

Public Safety Committee
Council Chambers
June 20, 2018
7:00 PM

MEMBERS PRESENT

Councilor David Walker
Councilor Robert Gates
Councilor Geoff Hamann
Councilor Peter Lachapelle

MEMBERS ABSENT

Councilor Jeremy Hutchinson

OTHERS PRESENT

Michael Bezanson, PE, City Engineer
Gary Boudreau, Deputy Police Chief
Georgia Flanagan, 12 Dry Hill Rd.

Minutes

Councilor Walker brought the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

1, Public Input

The members of the public present were there for item #4 on the agenda.

2. E911 Update

Councilor Walker summarized the issue. Deputy Chief Boudreau said that the E911 committee met today regarding the renumbering of Eastern Avenue. They had a little bit of a set back after bringing this to the State. The State was concerned about future development of Eastern Avenue. The committee took their suggestions and will renumber all of Eastern Avenue in case of future developments. The first notice was sent and the second will be sent in August with hopes for a September public hearing. Councilor Walker asked how many businesses were in the area. Deputy Chief Boudreau answered not many maybe four, there are a couple of schools and a church. Councilor Lachapelle asked where the public hearing would be held. Deputy Chief Boudreau said there is not a venue yet.

3. Emergency Management Updates

Councilor Walker stated that he received an email from Fire Chief Klose with an update. The City All-Hazard Mitigation Plan Update with the Strafford Regional

Planning Commission is complete with the revisions. On May 17th, the Fire Department and Jim Grant attended The Strafford County Public Health Multi-Aided Coordination Entity Drill (Mace). On May 9th and 10th, 2018 they attended and presented the Primex Risk Management Conference. In December and January, the warming facility adventure will take place. There was no significant damage caused by the thunderstorm on Monday, trees struck two houses, but no considerable damage noted.

4. Dry Hill Road-Speed Limit Sign Request (Resident Request)

Councilor Walker summarized the issue. Councilor Gates said that the road is newly paved and that is why there is a speeding issue. He thinks it is a good idea to have a “speed limit” sign on each side. Councilor Walker asked if it was on Councilor Gates’ end of the road. Councilor Gates said no it was the other end between Washington and Oak Streets. Deputy Boudreau said the speed limit in this area is 35 mph because it is considered a rural residential area. On the other end of Dry Hill Road, it is posted 30 mph. Councilor Gates asked what the criteria is for determining speed limits on a City road. Councilor Walker said the City Council has authority to establish signed speed limits; in the absence of a sign, prima facie limits apply, for instance a rural residential area is 35 mph. Georgia Flanagan of 12 Dry Hill Road came to voice her concerns with the speeding in the area. She stated that since this section of Dry Hill Road has been paved the speeding is bad, and this area is a cut through between Routes 202 and 125, and there are no “speed limit” signs down to Oak Street. She also said a sidewalk would be nice as many people walk this area. Councilor Walker said that sidewalk construction is a big cost and a lot of work. Deputy Chief Boudreau said that they could put the speed trailer there tomorrow; right now, it is on Route 11. Councilor Hamann said he travels these roads all the time to avoid town; he agrees with the speeding issue, but cannot support the signs. He said that if signs were approved here, they would be requested everywhere. He also would like to make it standard operating procedure for the Committee to collect speed data before putting signs up. Councilor Walker said that would not work in every case, it needs to be a case-by-case decision. This was kept in committee until next month to get the data report from the speed trailer. Deputy Chief Boudreau said he would put the blind down on the trailer to get the data. Councilor Lachapelle said that was a good idea, it will give accurate data.

5. No Parking at Corner of Washington and Sylvain Street (resident request)

Councilor Walker summarized the issue. Councilor Hamann said he thought this had been done on the Washington Street side; there are white hash marks there. Councilor Walker said this was already taken care of. Councilor Walker asked Deputy Chief Boudreau if the stripes were just as enforceable as the “no parking” signs. Deputy Chief Boudreau said yes they are.

6. City Hall Parking Lot-Signs

Councilor Walker summarized the issue. Mr. Bezanson discussed the City Hall Parking Lot signage. The request has been received by DPW to sign 2 hour parking between the Police Department and the Revenue Building. Short term parking has also been requested near the rear entrance to the City Hall Annex; the suggested time limit was 30-minute parking. Handicap parking spaces will require signs in addition to painted symbols on the pavement. Until recently, there was a general sign near the Columbus Ave. entrance to the City Hall Parking Lot that stated “2 Hour Parking Limit Monday-Friday 8am-5pm Except As Posted”. Deputy Chief Boudreau said there is an enforcement officer who monitors the parking lot, and does enforce parking limits. Councilor Walker asked if the 2 hour parking signs were necessary if the entire lot was posted for 2 hour parking. Councilor Walker said post the 30-minute signs and handicap parking and everything else will be 2 hour parking. Councilor Hamann said he does not believe they need the 30-minute parking, just keep it simple.

Councilor Gates made a motion to install handicap signs as required in the City Hall Parking Lot. The motion was seconded by Councilor Hamann. Unanimous voice vote carried the motion. Councilor Lachapelle made a motion to re-establish signage for general two hour parking at each entrance to the parking lot at the discretion of DPW. The motion was seconded by Councilor Gates. Unanimous voice vote carried the motion.

7. Collins Circle-Streetlight (kept in committee)

Councilor Walker summarized the issue. ***Councilor Lachapelle made the motion to install a light on existing fixture located on Collins Circle. Councilor Gates seconded the motion. Unanimous voice vote carried the motion.*** Councilor Hamann asked for clarification that this situation meets the streetlight policy requirements. Councilor Walker said it does meet the street light policy; it is on a decorative lamp post, not the usual cobrahead on a utility pole.

8. Other

Ten Rod Road-198 Ten Rod Road Parking Lot

Councilor Gates said that he just attended the RUN meeting for Ward 5. He said that some of the constituents were concerned about late night illicit activity, maybe between 11 PM and 1AM, in this dimly lit parking lot. Cars have been observed entering this parking lot and then leaving less than 5 minutes later. Councilor Gates passed on the request for a streetlight in the area. Councilor Walker said that might not change the situation, but a direct patrol may work. Councilor Gates said that the activity has not been observed every night, but that it happens sporadically.

Ten Rod Road Speeding

Councilor Gates said a constituent requested speed limit signs and the speed trailer out on Ten Rod Road. It was generally agreed that the likely area of speeding was from Four Rod Road headed in toward downtown.

Four Rod Road-Needs to be Repaved

Councilor Gates relayed complaints regarding the condition of the pavement on Four Rod Road and that drainage work may be needed first because that may be causing the issue. Mr. Bezanson recognized the condition of Four Rod Road and said that Woodside Lane, which is in that area, will be completely rebuilt, including drainage improvements. He also mentioned that the City is awaiting State Bridge Aid for the replacement of a culvert on Four Rod Road. Paving on that portion of Four Rod Road will likely be coordinated with the culvert work.

Route 11 Speed Trailer Update

Deputy Chief Boudreau updated the committee on the speed trailer that was set up on Route 11 for 13 days. There was 83,868 cars in 13 days with the average speed being 45 mph, which is 10 mile lower than the speed limit of 55 mph. Deputy Chief Boudreau said on Thursday the speed trailer would go to Dry Hill Road and then go to Ten Rod Road. On Ten Rod Road it will be placed over by the power lines and then the lower portion of Ten Rod Road.

Road Safety Audit – Gonic Road (Route 125)

Mr. Bezanson stated that he had sent an application to NHDOT for a Road Safety Audit for Gonic Road between Gear Road and Rochester Neck Road. NHDOT has responded that they are designing improvements this year to include a two-way left turn lane, and construction is expected in 2019.

Downtown Crosswalks

Mr. Bezanson said DPW is requesting to install pedestrian crossing signs at three of the mid-block crosswalks in downtown that have been discussed at previous meetings. The signs would be installed on both sides of the crosswalk, similar to the recent installations on North Main Street. Councilor Walker said that when this was discussed earlier the concern was for sign clutter downtown. Mr. Bezanson said the request was only for three crosswalks: the two crosswalks to be relocated (Union and North Main), and the crosswalk at Parson Main. Councilor Walker said that area is already getting polluted with too many signs. Councilor Gates asked how many accidents there have been in the area; he said he is reluctant to put the signs up downtown without looking at the data. Councilor Hamann stated that he doesn't want to put signs up that aren't mandated. ***Councilor Lachapelle made a motion to install the pedestrian signs with the arrows in the 3 mentioned locations. Councilor Walker seconded the motion. Voice vote was 2 to 2 with Councilor Hamann and Councilor Gates opposing.*** Councilor Hamman said he would rather see the crosswalks painted 3 times a year, if they needed it.

Councilor Gates made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:46 PM. Councilor Lachapelle seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Laura Miller, Secretary II.