

Public Safety Committee
Council Chambers
December 20, 2017
7:00 PM

MEMBERS PRESENT

Councilor Donald Hamann, Chair
Councilor Ray Barnett
Councilor Robert Gates
Councilor James Gray

MEMBERS ABSENT

Councilor Peter Lachapelle

OTHER PRESENT

Michael Bezanson, P.E., City Engineer
Deputy Chief Gary Boudreau, PD
Mark Klose, Fire Chief
Tim Wilder, Fire Marshal
Dr. Reverend Ronald Messer, Cocheco River
Estates

Minutes

Councilor Hamann brought the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

1. Approve Minutes from November 15, 2017.

Councilor Barnett made a motion to approve the November 15, 2017 minutes. The motion was seconded by Councilor Gates. Unanimous voice vote carried the motion.

2. Rt. 11 Light-Timing Study (kept in committee)

Councilor Gray made a motion to move item 6 up on the agenda, Reverend Ronald Messer was present to discuss the safety issues at the entrance Cocheco River Estates. The motion was seconded by Councilor Gates. Unanimous voice vote carried the motion. Mr. Reverend Ronald Messer was present to express the need for a traffic signal on Route 11 at Nashoba Drive (Cocheco River Estates). He moved to Cocheco River Estates in 2006. He stated that there is a COAST bus stop nearby and that there is a lot of development going on and he thinks it would be wise to have a sidewalk and a crosswalk. He said that, due to traffic and safety concerns, he turns right out of Nashoba Drive and goes down Little Falls Bridge Road to Chestnut Hill Road to

get downtown instead of turning left out of Cocheco River Estates. He knows it is a State decision not the City's, but was hoping the City could encourage installing a traffic signal. Councilor Hamann said that a letter was sent to NHDOT after the October 2017 meeting. NHDOT stated that the area does not warrant a signal right now. Councilor Hamann asked if the issue of traffic signal timing was addressed by NHDOT. Councilor Gray said it was not mentioned in their response; Phase 2 of the Ridge development project will include a traffic signal at Crane Drive (Ford & Harley dealerships). He also stated that the more people that shop at the Ridge, the more the developer will be likely to build out Phase 2 in the near future. Councilor Gray stated that a future phase of the development will include a traffic signal at Nashoba Drive, but reiterated that right now the intersection does not meet the warrant criteria for a signal. Reverend Messer asked if there was a person he could write a letter too. Councilor Gray said yes, to the Commissioner of the NH Department of Transportation (NHDOT), Victoria Sheehan.

3. Public Input

There were no other members of the public present for public input.

4. Crow Hill/Spring Street Intersection-Yield or Stop Sign

Councilor Hamann summarized the issue. Mr. Gagnon had stopped into the Public Works Department to discuss the issues on Crow Hill and Spring Street; he has a hard time getting past the vehicles that are almost in the street at the corner. Councilor Hamann said he didn't think a sign would help. Councilor Gray stated that from the aerial photo cars do not appear to be parked in the City's right of way; if cars were parking on the grass, maybe something could be done. He wanted to know how many registered and unregistered vehicles you could legally have on your property. Fire Chief Klose said you need to yield to make a left turn. Deputy Chief Boudreau said there is more traffic now than there was 20 years ago; maybe the configuration of the intersection is not ideal for the traffic volumes that this road now experiences. Mr. Bezanson said he thinks it's a line of sight issue. Councilor Gray recommends keeping this request in committee and asked the Police Department to check if there is a line of sight issue and asked Code Enforcement to go out to see the conditions of vehicles and to check the ordinance on how many vehicles they can have on their property. Councilor Gates suggested that someone explain to the gentleman that he needs to yield to oncoming traffic when making the left turn.

5. Trinity Circle-On-Street Concerns (kept in committee)

Councilor Hamann summarized the issue. Fire Chief Klose said that he had all of the fire apparatus out with all crews on various days, nights and weekends. He said the heaviest traffic was during the day and there was a lot of construction traffic as well. There have been 2 vehicles parked on the road and one of them on the sidewalk. There are multiple vehicles parked at the duplexes. Deputy Chief Boudreau said that a fire truck could not make it by the 2 parked vehicles. He said he spoke to Owen Friend-Gray regarding the construction equipment in the area. He also said that one side of the road parking is not a problem and when both sides have parked vehicles it becomes too narrow. Councilor Gray said it seems to be no different from other neighborhoods. No action was taken.

6. Colby Street-Crosswalk Visibility/Lighting (kept in committee)

Councilor Hamann summarized the issue. Mr. Bezanson said at last month's meeting they talked about getting a brighter light. He said it has been converted to the LED light like the other lights around the City. It has the highest wattage option they have. Mr. Bezanson said that they are experimenting with the angle. Councilor Gates asked Deputy Chief Boudreau if the Police Department had any complaints about the brightness of the light. Deputy Chief Boudreau said no. Councilor Gray said that they should look to see if the crosswalk could be moved nearer to St. Leo's on Main Street in Gonick; he thinks moving it down would be beneficial. This was kept in committee. Mr. Bezanson will report back to the committee on the angle of the light.

7. Downtown Crosswalks-(kept in committee)

Councilor Hamann summarized the issue. Deputy Chief Klose said he has taken a closer look at the crosswalks downtown, a pedestrian was hit during the daytime last week. He said there is a problem and something needs to be done. People are parking in the no parking lanes. Councilor Gray said they had discussed the crosswalks all the way to the 103. Many of the downtown streetlights are on the wrong side of the crosswalk to light up the person crossing the street. Councilor Gray said if there is room for angled parking on one side that would cut the visibility issue down. Councilor Klose asked if the reason the pedestrian got hit last week was for the first vehicle stopping and the second vehicle did not see the first vehicle stopped and hit the vehicle from behind. Deputy Chief Boudreau said that the first vehicle stopped and the second vehicle veered not to hit the first car and hit the pedestrian. Councilor Gray said that,

although he doesn't support it, North Main Street could be returned to 2-way traffic. Mr. Klose said maybe a blinking light would work. Councilor Gray said City Council have not been in favor of the blinking lights because of the way they look. Mr. Bezanson stated that in conjunction with the planned pavement overlay for the downtown area, he has a consultant working on a draft striping plan. Mr. Bezanson said that signage can be installed separately from the paving work. Councilor Gray asked Mr. Bezanson what the dimensions were for the downtown streets white line to white line. Mr. Bezanson measured 30 feet on North Main Street. Mr. Bezanson said Wakefield Street has much wider lanes that will be reduced in width on the draft striping plan. He said that they are planning to use a different style of crosswalk going forward; it is called "Continental", which is a series of thick bars across the roadway. He said it is too late in the season to add any more paint to the crosswalks now. This was kept in committee; Mr. Bezanson will get more information.

8. Strawberry/Cider Hill-Chevron Sign Notification (kept in committee)

Councilor Hamann summarized the issue. Mr. Bezanson said he has not reached out to the residents yet. Councilor Gray asked Mr. Bezanson if DPW has the Chevron Signs. Councilor Gray said it doesn't meet criteria for light, very small amount of cars in the area. Councilor Gates said he agrees with Councilor Gray there is no data showing that it's needed. Councilor Gray stated if the residents of the two houses wanted the chevrons and would pay for them he would consider it. No action taken.

9. Dry Hill Road-Street Sign (kept in committee)

Councilor Hamann summarized the issue. Deputy Chief Boudreau said that the ambulance was going to the wrong place, it's a shared driveway. He reached out to planning. Fire Marshal Wilder said basically two signs are required. Councilor Gray said the private street could be named. Fire Chief Klose said it's more of a driveway than a road and that he would be comfortable with just signage. No action taken by the Public Safety Committee.

10. Other

Councilor Barnett wanted to say that it has been fun and educating to be part of the Public Safety Committee.

Grants for the Fire Department

Fire Chief Klose said he is looking for support from the Public Safety Committee for some grant opportunities. Assistance Fire Fighter Grant-This grant is open now to apply. It is for apparatus and Safety, it closes on February 2, 2018 at 5:00 PM. Councilor Hamann said he has never seen the City Council reject a grant opportunity. Councilor Gray said in the past they have it usually depends whether there is a City obligation for matching funds.

AFG Grant from the Federal Government-This grant is a 10 percent matching grant based on population. The fire department is looking to upgrade rescue boats.

Government Surplus Administration -This grant is for free forestry apparatus. The specifications are that you have 14 days to get it to your community and you have to pay to come get the item or to have it shipped. ***Councilor Gates made a motion to support the Fire Department and the Police Department to apply for grants. The motion was seconded by Councilor Gray. Unanimous voice vote carried the motion.***

Ebony Drive-Speed Trailer Data

Deputy Chief Boudreau said the resident that requested the speed trailer was not happy with the placement of the trailer; she wanted it set up for traffic going uphill not downhill. There were 875 vehicles that passed through. 603 of the vehicles were going 21-30 mph, 13 were going 31-40, 227 were going 11-20, 32 of them were going 1-10 mph. There were no vehicles above 40 mph. Deputy Chief Boudreau said there is no speeding problem.

Councilor Gray asked if the speed trailer was placed on Portland Street. Deputy Chief Boudreau said he would check.

Councilor Gray asked if there were any complaints on Leonard Street. Deputy Chief Boudreau said he would check and get back to the committee. He said there has been only 1 speed trailer, but there will be two next spring.

Councilor Gray said there is a pole on Maplewood Avenue with a streetlight that has not been switched over to LED yet. Mr. Bezanson will look into this.

Fire Chief Klose thanked the 3 councilors on the Public Safety Committee that will not be returning in January.

Mr. Bezanson wished everybody a Merry Christmas.

Councilor Gates made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 PM. Councilor Barnett seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Laura Miller, Secretary II.