

Public Safety Committee
Council Chambers
February 19, 2020
6:00 PM

MEMBERS PRESENT

Councilor Don Hamann, Chair
Councilor Peter Lachapelle, Vice-chair
Councilor Jeremy Hutchinson
Councilor Chris Rice

MEMBERS ABSENT

Councilor Palana Belken

OTHERS PRESENT

Councilor David Walker
Michael Bezanson, PE, City Engineer
Gary Boudreau, Deputy Police Chief
Mark Klose, Fire Chief
Dan Camara, GIS Asset Mgmt. Tech.
Bonnie Billings, 161 Chesley Hill Road
Lynn Allen, Principal, William Allen School

Minutes

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

1. Public Input

The members of the public that were present were there for items listed on the agenda.

2. 161 Chesley Hill Road-No Outlet Sign

Councilor Hamann summarized the issue. Item number 3 was moved up on the agenda; Bonnie Billings of 161 Chesley Hill Road was present to discuss the safety concerns in her area. Mrs. Billings came to the meeting to request a “no outlet” sign for her driveway; she said she has been at this residence for 37 years and over the years there have been many changes to the road. There is a new development off Chesley Hill Road, and many new houses being built; 3 right near her driveway. This brings more traffic to the area. Her driveway is right off the curve in the road. If people do not know the area, they go down the driveway and then turn around sometimes in the driveway, lawn or their garden. It’s been getting worse lately, so she was hoping a “no outlet” sign would help. She stated that a few years ago her daughter came to a Public Safety meeting regarding concerns with the road; there were a lot of accidents in the area. Curve ahead warning signs and 20 mph advisory speed plaques were placed near the corner. Councilor Lachapelle said that he is

very familiar with this area. He asked if her driveway was paved. Mrs. Billings stated that although there is a paved apron portion, the actual driveway is gravel and she maintains it. Councilor Walker said that a “no outlet” sign typically is placed when there are at least 2 streets but no outlet; if this was a city street, it would warrant a “dead end” sign. Mrs. Billings said she saw a street across from the Kohl’s shopping plaza that had a “no outlet” sign, so that is why she thought of that. She said she knows she could probably get a “private drive” sign, but she just wanted to bring it to the committee to see what could be done. She said 37 years ago there was no lighting down there, so they had Public Service bring a pole and light in; that may be a reason people think it is a road. Councilor Hutchinson said a “private drive” sign would not reflect good at night, putting a reflective “chevron” sign right near the trees would help. **Councilor Lachapelle made a motion to install 2 “chevron” signs at the corner near Mrs. Billings driveway at the discretion of DPW. The motion was seconded by Councilor Rice. Unanimous voice vote carried the motion.** Councilor Lachapelle said that if Mrs. Billings wanted to put up a “private drive” sign on her property she could.

3. Portland/Franklin Street-Speeding Concerns

Councilor Hamann summarized the issue. He said that he spoke to a woman that requested a “speed limit” sign or a “school zone” sign on Chamberlain Street between Portland and Franklin Street. Councilor Walker said that the speed trailer could be placed in the area to collect data. Councilor Hamann said that the woman said the speed trailer was out in the area previously and the average speed was 28 mph. Deputy Chief Boudreau said he would look to see if he has any data for this area. Councilor Walker stated that the “school zone” signs have already been placed in the area. Mr. Bezanson said that the woman also had a chance to talk to Mr. Nourse, Director of City Services, and that she indicated that in addition to speeding cars, there were also buses speeding in the area. Deputy Chief Boudreau said he would put this area on the list for the speed trailer; he also said that he would have to ask someone if they would be willing to have the speed trailer on their property because it is tight in the area. This was kept in committee, the speed trailer would not be placed until the weather got warmer, maybe April or May.

4. Wilson Street/Route 125-Left Turning Traffic-Intersection Concerns

Councilor Hamann summarized the issue. Michael Rademacher of 11 Wilson Street sent an email to the City Manager’s office stating that at the intersection of Wilson Street and Route 125 is dangerous to attempt to continue straight through the intersection onto Old Dover Road as the opposing traffic regularly turns left in front

of him even though they have to yield. Councilor Hamann asked if the traffic signal phases could be adjusted. Mr. Bezanson said that they recently went through and coordinated the timing through the whole corridor; it was difficult to get it just right and it is still not great for some turning movements, but it is the best they could do in the area. It was suggested that a sign that states “left turn yield on green” be installed for traffic on Old Dover Road. Councilor Walker asked where the sign would be placed. Mr. Bezanson stated that the sign would be installed on the mast arm near the signal head. ***Councilor Lachapelle made a motion to place a “left turn yield on green” sign on the mast arm facing Old Dover Road. Councilor Rice seconded the motion. Unanimous voice vote carried the motion.***

5. Granite Street William Allen School Parking/Traffic Concerns

Councilor Hamann summarized the issue. Deputy Chief Boudreau said that Lynn Allen, Principal of William Allen School, was present to discuss the traffic issues in the Woodman and Granite Street Area; Superintendent of Schools Kyle Repucci and School Board Chair Paul Lynch could not make it due to a prior commitment. This issue has been in committee for a couple of months now. The original complaint came from a resident of Glen Street; she said that traffic was backing up on Granite Street and on Charles Street and emergency vehicles could not get down the street. The School Resource Officer has been out in the area; vehicles are stopping and standing on Granite Street and people are passing on double yellow lines on Charles Street, making the area very dangerous. Deputy Chief Boudreau said he and Mr. Bezanson met today with the School Department to go over possible solutions. He stated that any solution would cause some complications. Mr. Bezanson said that the current traffic pattern for student drop-off and pick-up is vehicles go down Charles Street to Granite to the school and buses go down Woodman Street to Davyanne Locke Lane to the school. This traffic pattern was switched during the last construction project due to complaints from residents in the Woodman Street area. One possible long term solution to queue more vehicles before reaching Charles Street is to switch the traffic pattern back with next project, so it queues on Davyanne Locke and Woodman, and potentially Myrtle. Councilor Walker said that just moves the problem to a different area. Mr. Bezanson said Granite is one-way, but Woodman is two-way and emergency vehicles could access the neighborhood more easily on a two-way road. Also, the roadway will be reconstructed with designated parking in certain areas and proper travel lane widths striped, which is much different than the existing condition where vehicles are parked on both sides of Woodman and passing two-way traffic is very difficult. Councilor Walker said he thinks it is time to put “no parking from 2-3” signs on Granite Street with the exemption of the apartment buildings; they will have to get a

sticker so they are not towed. Councilor Rice said he would like to hear from the School Department to see if they have any solutions. Councilor Hamann said no matter what is decided unfortunately for the next 2 years during the construction project there are going to be issues. When the school was built everybody was walking to school; now the parents bring them and wait to pick them up. Lynn Allen, Principal of William Allen School, said they have met collaboratively with City staff, trying to find the best solution. She remembers that the traffic flow changed because some of the neighbors were complaining. She said she was working on the March newsletter to educate the parents to be better neighbors; she said they will continue to get the message out. She said that she has been there for 7 years and they had to get an emergency vehicle down there twice and they were able to do so; people work together during an emergency. Councilor Walker said he knows that the solution he proposed won't be a popular one, but might be the only one that works to get the emergency vehicles down the road. Councilor Lachapelle wanted to thank Ms. Allen for coming and trying to educate parents on the issue. He said he is not so keen on the "no parking" sign idea on Granite Street, but the parents need to be educated about the safety of the kids and access for emergency vehicles; if the parents don't cooperate, there will be no parking on Granite Street. Councilor Walker said that educating people works for short periods of time, then a new year starts and it goes back to how it was. Councilor Hamann asked if the newsletter mentioned anything about not showing up for pick-up until the 3:00 PM dismissal time. Ms. Allen said not in the March letter; she said there was a little different tone to this letter, but she has stated that in the past. Councilor Hamann said that they had the same problem at Maple Street School and that the police came out and moved the vehicles along. Councilor Hamann said why don't we wait to see, try to get the parents educated. This is kept in committee until springtime.

6. E911 Update

Councilor Hamann summarized the issue. Deputy Chief Boudreau said that they did not meet this month. Deputy Fire Chief Wilder has been working with Waste Management to renumber the Rochester Neck Road. The consent letters went out and waiting for them to return.

7. Emergency Management

Councilor Hamann summarized the issue. Fire Chief Klose said that it has been pretty quiet on the emergency management side, he expects to see a notification to come out before noon tomorrow regarding the cold weather. He said the tri annual seacoast response drill is happening soon, Rochester is the host for Portsmouth.

The training started tonight and is region wide training. This allows them to reach out to community like Farmington, Barrington, and Milton. There will be a drill in September where the city will be raided, it is a practical exercise.

8. Seasonal Cold Weather Warning Center

Councilor Hamann summarized the issue. Fire Chief Klose said that the City Manager has made the decision to open the Cold Weather Shelter, it will be opening tomorrow night at 38 Hanson Street at 9 PM. They are working with Strafford County for volunteers, they are having a hard time getting volunteers from 2am to 6am. He said it opened on February 7th and 8th and the 1st night they had 9 individuals stay the night and 7 or 8 who came to warm up and get some food. The second night they had 12 individuals and 7 or 8 come in to warm up and eat. Fire Chief Klose said Clementos has donated the pizza and some citizens donated food; they had so much that some had to be thrown away the next day. Councilor Walker wanted to know what would happen if the weather was 0-degrees during the day. Fire Chief Klose said he would make that recommendation to the City Manager to open the shelter. Councilor Rice asked about donations. Fire Chief Klose said they need sleeping bags, blankets and socks, he said when they're outside their socks get wet. Councilor Hutchinson talked about trigger temperature when to activate the Cold Weather Shelter and asked if they should have some soft guidelines for it. He has a Task Force meeting tomorrow night and he will bring it up.

9. Other

North Main Street Crosswalk Yield Sign

Councilor Rice asked for an update on the signs/lights for the North Main Street crosswalk. Mr. Bezanson showed the Committee a graphic of the new crosswalk location on North Main Street near the municipal parking lot and next door to the Lilac City Grill; the previous crosswalk location went driveway to driveway. Existing streetlight locations were also shown on the graphic; Mr. Bezanson said the existing lights are not in the best locations for the new crosswalk. He showed another graphic that depicted the current guideline for placing streetlights ahead of mid-block crosswalk locations; the distance from the crosswalk depends on a few factors including the height and intensity of the light. Mr. Bezanson also showed a couple of photos of rectangular rapid flashing beacons (RRFB) that could be installed with crosswalk signs and an actuator button. Councilor Lachapelle asked if you hit the button, does it automatically start blinking? Mr. Bezanson said yes. Councilor Rice wanted to know if there is a solar option. Mr. Bezanson said yes, and they may be

cheaper, but not sure if they are as reliable; he recommended that the RRFBs and street lights be hardwired. He said the light poles are about \$9,000 each; total cost including the RRFB installation, installing conduit in the sidewalk/road, repairing the concrete/pavement, etc. will be around \$50,000. Councilor Walker said this should be a budget item in the capital budget. Mr. Bezanson said DPW already met with the City Manager on their proposed budget, but that he could request that the City Manager add it in. **Councilor Lachapelle made a motion to bring to full City Council the budget of \$50,000 to install overhead streetlights and crosswalk signs with RRFBs at the North Main Street crosswalk. The motion was seconded by Councilor Rice. Unanimous voice vote carried the motion.** Mr. Bezanson said there were a couple of options for the streetlight poles/globes and he wanted to present the idea to the Historic District Commission. He also mentioned that the Planning Department is developing a Downtown Master Plan and he should meet with them to discuss the streetlights as well.

South Main Street/Columbus by China Palace

Councilor Lachapelle said last month the request for the “no parking” sign was misunderstood. On South Main Street in front of the China Palace in the last spot they are requesting a “no parking” sign. **Councilor Lachapelle made a motion to place a “no parking here to corner” sign at the corner of South Main Street in front of the China Palace at the discretion of DPW. The motion was seconded by Councilor Rice. Unanimous voice vote carried the motion.**

Columbus Avenue- “No Right Turn On Red” sign on South Main Street

Councilor Lachapelle said that the “no right turn on red” sign that is on the mast arm on South Main Street is very small and vehicles are not obeying the sign. Councilor Hamann said maybe the stop line could be painted further back and a duplicate sign could be installed on the side of the road. Mr. Bezanson said that they could leave the current sign on the mast arm, but move it a little bit to avoid early morning shadows. No action had to be taken by the Committee for this item.

Councilor Lachapelle made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:21 PM. Councilor Rice seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Laura Miller, Secretary II.

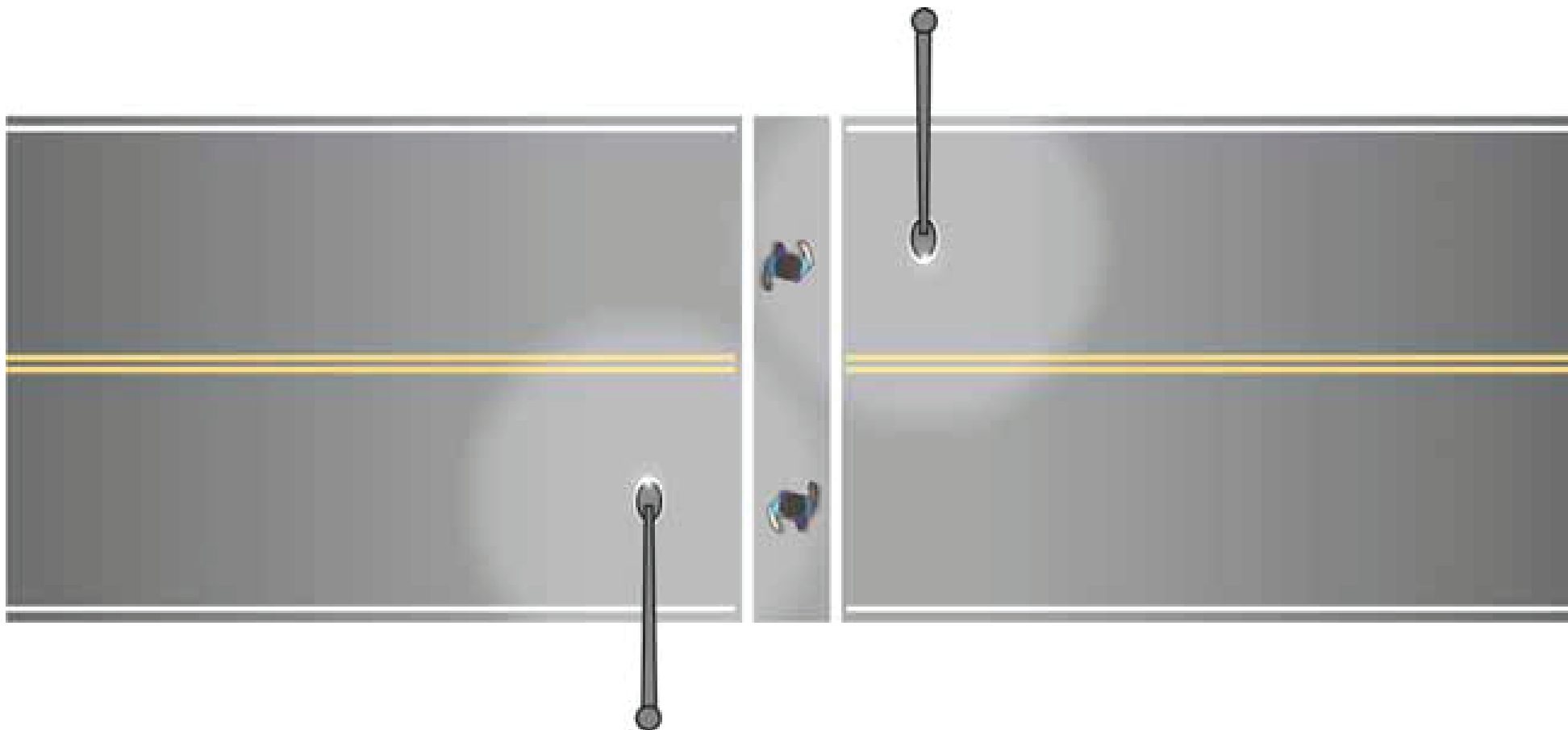


Figure 12. Drawing. New design for midblock crosswalk lighting layout.

