

DERRY HIGHWAY SAFETY COMMITTEE

Minutes for November 21, 2019



COMMITTEE MEMBER	PRESENT	ABSENT
Scott Savard, Chairman	X	
Jim Roddy, Co-Chair	X	
Ed Garone, Derry Police	X	
Mike Gagnon, Derry Fire Dept.		X
Jane Simard, Derry School Dept.	X	
Alan Côté, DPW	X	
Walter Deyo	X	
Ronald Goldthwaite	X	
Randall Chase	X	
Jacob Pelletier		X
Jeremy Lamothe (School Dept Alt)		
Patti Doyle (School Dept Alt)		
George Feole (Police Alt)		
Jim Richardson (Fire Alt)		
Mike Fowler (DPW Alt)		
Vern Thomas		
Chuck Hemeon for Fire	X	

A monthly meeting of the Derry Highway Safety Committee was held on Thursday, November 21, 2019 at the Derry Municipal Center. The meeting was called to order at 8:58 am.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the October 17, 2019 meeting were reviewed. Error made in the first sentence on page 3, Chester Road should be North Shore Road

Alan Côté made a motion to approve the October 17, 2019 minutes as amended.

Seconded by Walter Deyo.

MOTION PASSED (8- 0) with Scott Savard & Jane Simard abstaining as they were not present at the last meeting.

Jim Roddy mentioned that he and Scott Savard will drive around town and discuss areas in need of road safety improvement for the Southern NH Planning Commission (SNHPC). All members of the committee will discuss at a future meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

- 1) Letter from William Ladd; requesting a guard rail at the corner of W. Broadway/High Street.

Residents from 85 W. Broadway, William Ladd & Leanne Cataldo bought their home in May of 2019. They provided photos to show that they have a stone retaining wall with a stone cap. Unfortunately, their retaining wall keeps getting hit by vehicles. The first motorist to hit the wall did not have insurance and their own home insurance deductible is \$1,000. They are requesting a guardrail as they are worried about their home getting hit. A report was filed with the Derry Police Department. Chief Garone stated that the uninsured motorist is required by the Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to satisfy the cost of damages. The motorist would also be required to carry insurance moving forward. The uninsured motorist's driver's license would be held until the restitution was paid. Chief Garone recommended that the residents obtain estimates to repair the wall.

Alan Côté stated that it would be hard to justify a guardrail and the likelihood of approval is unlikely. The property located at 85 West Broadway is on a fairly straight section of roadway and the home is actually slightly higher than the roadway. There is a guardrail located on High St. on a curve near Madden Hill Rd. The house sits lower and given the geometry of the road the home was a great risk of being hit by motorists. This is the reason for that section of guardrail. In general, guardrails are only installed when a vehicle leaving the road would cause more harm and damage than a colliding with a guardrail. The Town can't install guardrails along the sides of roadways throughout town and must limit their installation to where they are necessary. Alan Côté indicated that 25 years ago the Town of Derry removed the corner of the wall, the wall was pushed back due to the road being narrow at that time.

Jim Roddy asked if there was any description of the accidents. William stated that the last person was looking at her phone and blew out her tire. Another driver stated that the "sun was in her eyes". Alan Côté stated some accidents were caused by driver inattention.

Chief Garone stated that the residents have police reports and to contact the DMV and explain that the damage was never repaired. The DMV will work on obtaining funds from the uninsured motorist.

Jim Roddy suggested placing larger rocks. Alan Côté stated that the area was developed around 1902. It is unknown if the wall is in the right of way. It was explained to the residents that the Town Council makes the final decisions. Chief Garone suggested using planks, as they are inexpensive to replace. Alan Côté closed by saying that in addition to being difficult to justify a guardrail would not be aesthetically pleasing.

The owner understood the explanation and thanked the Highway Safety Committee for their time. No vote was necessary to formally deny the request for a guardrail.

2) Letter from Town of Derry Councilor Richard Tripp; request for a rail trail crossing on Bowers Road to be properly signed with a painted crosswalk.

Rod Pierce, resident of 26 Bowers Road, stated that the traffic from Fordway Extension speeds up. Many vehicles can be found speeding in the afternoon between 3-4pm, some are students from Pinkerton Academy. There is a bicycle sign on the rail trail but it does not mean much. Rod Pierce stated that there are three solutions: a) bring the bridge back, b) flashing lights similar to Kendall Pond Road, or c) crossing/crosswalk sign/stripping the road.

Scott Savard stated that he has used the rail trail many times, and it is dangerous going south bound. There is good visibility on the right. However, on the left there is very poor visibility. Scott Savard stated that at the very least, a crosswalk is in order.

Alan Côté stated that bicyclists are not pedestrians and they are supposed to ride with the traffic. Motorist do not have to yield to cyclist in crosswalks unless they dismount their bike and become pedestrians. They can cross, but they need to walk their bicycles. Scott Savard stated that 90% of the bicyclists do not make the hill. The speed limit is 35 mph. Alan Côté stated that he is reluctant to add a crosswalk or Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFB's) in a rural area. The bicycle sign placement was in question. Scott Savard stated that there needs to be a crosswalk with crosswalk signs. Alan Côté stated that white lines are not going to stop vehicles and are not magical barriers that stop vehicles. On Bowers Road, at the peak hours from 4-5 pm, there were 112 vehicles per hour. The total count was 931 vehicles per weekday and 888 vehicles per weekend. There is ample time and space for pedestrians to cross. The reason there are crosswalks on roadways such as Broadway which have high volumes of traffic are to ensure pedestrians an opportunity to cross the road by requiring motorists to yield.

Rod Pierce stated that the speed limit should be lowered as 50-60% of the rail trail users are walking pedestrians. Alan Côté stated that the volume of traffic has no bearing and is immaterial to the speed limit. The ability of a 10 wheeled vehicle to stop quickly, such as Groundhog Landscaping was brought up. Rod Pierce stated that he does not want to be the one to have to call 911 and thinks that 35 mph is too high.

Jim Roddy stated he is in agreement with the concern and that the traffic study is flawed. There is no way that the road supports 35 mph. He is a driver's ed teacher and teaches his students to take the corners at a maximum of 20-25 mph. He is not sure of the ratio between walkers vs. bikers. Discussion ensued between Jim Roddy and Alan Côté.

Jim Roddy asked what liability the Town has if no action is taken but the concern was brought forth. Chief Garone indicated that more people get struck in a marked crosswalk. Jim Roddy is in agreement but stated that he thinks a crosswalk would be helpful at this location.

Ronald Goldthwaite stated that he is leaning toward a crosswalk as the North side of Bowers Road is quite narrow. He would suggest widening the top of the rail trail. Jim Roddy stated that Bowers Road is very active. Rod Pierce suggested a ramp up to the other culvert that is an under the road passageway but it is for snowmobiles and not tall enough.

Chief Garone stated that the rail trail is very popular. He recommended exploring a new culvert to replace the current culvert. Alan Côté opposed this suggestion as a rough estimate of the cost is approximately \$400,000. Jim Roddy asked if the Town could apply for any grants and Alan Côté explained that many strings exist with federal grants.

Chief Garone suggested a long-range fix as we are encouraging people to utilize the rail trail and should ensure the safety of users. Chief Garone stated that the decision is up to the Town Council.

Ronald Goldwaithe stated that something short-term should also be done and that the committee does not need Town Council approval for implementing a crosswalk.

Chief Garone stated that he wondered if Beverly Donovan could tie this proposed culvert in with other downtown projects. Randall Chase stated that it was worth exploring and that he is against a crosswalk. Jim Roddy asked how many people utilize Bowers Road. Randall Chase stated that there are too many accidents on West Broadway and that crosswalks are a feel-good measure.

Randall Chase made a motion to forward the concern and explore replacing the steel culvert (for snowmobiles) with a box culvert as a permanent fix. Seconded by Chief Garone.

Motion passed (7-1), all in favor except Alan Côté that the Highway Safety Committee has no objection.

Ronald Goldwaithe stated that he still thinks that the committee should take some action as well. Chief Garone stated that public safety items are generally not put out as political decisions. His goal is to make users as safe as possible.

Alan Côté stated that 2,500 Pinkerton Academy students cross By-Pass 28 every day. Chief Garone stated that they also use crossing guards. Rod Pierce asked that the committee consider lowering the speed limit. Alan Côté explained that motorists will still drive the road at 35 mph as the 85th percentile of motorists drove at 37 mph. Alan Côté stated that the minimum speed limit for this road could only be lowered to 30 mph.

Scott Savard would like to present the replacement of the culvert idea to the Town Council.

OLD BUSINESS

Jim Roddy brought up that he plans to meet with Scott Savard regarding the potential grants for road safety improvement through the SNHPC. Chief Garone stated that the causes of the accidents on the map are important. Jim Roddy stated that his driver's ed students are often tailgated on Bowers Road. Rod Pierce stated that there are scars on the trees. Chief Garone explained that the Manchester Road and Scobie Pond accident may have been due to a medical condition. None of the accidents were due to geometry of the roads. Some causes were: failure to yield, driving through stop signs, DWI, and a tree fell on a vehicle. Jim Roddy asked if the causes of the crash accidents are available. Chief Garone confirmed that yes accident information can be obtained from the Derry Police Department if a date and time of an accident are provided. However, driver information is confidential.

Jim Roddy stated that 102 & J & F Farms is one location to focus on. Chief Garone stated that there is limited vision westerly, and a short site distance from Old Auburn to Regency. Some of this is due to geometry of the road.

**Alan Côté made a motion to adjourn at 10:06am.
Seconded by Randall Chase.**

Motion passed (8-0)

The next meeting is Thursday, December 19, 2019.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jill Jamro, Recording Clerk