

TOWN OF STOW
TRAFFIC SAFETY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the September 28, 2021 Traffic Safety Advisory Committee Meeting

Committee Members Present: Chief Michael Sallèse; Acting Fire Chief John Paul Benoit; Steven Nadeau; Jesse Steadman

Chief Sallèse called the meeting to order at 1 pm.

Review of Meeting Minutes

Members reviewed the minutes of September 13th, 2021.

Jesse Steadman moved to approve the minutes of September 13th, 2021.

Chief Benoit seconded.

VOTED: 4-0 Unanimously in favor (Chief Sallèse – Yea; Chief Benoit – Yea; Steve Nadeau – Yea; Jesse Steadman – Yea)

Member Updates

Chief Benoit shared an update to the dashboard template he has created and the members discussed options for uploading it to the webpage.

Discussion of Sudbury Road Safety Zone

The Committee discussed that rather than initiate a Safety Zone on Sudbury Road in the vicinity of Pine Bluff Recreation Area, extending the existing 25MPH zone could have a similar impact on the rate of speed along Sudbury Road. The Committee agreed that Jesse Steadman will draft a letter for review by the Committee recommending that the Select Board amend the Traffic Rules and Orders to extend the 25MPH speed zone on Sudbury Road.

Red Acre Road

The Committee discussed issues raised by residents along Red Acre Road regarding speeding of vehicles, at times in excess of 70 MPH. Chief Sallèse indicated that further data would be needed prior to recommending any specific approach to mitigating speeds, with the possibility of a petition being needed as well. Jesse Steadman said that the Complete Streets Prioritization Planning process also surfaced concerns about Red Acre Road. However, he stated that the narrow width, large street trees and grade changes, made specific mitigation strategies difficult to identify. The Committee agreed that Red Acre Road will be an issue that they will need to continue to monitor.

Crescent Street

Committee members discussed comments regarding speeding along Crescent Street. Chief Sallèse stated that Crescent is a known cut-through, and despite the prohibition on left hand turns during peak periods, drivers are still travelling east on Crescent. The Committee brainstormed ideas, including limiting traffic to local only, as well as limiting travel to westbound only and eliminating the ability for

eastbound vehicles to access Route 117. Steve Nadeau stated that the upcoming Town Center planning effort could include a review of Crescent Street and offer the Town a chance to see what traffic engineering professionals would recommend. Members agreed.

South Acton Road

Nicole Stange-Thormann of South Acton Road indicated that speeds have been steadily increasing along South Acton Road, a road that sees many deer crossings, as well as pedestrians and cyclists. Jesse Steadman stated that the Complete Streets Prioritization Plan focused on South Acton Road, and included strategies to try to improve pedestrian safety, given the relatively high speed limit as compared to other regional connectors in Town. One option was for a separated bike and pedestrian path along one side of the road.

Chief Sallese stated that as an immediate response, he can direct some additional patrols on South Acton Road. Chief Benoit asked if it was possible to create dedicated bike lanes. Jesse Steadman said that his office had examined lane widths in the past and found that it may be difficult to locate the typical 5' foot bike lanes without adding pavement. Jesse Steadman said he could review and report back to the Committee.

Taylor Road

The Committee discussed issues from a resident on Taylor Road indicating that bikes often take up large portions of the Road. Steve Nadeau said that it is state law that bikes may occupy the full lane. Jesse Steadman said that they have recently begun the purchase process for signage indicating that bikes can use full lane for Taylor Road, as recommended by traffic engineering consultant who helped prepare the Town's Complete Streets Prioritization Plan. Jesse Steadman added that the issues outlined in the letter are common throughout various roads in Stow.

Great Road

The Committee discussed a letter from John Sangermano regarding difficulty accessing vehicles at St. Isidore's Church when vehicles are parked along Route 117 on Sundays. Steve Nadeau indicated that the Town Center upgrades should consider bringing a sidewalk on the south side of Route 117 as far west as St. Isidore's with a crosswalk to alleviate the issues. Steve Nadeau said that without a sidewalk to get to, you cannot install a crosswalk.

Jesse Steadman added that prior to sending a message that a sidewalk is needed along the south side, together with the necessary crosswalk, the Committee should determine whether the existence of the sidewalk on the north side, the same side as Center School, really brings a south side sidewalk to the top of the priority list. Further, Jesse Steadman stated that he is cognizant of mid-block crossings on Route 117 requiring Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons, and whether the Town should be thinking strategically about which crosswalks in greater Town Center it wants to prioritize public use of, and therefore investments in push button crossing signals. Chief Sallese indicated he would reach out to Mr. Sangermano.

Old Bolton Road

Chief Sallese summarized the issues from a resident on Old Bolton Road, regarding the gap in sidewalk between Route 117 and Stow Community Park. The Committee agreed that the gap was noted on the Complete Streets Prioritization Plan, and that perhaps with the redevelopment of the Bose site there may be an opportunity to require further improvements to the streetscape.

Hudson Road

Nicole Fanning, a resident along Hudson Road noted that Sudbury and Hudson have done a good job of creating meandering sidewalks along streets in their Towns, and she hopes that Stow can make pedestrian improvements along Hudson Road. Ms. Fanning indicated that she and her husband have been forced off of the road by speeding vehicles and the situation is dangerous for pedestrians. Steve Nadeau said that to provide some context on costs, he has estimated that to install ADA compliant sidewalks from Lower Village to Old Bolton Road, would cost about 4 million dollars. Steve Nadeau added that when they resurfaced Hudson Road, he dropped lane widths to 11 feet along the northern portion of Hudson Road. Chief Sallese asked Ms. Fanning if the change provided any results? She said she has not seen any reduction in the issues.

Jesse Steadman stated that prior to coming to any conclusions regarding next steps with Hudson Road, there is currently a consultant performing a traffic study on a proposed residential development off of Athens Lane, and he would like to see the results and recommendations of that study to inform how the Town could potentially build upon any necessary improvements.

Wheeler Road

Vickery Trinkaus-Randall said that the continued speeding of traffic on Wheeler Road is diminishing the quality of life for residents. Vickery Trinkaus-Randall indicated that speed bumps would be the best solution and she can find no evidence of vehicles speeding up between speed bumps. Ms. Trinkaus-Randall noted that lane delineators and markers, as suggested by the Superintendent of Streets, could be a good solution. Chief Sallese indicated that lane delineators are something worth looking into. Jesse Steadman said that he would be curious as to the exact standard of their use, including the distance between the delineators and if they are meant for areas where traffic is travelling within a certain speed range. Steve Nadeau said that the town could install the delineators in the spring and then use the summer months to monitor their effectiveness as a pilot project.

Letters to Residents

The Committee reviewed a series of draft letters to residents based upon complaints received at the September 13th meeting.

Chief Benoit moved to send the letters to the respective residents.

Chief Sallese seconded.

VOTED: 4-0 Unanimously in favor (Chief Sallese – Yea; Chief Benoit – Yea; Steve Nadeau – Yea; Jesse Steadman – Yea)

Speed Bumps

Chief Sallese stated that he would like a traffic engineer to review the appropriate design and location for speed bumps at particular locations in Town where the Committee thinks the speeding issues could be most impacted by their use, prior to recommending a policy on their use. Steve Nadeau stated that he hopes the vacant seat on the Traffic Safety Advisory Committee can be filled by someone with traffic engineering expertise to help the Committee along in the process.

Town-Wide 25MPH Policy

Committee members discussed the potential for a town-wide policy that all roads without a statutory speed zone be subject to a 25MPH speed limit. Chief Sallese said that having such a policy would be a big help for enforcement in various areas of Town. The commission agreed that Jesse Steadman would put together a draft letter of recommendation to the Select Board for vote by the TSAC at their next meeting. The letter will be accompanied by a map of locations where signage may be needed as well as a copy of the enabling legislation and Town Meeting vote that allows the Select Board to adopt the policy.

Chief Sallese motioned to adjourn

Jesse Steadman seconded.

VOTED: 3-0 Unanimously in favor (Chief Sallese – Yea; Chief Benoit – Yea; Jesse Steadman – Yea; Steve Nadeau)

Respectfully Submitted,

Jesse Steadman