

TRAFFIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes of May 19, 2017

PRESENT: Commander LaChance, Jeffrey Wennberg, James Rotondo and Gary Donahue

ABSENT: Commander Prouty and Bradley Lafaso of Lafaso Electric

GUESTS: Connie Sue Erickson, Chad Erickson, Christine Zullo, Jean Yeager and Marietta Yeager

Per the request of Commander Prouty, the meeting was called to order and chaired by Commander LaChance at 9:00 A.M. Minutes from the April 28, 2017 meeting were accepted as written. Today's meeting Agenda was approved. No further discussion.

New Business:

1. Request to remove sidewalk in front of Rutland Discount Food – Tracy Taylor

Jeff Wennberg spoke to Mr. Taylor. Jeff looked at the City's policy regarding this. They evaluate them on a case by case basis. Jeff said it's perfectly fine for Mr. Taylor to remove the sidewalk, given the conditions of the sidewalk. It's more of a continuous curb cut, access to parking. Gary Donahue asked if it will block the sidewalk. Jeff replied with no more than now. Rutland City doesn't currently have plans to improve the sidewalk to the south, near this location.

2. Request to close Forest Street at West Street end – Ernest Smalley

Ernest Smalley has inquired if it would be possible to dead end Forest Street so it doesn't connect with West Street. This would be in connection with a redevelopment plan that Ernest has for his business properties in the surrounding area. Jeff Wennberg mentioned that the site line is terrible at the hill, as you're coming to the end of Forest Street at West Street. If we were to close Forest Street at the West Street end, this would also be a benefit to the City of Rutland. The City has had a lot of complaints about the substantial amount of truck traffic. Local truck traffic is allowed here, but cut through truck traffic isn't allowed. If we were to do a traffic study, the Police department would have a lot to say about the traffic counts.

Jeff asked if the Traffic Safety Committee and the Police department feel this topic would be worth exploring. Commander LaChance indicated that the Police department would be in favor of exploring this option. Jeff asked where the traffic will go. Commander LaChance mentioned that it couldn't go on Pine Street, as there is no left turn there. Trucks would go to Evelyn or continue on West Street. Gary Donahue mentioned that the best way to go would be the bypass.

Jeff asked the Traffic Safety Committee what information we would need. He also mentioned we may be taking one problem and swapping it for another. We need to investigate this. Gary stated that he isn't too keen on turning the road over to him, if we decide to do that. He asked what would be done if there are issues. Would we buy the road back? Jeff mentioned that we would normally put up barricades. We would leave it this way for an extended period of time as a test. We would see where the traffic goes and if we get complaints. We did the same thing at North Street. We left the barricade there for like 2 years, then made it permanent.

Jeff will talk to Ernest Smalley regarding this. Jeff asked Jim Rotondo if the State would have any authority. Jim will check with the State and will also talk with Rutland Regional Planning Commission. Maybe we could get the number of turning movements from past traffic studies that they have done. Jeff asked Gary Donahue if it was 2 years ago when the study on truck traffic was done in this area. Gary said it was.

3. Handicap sign on Church Street near Rutland Intermediate School – Commander Prouty

Commander Prouty mentioned that we need DPW to review signs around the Rutland Middle School and trim some limbs. Jeff Wennberg will have the City Forester make sure limbs are cut back. The manual requires stop signs to be 6 feet. At the location of Kendall Avenue and Church Street, the stop sign is behind a crab apple tree. The only way to make the stop sign visible is to kill one of the most beautiful trees in the City. Do we kill the tree to satisfy federal standard or do we violate standard to leave the tree? Commander LaChance suggested maybe putting a bigger stop bar on the ground. Maybe also put up a sign to stop ahead, alerting motorists that there will be a stop sign ahead.

Marietta Yager mentioned that driving through River Street is the same situation. Maybe you could add another stop sign below the existing one and also add the stop ahead sign, it may help. She doesn't see people running the stop sign. She thinks speed is the issue. Maybe cut one branch from the crab apple tree.

Jim Rotondo will have the tree trimmed, will have a bigger stop bar put in and also a stop ahead sign at the location of Kendall Avenue and Church Street.

4. Speed cart to monitor speeding on Church Street and Kendall Avenue – Barrett Fredette

Jean Yager stated that there is a speed issue on Kendall Avenue. There is a day care center across the street where about 15-20 cars park on Kendall Avenue to get their kids from daycare. How about signage like "Caution, school zone?" He is concerned for the children. Marietta Yager asked when the speed cart will be installed. Commander LaChance mentioned that it is already installed on Church Street. She also asked if it will be moved. Commander LaChance indicated that it would. He also said that we will see what the data shows the rate of speeds are. Marietta said that in the beginning stages when she spoke to Chief Kilcullen, he indicated she might be surprised with how low the speed actually is in the area of Lincoln Avenue and Church Street. She also asked if 2 blocks within the school, if the speed limit could be lowered. She asked how she would petition for lower speed. Maybe a temporary speed bump, regular speed bump 3 foot wide, 6 inch height in the center would deter speeding.

Jeff Wennberg mentioned that there have been regular requests to lower speed in the City. If we were to lower the speed, everywhere it's 30 mph, would go to 25. It's a bit complex to legally modify the speed. Jeff also indicated that the first thing to do would be to look at traffic speeds. Maybe we have to convince people to travel speed limit and we may not have to lower the speed. Maybe we could increase enforcement of the speed limit.

Jeff also said if issue is excessive trucks, we can get information on that, the traffic counters that go on the road, the tubes. The Regional planning commission could put these out to get history on truck traffic, which direction they are traveling and how fast.

Jean Yager asked about signage at the interest of the City, if it could be changed to 30 mph, unless otherwise posted. Jeff indicated that Routes 4 & 7 in the City are 35 mph. Jean also asked if the City has tried reposting 30 mph in the City and when coming up to school area, maybe remind people of the speed limit. Marietta Yager said she would rather see a sign that says "Slow, school ahead" Jeff Wennberg indicated that he has seen speeding when people are coming down the first block of Kendall Avenue. We could put out 30 mph signs, reposting the speed. If this seems to work, we could put more out.

Old Business:

1. Utility trailers parked on Forest Street near Mount Saint Joseph Academy

Christine Zullo indicated that a couple months ago, Louise Harrison expressed frustration with the fact that the Zullo's have had 3 utility trailers on the street. Christine indicated that they have 3 trailers, have atv's and motorcycles. They share a driveway with the Navins. Her husband has owned this house for 39 years and they haven't had issues for these years. Louise told Christine that she needs to move these trailers,

because they are on her property. There are 2 spaces in front of 2 properties. Louise made videos, she plowed snow up to the trailers so Christine couldn't get in the utility trailers. Christine mentioned that the trailers have been broken into and damaged and she doesn't know what to do. She feels Louise is harassing them, in general.

Jeff Wennberg told Christine that the trailers appear to be permanently parked there. They are in the city right of way. Is it appropriate to park trailers, permanently? Christine indicated that this is where she lives Jeff also mentioned that the trailers don't move often. This Agenda item was moved to the Public Safety Committee. Christine said she had a member tell her in a rough manner, a couple of weeks ago at her husbands place of business, that she was part of the discussion at the April meeting and if she didn't move the trailers, it will make it so no one can park in off street parking in the City of Rutland. Jeff also mentioned that there are physical things that can be done, if paved area is restored here. You would be subject to the winter parking ban. Christine asked, "You would do this to just me?" She said one trailer is by crosswalk in front of her home, another one is partially in front of Louise Harrison's property and the Zullo's home. Christine indicated that the Harrison's park in the crosswalk regularly and had parked a large uhaul truck here for 2 weeks. Christine moved one of the trailers and parked it in the middle, which cuts off parking space. She can't tell her tenants not to park in front of Harrison's property. Christine was given William Notte's name as the chair of the Public Safety Committee. Gary said he was surprised it wasn't sent to Ordinance Committee.

2. Request for audible crossing at the intersection of Wales Street and Center Street – Chad Erickson

Chad Erickson stated that there is a hill on Center Street leading to Wales Street where the car Engines are idling. Cars are getting quieter. He can't hear the engines when they're coming down the hill. Jeff Wennberg stated that he received a quote for this and it would cost about \$20,000.00. Jeff is currently \$50,000.00 over budget right now. It might be a year or 2 or 3 down the road, before we could do this. In the meantime, what if we have all directions stop, asked Jeff Wennberg. Jeff said it may result in backups of traffic, but we could see how it works for a few weeks and if it provides some relief, make it permanent. Commander LaChance stated that everyone would have to stop. There would be no green light. Pedestrians do have the right of way. Jeff also stated that he understands it's a half measure.

Connie stated that her and her son, Chad moved to Center Street for ease of The Bus being able to pick up Chad, he can walk to CCV for classes and he has access to everything downtown. Connie plans to move to Florida, eventually but Chad will remain here in Rutland. Jeff said that he thinks a stop sign will work. Jeff has spoken with Commander Prouty and he said it's worth a try. Commander LaChance suggested that maybe a reminder sign to Yield to Pedestrians would help. Jeff mentioned that the one's that work best are at mid block.

Connie also mentioned that the audible signal that is at Wales, West St/Church on a rainy day, you can't hear the signal. It's too far away and the rain from the tires and the sounds of the trucks are too loud that you can't hear it. The other audible signal on Merchants Row/Center Street is loud. There's no problem hearing that one. Jeff mentioned that maybe they could put another enunciator there. Gary Donahue said that when the buzzer makes noise, it says you can walk. Commander LaChance stated that they need to yield. Gary said that this issue can also be brought up in the CAIR committee, too.

Jeff mentioned that technically Chief of Police has control to modify signals, to change to 4 way stop as a test. Jeff will come up with a plan and will put up signs to warn people. He also mentioned that this is probably the 2nd to the oldest of signals in the City. There's no sequence for pedestrians there. Connie asked what about between the lights changing on Wales and Center. Jeff said they would leave both sides red for awhile, to allow Chad to cross, without the audible. Jim Rotondo asked if without the audible, this would be acceptable. Connie said yes, instead of changing to 4 way stop. Commander LaChance said maybe it's better to do a 4 way stop. It may be safer. Jeff will let the Traffic Safety Committee know when they will be making changes to the signal at this location and Nora will contact Connie Sue to let her know.

3. Requesting signage for truck traffic into the Howe Center

Jim Rotondo ordered signs earlier this week. They will be put up on Main Street to alleviate problem with big trucks having to back into traffic. There will be 2 signs going North and 2 signs going South bound to direct truck traffic to Howe scale. They have spoken with Joseph Giancola the sign placement is acceptable to him.

Other Old Business:

Putting Traffic Safety Committee Meeting Dates on City Calendar - Gary Donahue suggested that we put the dates of our meetings on the City calendar. He said Nora could check with Henry to find out how to do this.

Utility Trailers parked on Forest Street near Mount Saint Joseph Academy – Gary Donahue said that he thought they sent this item to the Charter Committee. He has been looking through the parking specific ordinances and believes there are about 15. He said the Chief of Police has huge latitude in regards to parking.

Meeting adjourned at 10:04 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Nora J. Moore
Records Clerk

Cc. Mayor
Police Commission
Board of Alderman
City Clerk
Post