

**Town of Chester
Highway Safety Committee Meeting
Thursday, August 18th, 2016
Meeting Room
Approved Minutes**

I. Preliminaries

Members Present:

Tony Amato, Maintenance Supervisor
Aaron Berube, Police Chief
Greg Bolduc, Fire Chief (departed at 11:37pm)
Myrick Bunker, Building Inspector
Andrew Hadik, Planning Coordinator
Michael Oleson, Road Agent
Jean Methot, President - Chester Historical Society

Members Absent:

Richard S. Trask, Selectman

Agenda:

Call to Order

Review and approve meeting minutes for May 26th, 2016

Old Business:

Center striping of key Town roads?

Review draft of letter requesting BOS to approve & agree to budget for "Stop Ahead" pavement markings on Route 121 at Town Center

New Business

Snowmobile "Water Cross" Event

Town Fair 2016

Halloween 2016

Fire Department call-response egress issue out Murphy Drive onto Route 102?

Set next meeting date

Department Reports:

Police Department - Accident Reports – May, June, & July

Fire Department

Highway Department

Planning Board

Maintenance Department

Legislature

Adjournment

I.1 Call to Order

The meeting of the Town of Chester Highway Safety Committee was called to order at 10:05am by Chairman Berube.

II. Approval of Minutes

May 26th, 2016: Mr. Methot moved to approve these minutes as drafted; Mr. Hadik seconded the motion. The vote was six in favor with Building Inspector Bunker abstaining due to absence from the meeting in question; so moved.

III. **Old Business**

Center striping of key Town roads

Road Agent Oleson reiterated that the roads in Chester are generally too uneven to stripe a straight line, and/or too narrow to stripe for an appropriate lane width. The ideal road width is 24'; although he attempts to widen newly paved roads to 22', many roads in Chester are still only 16'.

Chairman Berube stated that "cut-through" roads, such as Fremont Road, Shepard Home Road, Hale True Road, Candia Road, and Lane Road, tend to have the most incidents and striping might help. Striping the road is also important as a law enforcement tool.

Mr. Hadik stated that the issue of road striping is contentious and carries a cost. It had been raised at a Town Meeting decades ago – perhaps in the mid-90s - with the Legislative Body firmly opposed. It was also noted that it tends to be younger and newer residents that advocate for striping.

Mr. Hadik will research the Town Minutes as mentioned in the prior paragraph; the Police, Fire, and Highway Departments will collaborate to create a list of which roads they believe should be striped; Road Agent Oleson will also revisit the subject.

Review draft of letter requesting BOS to approve & agree to budget for "Stop Ahead" pavement markings on Route 121 at Town Center

Mr. Hadik did not have the time to draft this letter due to the presence of the Auditors. Once he drafts it, he will run it past Road Agent Oleson for his approval and then pass it along to the Board of Selectmen. This work is expected to cost ~\$1,250.

Chairman Berube noted that many towns are now marking their pavements with "Stop Boxes" (also known as "Stop Bars") at stop signs. According to Road Agent Oleson, although this is not yet required by the State, it is likely to be so in the future. This unfunded mandate will entail moving every stop sign in Town – of which there are ~150 – in order to have the Stop Box painted at the correct distance from the intersection. The paint, which costs ~\$22.50 for each marking, will then need to be maintained every couple of years. This will be a large expense for the Town, and towns that do not comply will be taken off of the State Funding list.

Chairman Berube suggested that Mr. Hadik's letter be worded more vaguely, perhaps using the terms "roadway markings" rather than "Stop Ahead" so that it can also apply to Stop Boxes.

Mr. Hadik also reiterated the issue of cars 'doubling up' at the Routes 102/121 intersection, most specifically those heading from Auburn and making a right turn towards Derry. These cars block the view of the cars turning left or going straight. It was suggested that drivers 'hug the right' as much as possible in order to prevent cars from pulling up alongside them; it was also suggested that the area be painted in order to discourage drivers from making their own lane. As Route 121 is a State Road, DOT must give permission; Road Agent Oleson will contact Bob Neveu.

IV. **New Business**

Snowmobile "Water Cross" Event

An organization is attempting to hold a Snowmobile "Water Cross" Event on the weekend of August 27th and 28th, 2016, at a facility called The Sandlot. This property is located in Chester, but access is from Sandown. New Hampshire Fish & Game has approved their request to allow unregistered OHRVs on private property; that is the only approval that they have received.

Chairman Berube noted that they had requested that the Police Department support this same event last year and that he had declined, due to the fact that the event was taking place quite soon, the essential departments of the Town had not been notified, and the organizers had balked at his safety requirements. He is declining to support the event this year as well, as is the Sandown Police Chief. Building Inspector Bunker added that these events draw thousands of people, and that planning began much too late; a year would have been optimal.

According to Mr. Hadik, the organizer stated that there would be no Police presence, but that the Fire Department and their Rescue Truck should be available, as in prior years there have been multiple injuries. Fire Chief Bolduc added that as it is a water event, the Fire Department's Boat would also be necessary and that staffing that is an issue.

Chairman Berube opined that on a nice Saturday, there are likely to be thousands of people. His biggest concern is the presence of tents and beer. Fire Chief Berube noted that the State Fire Marshall has become very strict on tent regulations, after last year's tent collapse in Lancaster; the permit fees are high, as the tent erection must be monitored from start to finish by a member of the Fire Department in order to ensure that stakes are the correct size and sunk to the proper depth. Building Inspector Bunker added that if sides are attached, the tent then becomes a building, and is subject to many more regulations, such as lighted exit signage, multiple points of egress, etc.

Maintenance Supervisor Amato moved that the Highway Safety Committee decline to support the Snowmobile "Water Cross" Event, due to the short timetable; Building Inspector Bunker seconded the motion.

Mr. Hadik offered a friendly amendment; that the Town would have needed a sufficient amount of notice and that said notice should have been made to the proper Departments. Maintenance Supervisor Amato accepted this amendment, and Building Inspector Bunker seconded the amended motion.

The vote was unanimous in the affirmative; so moved.

The Board of Selectmen should be notified of this situation.

Town Fair 2016

The Fire Department is prepared for Town Fair; they will set up the cones on Friday night, and EMS will be available. They have ordered the fireworks, and the permitting is in process.

Maintenance Supervisor Amato reported that the tree-line had been trimmed two years ago, and that there was sufficient clearance for the fireworks. The fields have been cleaned up – seeded, divots filled, irrigated, etc. – and are ready for use. Incidentally, the well tested for sodium at only 240ppm, which has continued to drop from a high of ~900 twelve years ago, and which is perfectly acceptable for irrigation.

Building Inspector Bunker noted that tents under 12' x 12' were exempt from permitting. The Fire Department is not ready to enforce larger tent permits this year, due to the short timeframe from when the new regulations were enacted up until Town Fair. Mr. Hadik will alert the Boy Scouts about the new Tent regulations, however.

There will be more police presence this year in order to direct traffic and hopefully prevent the most common problems, DWIs and accidents.

The dirt parking lot will be available for vendors to unload and load their wares; handicap parking will be elsewhere.

Halloween 2016

It was reiterated that Halloween (Monday, October 31st, 2016) is not a Town-sanctioned event.

The Fire Department is prepared to staff and perform their normal activities - cones, trucks, etc. Road Agent Oleson suggested perhaps running caution tape between the cones to deter parking.

Chairman Berube noted that last year the Police Department had arrested an individual who was driving under the influence, without lights, and had recently started an arson fire.

The State will not allow the roads to be closed or narrowed. Mr. Methot suggested temporary crossing signs, if available. Traffic and public safety are key. Road Agent Oleson estimated that there were over 1,000 people on Chester Street on this night last year.

It is unknown if the American Legion plans a haunted house again this year. Building Inspector Bunker is not in favor of these; they must be permitted, they often contain combustible materials, and most buildings are not properly constructed to house them. Additionally, there would be road crossing at that point, which is a highway safety issue. Fire Chief Bolduc believes that the pedestal light that was outside of the Legion last year is rented by Rec for soccer, and could be available again this year; he will manage it, if so.

Last year the former Chester College parking lot was made available for parking purposes, but this year the Busche Academy owns the property. It is unknown if they would be willing to allow parking.

Mr. Methot noted that the Scarecrow maps will have Public Safety wording on them, and copies will be given to the Police Department. There are ~700 scarecrows in Town now; this is definitely a Highway Safety issue.

Fire Department call-response egress issue out Murphy Drive onto Route 102?

During times of high traffic, such as school day start/end, Town Fair, Boy Scout yard sale, etc., the Fire Department has difficulties exiting via Murphy Drive. There is a second exit point, but it has not been maintained. Optimally, the road would need to be widened and graded, and "Do Not Enter" signage and gates installed in order to deter cars from using it to avoid the traffic on Murphy Drive. Road Agent Oleson will draw up a cost estimate; Mr. Hadik opined that this could be a CIP item.

Set next meeting date

The next meeting of the Highway Safety Committee has been scheduled for Thursday, November 17th, 2016 at 10:00am in the Police Department Meeting Room.

V. Department Reports

Police Department - Accident Reports - May, June, & July

Month	#	Reason
May 2016	2	Driver Error
	1	Driving while Intoxicated

Roads	Injury
Raymond @ Haverhill	No
Raymond @ Shaker Heights	No
Raymond @ North Pond	No

Month	#	Reason
June 2016	4	Driver Error

1	Driving While Distracted (texting, etc.)
1	Other Violations

Roads	Injury
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Derry @ Haverhill	No
Raymond @ Hanson	No
Derry @ Webster	No
Derry	No
Chester	Yes
Red Squirrel	Yes

Month	#	Reason
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July 2016	1	Weather related
	2	Driver Error
	1	Driving While Intoxicated
***	1	Driving while Distracted (texting, etc.)
	1	Traffic Control
	2	Deer/Animal

Roads	Injury
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Red Squirrel	Yes
Fremont @ Jennifer	No
Shepard Home @ Fremont	No
***Derry	Yes
Derry @ Webster	Yes
North Pond	Yes
Raymond	Yes
Derry	Yes

The "Driving While Distracted" accident in July on Derry Road had serious injuries and was handled by the State Police. There were 30 DWIs during the months of May, June, and July; many were aggravated and many had children in the car. Chester had as many DWIs in that time period as Derry, which has a population of 30k. It was noted that 90% of the DWIs were not Chester residents.

Chairman Berube is of the opinion that the enhanced LED lighting and signage, along with proactive enforcement of the 102/121 intersection, might be improving safety there. Grants for speed and DWI enforcement are in process.

Fire Department

The Fire Department responded to the Derry Road accident in July. They are sending two members to a defensive driving/operator course in Derry. Captain Clark is working on procuring highway safety vests from Primex.

Highway Department

The Highway Department is patching, cutting brush, and mowing. There are ongoing issues with the repair on Cole Road; unhappy drivers are harassing Road Agent Oleson, but his only other option is to close the road. Pulpit Rock Road should be completed in mid-September. A culver is being replaced on Harantis Lake. Hart Roberts Road needs upgrading, now that a second and perhaps third house is going up there; Road Agent Oleson is working on it with Fire Chief Bolduc and Building Inspector Bunker.

Planning Board

Mr. Hadik reported that the Town is about to see accelerated growth. New subdivisions are coming (two 7-unit open space subdivisions off of Lane Road, and a number of 4-lot subdivisions have been

approved). More are in the pipeline; one should expect an 8 - 10% increase in the number of homes in Chester.

The Route 93 Exit 4A project is ongoing; the new exit will dump out on the Route 102/Tsienneto Road area. It has been described as a "Merrimack Outlets situation" and as the towns surrounding the Merrimack outlets have been affected by that project, so will Chester. A bypass may need to be considered. Abutting towns are working with the SNHPC and T2 @ UNH on the 'trip model', which is outdated.

There are issues with the Route 93 road widening; the amount of salt used in the winter may not increase, but there will be twice as much road. Mr. Hadik noted that brine is beginning to be used, which uses less salt, but requires more advance planning.

Mr. Hadik is working with the Fire Department on the new Ordinance Book; a Public Hearing might be needed. Anyone with suggestions should contact the Planning Board. The Fire Department has requested that new driveways be paved 18' wide, not 12', in order that Fire Trucks can operate in them safely. This is especially important for long driveways, but is a great expense.

Maintenance Department

They are working on a number of things at Wason Pond that are not specifically Highway Safety oriented, but it was noted that barriers with rope are necessary to block automobile access to the water via Ash Street.

Legislature

There was no report as there was no Selectman in attendance.

VI. Adjournment

Maintenance Supervisor Amato moved to adjourn the meeting; Building Inspector Bunker seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative; so moved.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:59 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Debra H. Doda
Recording Secretary