when this school is in session), install speed bumps in the area of 56 Whitehall Road by Jack & Jill Daycare/School or have police sit on the road at different times of day performing speed limit enforcement. Councilor Lachapelle responded to some of the requests stating it was illegal to install cameras and speed bumps wreak havoc with the winter snow maintenance. Councilor Lachapelle wanted to know if they could put school zone signs up if it wasn't a public school. Mr. Bezanson will look into that. Deputy Chief Thomas said they are on Whitehall Road a lot and they know this road has a speed issue; 563 vehicles were stopped on Whitehall Road this year of a total 4,000 stopped city-wide. Kept in committee until next month; Mr. Bezanson will get information on the school zone signs.

10. Other

Crosswalk Issues

Councilor Berlin said he got a call about the crosswalk by the Common and also by Parson Main on North Main Street (the crosswalk without the lights on them); traffic doesn't stop. Councilor Berlin would like to see at the earliest

possible time the police to do a sting. Deputy Chief Thomas said they can do that without the direction of the City Council or Police Commission. It is easier with the Problem Oriented Policing (POP) unit in place, but that won't be until end of year. They can do it during regular hours; they can make that work.

Woodman Area Construction

Mr. Bezanson said during the course of the construction of the Woodman Area Infrastructure Improvements project, DPW has had communication with the principal at the William Allen School and the new drop off/pick up route has been working alright. However, one of the results of the new traffic pattern is some of the parents are parking on Sheridan Avenue. The principal requested that "no parking" signs be installed on the right side of Sheridan between Granite and Glen and by the corner on the left side of Sheridan. The busses cannot turn the corner with the vehicles parked there. Councilor Berlin wanted to know if there is an officer dedicated to this area. Deputy Chief Thomas said they do not have an officer dedicated to this area. Mr. Bezanson said that the standard times for school zone speed limit signs are 45 minutes before school and 45 minutes after school closing. ***Councilor Berlin MOVED to recommend to full council to place "no parking" signs between certain times on the right side of Sheridan Avenue and a "no parking" sign on the left side of Sheridan Avenue by the corner, at the discretion of the Public Works Department. Councilor Malone seconded the motion. MOTION CARRIED by unanimous voice vote.***

Milton Road – No Parking Signs

Councilor Berlin said he drove by the "no parking" signs that are on the road by Cumberland Farms and Dunkin Donuts, he said that it was a good decision and they don't look obnoxious or look bad.

Councilor Lachapelle said that the next Public Safety Committee Meeting will be on November 16, 2022.

Councilor Lachapelle ADJOURNED the meeting at 6:52 PM.

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