

TOWN of AMHERST
Highway Safety Committee Meeting
Minutes
October 27, 2020
1:00 pm

Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 1:00 pm with all committee members in attendance:

Mark O. Reams, Police Chief/Chairman; John D'Angelo, Selectman; Matthew Conley, Fire-Rescue Chief; Adam Steel, Superintendent of Schools; Eric Hahn, Director, Department of Public Works; Also invited and in attendance for Item D, George Bowers and Chris Buchanan on behalf of the BPAC (Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee).

New Business

a. Speed Limit Designation for Manchester Road

Discussion began over the lack of a formal speed zone designation for the portion of Manchester Road located between the intersections of Mack Hill Road and Limbo Lane, though a speed limit of 25 mph had been set some years ago, pursuant to Town ordinance, for the portion of Manchester Road extending from Main Street to the intersection of Mack Hill Road. By NH state statute, this unposted section of Manchester Road represents an Urban Residence District and therefore qualifies for posting as a 30 mph zone. However, the Committee was asked by one or more residents of Manchester Road to consider posting this section as a 25 mph zone. Pursuant to NH state statute, Chief Reams conducted the required traffic study to determine if this section of Manchester Road met the requirements for consideration as a 25 mph zone. Traffic data was collected over the course of two weeks, however, that data did not support consideration for a 25 mph zone according to the federal Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) to which the Committee and Town look for guidance. Specifically, MUTCD guidelines state that the posted speed limit should be within +/- 5 mph of the 85th Percentile Speed which in this case was determined to be 38 mph. Other additional factors, such as a favorable sight distance and the lack of any accidents in the preceding two years also worked against the 25 mph designation. DPW Director Hahn made a motion to recommend that the Board of Selectmen designate the section of Manchester Road between Mack Hill Road and Limbo Lane a 30 mph zone in accordance with statutory guidance. AFR Chief Conley seconded the motion, and all were in favor (5-0).

b. No Parking sign request for Grater Road @ ACC Grater Woods trailhead

At the request of the Amherst Conservation Commission, the Committee was asked to consider the placement of permanent No Parking signs along the roughly 600' portion of Grater Road (north of South Grater Road) which provides access to the Grater Woods ACC trailhead parking lot. Temporary No Parking signs had been posted last spring due to record turnout by hikers during the onset of Covid-19 shutdowns and emergency orders. The ACC asked that trail parking be restricted to both the main and smaller parking areas off of Grater Road, and that vehicles not be allowed to park along Grater Road due to safety concerns over congestion and obstruction of emergency vehicle ingress/egress. Discussion amongst the Committee recognized and supported this measure. Selectman D'Angelo made a motion to

post the 600 foot section of Grater Road –north of South Grater Road- a no parking zone. AFR Chief Conley seconded the motion, and all were in favor (5-0).

c. Stop Sign proposal for Madison Lane

One or more residents of Madison Lane reported that local delivery traffic has increased in recent months, as has outdoor walking, biking, and children playing. This increased traffic has caused increased concern for residents over a previously unreported situation involving the lack of stop signs at either end of Madison Lane. The Committee reviewed photographs of the area and noted that although both ends of Madison Lane –i.e., the intersection with Williamsburg Drive on one end, and with Georgetown Drive on the other- are appropriately marked with a painted stop line, but with no corresponding Stop Signs posted. It has been the Committee’s position in recent recommendations to the Board of Selectmen that neighborhoods be properly posted with both the stop line *and* stop sign in a manner appropriate and consistent with similar neighborhood roadways throughout town. AFR Chief Conley made a motion to post a stop sign at each end of Madison Lane, which was seconded by Selectman D’Angelo. All were in favor (5-0)

d. Road striping change for Old Manchester Road

DPW Director Hahn proposed a road striping change for Old Manchester Road in accordance with previously recommended changes presented by the Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC). Specifically, that instead of a double yellow center line, and pair of Advisory Shoulders be implemented. Director Hahn stated that the following proposed changes would be consistent with MUTCD guidelines as that particular roadway does not require a center dividing line. Principle recommendations from representatives Buchanan and Bowers were as follows:

1. Establish the dimensions of the vehicle lane by using the center point of the pavement as the reference for the minimum 12 ft bi-directional travel lane. The outside of 12 foot vehicle bi-directional lane should be delineated using a white dashed line placed 6 feet to the left of the center point and 6 feet to the right of the center point to establish a consistent width for the length of Old Manchester Road.
2. The Advisory Shoulders on the outside of the center vehicle travel lane should be a minimum of five feet wide. Where the pavement exceeds the standard 22 foot dimension, the Advisory Shoulders will be wider.
3. Signage should be installed at the Walnut Hill Rd intersection and RT-101 intersection entrances to inform vehicle drivers of the presence of the Advisory Shoulders and the use of the sides of the roadway by pedestrians and cyclists.
4. Warning/Information signs should be installed at three points on Old Manchester Road where there are potential vehicle/pedestrian conflicts: a. At the curve near 10 Old Manchester Rd b. At the crest of the hill near 20 Old Manchester Rd c. At the crest of the hill near 60 Old Manchester Rd.

BPAC concerns regarding the speed limit on Old Manchester Road were based upon a belief that the road is a posted 35 mph zone; however, the Committee clarified the fact that the road is actually a posted 30 mph zone which BPAC representatives found consistent with the implementation of this new road marking proposition. Chief Reams proposed that Old Manchester Road be striped with Advisory Shoulders in accordance with BPAC and DPW recommendations. The motion was seconded by AFR Chief Conley, and all were in favor (5-0).

Approvals**a. Prior Meeting Minutes**

Selectman D'Angelo made a motion to accept the prior meeting's minutes, which was seconded by AFR Chief Conley. All were in favor (5-0).

Meeting adjourned at 1:41 pm.