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Amesbury

Traffic and Transportation Committee

Meeting Minutes

Date: March 21, 2022
Start: 7:00 PM Virtual Meeting
Attendees: Lauren Tirone, Christopher Falcos, Owen Corcoran, Christine Miller, James Nolan, Jonathan Hickok, (Rob Desmarais absent).

- Before approval of the previous meeting's minutes, Owen made a statement regarding conflict of interest and the open meetings law and reiterated best practices for abstaining from a vote during a virtual meeting.
- Approval of minutes from the previous meeting. Councilor Hickok stated that he had not seen the minutes from the last meeting, and Lauren stated that she had sent them out via email. Jim motioned to approve, Chris 2nd, Roll call to approve: Lauren-yes, Chris-yes, John-yes, Christine-yes, Owen-yes. Approved.

Old Business

- Request for a 4-Way Stop at the intersection of Pond Street and High Street by Gage Foley.
 - Rob had updated information but was not at the meeting. Councilor Wheeler stated that he supports the request, and that a number of his constituents have told him that they also supported the stop signs. Councilor Wheeler also stated that he understands that the city is waiting on a traffic study to be completed. No further public comments. Councilor Hickok said that this item had been on the agenda for quite a while, and asked Chris for amplifying information from a DoT perspective. Chris stated that we are waiting on traffic counts, as well as the requirement for the new stop signs to be within state policy. No further discussion from TTC members. Owen motioned to continue the item until the next meeting when Rob could attend. Lauren 2nd. No discussion on the motion. Roll call to approve: Lauren-yes, Chris-yes, Jim-yes, John-yes, Christine-yes, Owen-yes. Approved.
- Abutter notices by Rob Desmarais.
 - Continued until next meeting when Rob can attend.
- Speeding issues and bus stop safety at 19 Woodman Road by D'Ann McBryan.
 - Ms. McBryan was unable to make the meeting. Rob also had updated information to share. Owen motioned to continue the item until the next meeting. No discussion from TTC members on the motion. Councilor Hickok 2nd. Roll call to approve: Lauren-yes, Chris-yes, Jim-yes, Councilor Hickok-yes, Christine-yes, Owen-yes. Approved.

- Request for speed bumps on Lakeshore Drive by Stephen Mason.
 - Lauren had emailed Mr. Mason and never heard back. Mr. Mason was not in attendance. No public comments. Councilor Hickok asked how long this item has been on the agenda. Owen stated it was the second month it was on the agenda. Owen stated that the TTC typically drops agenda items after three months when a resident doesn't show up to a meeting. Owen motioned to continue the item. Councilor Hickok 2nd. Roll call to approve: Lauren-yes, Chris-yes, Jim-yes, Councilor Hickok-yes, Christine-yes, Owen-yes. Approved.

- Speeding and safety issues on Beacon, Merrimac Street by Linda Hansen-Rodier.
 - Ms. Hansen-Rodier was in attendance. She stated that she wanted to reiterate some concerns from residents in the area. She stated that the area of concern was from Main St. and Merrimac St., then from Merrimac St. to Beacon St. Ms. Hansen-Rodier stated that the neighborhood used to be quiet, but that there has been a significant uptick in traffic and expressed concern with dangerous driving conditions with houses in the area being very close to the street. She said that speeding and trucking has raised concerns in the area, and that it doesn't seem like most drivers are following the new 25 MPH speed limit. Lack of signage for Cutter's Lane was also mentioned as a concern. Also of concern is the lack of sidewalks and disabled persons' access. Ms. Hansen-Rodier proposed measures to redirect traffic to Rt. 110 or I-495, and stated that with GPS apps, drivers are being redirected into the neighborhood as the fast route. Also proposed were weight limits for trucks, speed bumps, and increased police presence for traffic enforcement. Sally Nutt spoke in support of Ms. Hansen-Rodier, and reiterated her full support for all of the concerns raised.
 - Joe Finn of 12 Main street also spoke in support of all concerns raised and proposed mitigation measures. Jim Stated that there is a sign at Cutter Lane and Beacon St. He discussed the years long traffic concerns in the entire Point Shore and Merrimac St. areas, and talked about the efforts that the TTC have taken over the years. He mentioned that he tried years ago to get the concerns addressed as a "package", and how neighbor disputes over street parking, etc. had made it necessary to address the area as a whole rather than one item at a time.
 - Jim discussed the measures taken on Main St. Clarks Rd., and Rocky Hill Rd., but that those measures didn't seem to be good enough for residents. He also mentioned how traffic will increase with the completion of Maples Crossing.
 - Councilor Hickok thanked Ms. Hansen-Rodier for bringing her concerns to the TTC. Councilor Hickok stated that he is the councilor in that area, and that he's been attending TTC meetings for years. He wanted everyone to know that the TTC is an advisory committee and that the ultimate decision rests with the mayor. He talked about the major developments in the area, such as Maples crossing and 40R. He stressed the importance of being patient, as the mayor has received a \$75,000 grant for a holistic study of the Merrimac River District Area. Councilor Hickok referred residents to the Amesbury Insider and discussed the upcoming public meetings regarding the area in April.
 - Chris stated that due to Merrimac being a rather tight road, it would be extremely difficult to slow vehicles down, and that volume rather than speed was the issue. He stated that the issue is more about efficiently directing traffic around the city. Chris also stated that he'd like to see a speed study done to get a true sense of whether or not there is a speeding issue in the area. He stated that speed humps

aren't really the answer, as they can tend to anger drivers and increase aggressive driving. He supported the holistic approach to addressing the issues in the area. Lauren mentioned there was a full traffic engineering study conducted that should be posted on the TTC webpage.

- Tracy Chalifour expressed concern over the long term deliverables overshadowing shorter term traffic calming measures. Owen stated that the mayor has requested a stay on individual TTC requests in the area bounded by Martin Rd. and the Salisbury line. He requested discussion from the TTC.
- Brett Janosky expressed concerns with Parking on Main St and supported no parking signs in the area.
- Councilor Hickok encouraged everyone with concerns to participate and make their voices heard, and motioned that the TTC continue this agenda item for the next traffic meeting. Jim 2nd. Roll call to approve: Lauren-yes, Chris-yes, Jim-yes, Councilor Hickok-yes, Christine-yes, Owen-yes. Approved.

New Business

- Request for Deer Crossing sign on Whitehall Road near Woodwell Circle by Rebecca Nazzaro.
 - Lauren stated that Ms. Nazzaro was not in attendance, as she had talked with the mayor's office, and since the signs were non-regulatory in nature, DPW would handle the item directly. Councilor Wheeler stated that he supports the request, as deer strikes are relatively frequent in the area. He proposed signage such as "deer crossing next mile" to encompass the entire area rather than just one street. Lauren stated that she would pass the item along to Rob. Owen motioned to remove the item from the agenda. Councilor Hickok 2nd. Roll call to approve: Lauren-yes, Chris-yes, Jim-yes, Councilor Hickok-yes, Christine-yes, Owen-yes. Approved.
- Parking issues on Main Street at Clarks Road and Evans Place by Tracey Chalifour
 - Ms. Chalifour stated that she had a statement to read to the TTC. Christine asked for recusal procedures to be reiterated. Owen stated that best practice is to disable the camera and audio, and rejoin the meeting when the next agenda item comes up. Ms. Chalifour reiterated her concerns with the intersection at Clarks Rd. and Main St., namely that cars parked too close to the corners make it very difficult for both pedestrians and vehicles turning onto, and travelling on, Main St. She reiterated her concerns with the length of time for the larger projects, and how it conflicts with shorter term safety measures.
 - Joe Finn stated that this issue could have been solved if Halid Hadic and Tracey Chalifour hadn't opposed the traffic engineering study completed last year.
 - Owen stated that this item falls in line with the mayor's request for a stay on incremental measures in the Merrimack River area.
 - Jim reiterated his comments regarding the extensive planning and work that had gone into traffic mitigation in previous years.
 - Sue Dowd asked that even if we're holding off until larger projects are done, could smaller measures be taken in the interim that can be reversed if they conflict with more extensive projects.

- Owen stated that this was a big, complex issue, and reiterated that as an advisory board to the mayor, the TTC would follow the request for a stay on incremental measures in the area. Owen motioned to continue this item until after the April public meetings are held in the area. Jim 2nd. Roll call to approve: Lauren-yes, Chris-yes, Jim-yes, Councilor Hickok-yes, Christine-yes, Owen-yes. Approved.
- Main Street Traffic Improvements Update for Point Shore updates and calendar review by John Stevenson
 - Mr. Stevenson stated that he had concerns with the TTC approving something, then putting it on hold, then there must be some way to get that information more efficiently to residents. He expressed support for interim safety measures amid larger projects. Mr. Stevenson expressed frustration with the length of time that measures have taken to be put into place.
 - Owen motioned to continue the item to the next meeting. Councilor Hickok 2nd. Roll call to approve: Lauren-yes, Chris-yes, Jim-yes, Councilor Hickok-yes, Christine-yes, Owen-yes. Approved.
 - Tracey Chalifour asked how long a traffic study would be considered valid. She expressed concern for the timeliness of the data collected.
 - Chris stated that there is no set standard for when a study is considered old. He stated that when construction is done for the state, traffic studies can sometimes be up to five years old before construction starts. He expressed support for a renewed traffic study as traffic builds post COVID.
 - Councilor Hickok stated that the Merrimack River District Task force had a very short window for delivery of product, and stated that hopefully by this summer there would be more information available for planning purposes.
 - Appeal of TTC decision regarding speed bumps on Spindletree Lane by Lynn Hutchinson-remanded down from City Council on March 8, 2022.
 - Ms. Hutchinson reiterated the background on the item that addressed a request for speed bumps on Lake Attitash Way and was concerned that the item impacted Spindletree Lane. She presented a petition from residents on Spindletree Lane with ever signature saying “no” to speed bumps on the street. She also stated that speed limit signs still read 30MPH rather than 25MPH. Ms. Hutchinson expressed concern that no other measures had been considered for Spindletree Lane, and that in her experience, many drivers do not slow down.
 - Owen asked that residents speak on the issue only if they have something to add.
 - Jill Hooper lives in the area of Spindletree Lane and spoke in support of Lynn Hutchinson.
 - Chief Bailey supported the residents of the neighborhood and opposed speed bumps. He asked that residents let the police get out there to conduct other mitigation measures such as a speed trailer and officer presence.
 - Ms. Hutchinson asked if the TTC wanted a copy of the petition. Owen directed her to the TTC email.
 - Tracey Chalifour addressed concerns with Swift911 calls not reaching residents.
 - Chris motioned that Rob put 25MPH signs on Spindletree Lane. He proposed that after a month or so, speed trailers could be put in place to gather speed data on vehicles in the area. Lauren 2nd. Roll call to approve: Lauren-yes, Chris-yes, Jim-yes, Councilor Hickok-yes, Christine-yes, Owen-yes. Approved.

Councilor Hickok asked if the TTC needs to meet every month. Owen stated that there is no requirement to meet monthly. Next meeting scheduled for May 16, 2022 at 7:00 pm.

Owen made a motion to adjourn meeting with Lauren 2nd. Roll call vote: Lauren-yes, Chris-yes, Councilor Hickok-yes, Jim-yes, Christine-yes, Owen-yes. Approved.

Meeting adjourned at 8:16p.m.