



Town of Amherst, NH

Highway Safety Committee

Wednesday, January 4, 2023

Attendees: Chief Ciampoli, DPW Director Eric Slosek, Fire Chief Matt Conley;
Selectman John D'Angelo; Superintendent Mike Berry
Residents present: Jeanne Ludt, Bill Ludt and Doug Chabinsky

1. Call to Order

2. Citizen's Forum

3. Boston Post Rd. – Several known issues are noise pollution, no through trucks, increase in truck traffic over the years, perceived speed and pedestrian safety. Nashua Regional Planning did conduct a study and Boston Post Rd and New Boston Rd were well within the averages found on other local roads. The recommendation was to reduce truck traffic and consider creating an ordinance regulating truck traffic on all public roads that are duly signed. The recommendation does not seem to be evidentiary based. Eric Slosek states that he hasn't seen any data to support this. Chief Ciampoli has not seen any data either and if that was available that would certainly be helpful to them for today's purposes. Chief Ciampoli states that a no through trucking ordinance would require previous knowledge of a vehicle passing through, you would have to know that they had not already stopped somewhere before you saw them, and you would also have to know that they would make it through the zone without stopping somewhere else. The only way to combat that would be to station a vehicle at both ends. The town attorney's feedback was this; enforcement of a "No through truck" ordinance is tough, there is little guidance in the state statutes and that he couldn't find any NH cases that are on point. Any restriction is generally discriminatory in nature and arguably frustrates general public use.

Chief Ciampoli feels that the Town does need to have a reasonable basis to restrict truck traffic, but it can be something other than weight. Chief Ciampoli would also recommend an ordinance limiting the use of air brakes. This would be easier to enforce. "No Through Trucks" signs/ordinances need to have a weight limit posted. Ponemah Hill Rd. is in compliance, it is a weight restricted ordinance. If trucks had to take an alternate route other than Boston Post Rd. (2.9 miles) the shortest route would be New Boston Rd. (4.4 miles), Lyndeborough Rd. or Amherst St. to Route 13 (5.9 miles).

36 Chief Ciampoli does have an ordinance from a nearby town that does include the
37 weight limit (26000lbs.) This is the same weight as a DPW 6-wheeler truck.
38 Waivers for hardship can be issued by the Board of Selectman. Most complaints
39 are in reference to the engine noise and air brakes, not the weight. There is an
40 ordinance from Hanover which is restrictive 24 hrs. a day. They did add "except
41 in an emergency." Not every Town outright prohibited truck traffic. There are
42 some towns that limit trucks during certain hours.

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44 Eric Slosek states that in terms of the noise ordinance, without discussing no
45 through trucking, he thinks that makes complete sense. The facts that were
46 pointed out, it's a flat area, there aren't any hills or topographical challenging
47 areas, (short of an emergency) it would make sense to help mitigate the noise
48 concerns. The no through trucking: The board of Selectman is asking them to
49 determine if they should or should not have "No Through Trucking" through the
50 village and would like to know what the deciding factors for the decision would
51 be. Eric's comments were looking at Chief Reams's traffic study, they were able
52 to lower 85% of traffic speed by 5 mph. bringing the speed to 33 mph. He
53 understands some of the concerns being made, he can't support it on the
54 evidence he has seen. If they close Boston Post Rd to trucks, those trucks have to
55 go somewhere, doubling their trip. Chief Ciampoli asks if the time prohibition
56 was part of the ordinance it would lessen to Towns exposure for liability. Eric
57 would consider supporting "No Through Trucks" for a certain period of time
58 overnight. Chief Ciampoli states that the evidence is more towards noise. He
59 didn't come up with speed or traffic as reasons and absent those factors the
60 attorney really pushed toward the noise. He's not sure there is support right
61 now for full prohibition.

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63 Matt Conley asks about the devices that are available to do a count of vehicles
64 and can they tell you the number of axles? Does it also include timestamps? No,
65 timestamping is not going to be available. John D'Angelo thinks that there should
66 be an ordinance preventing engine braking in that section of town. That is a
67 pretty flat section of road before you get to the 25MPH zone. That would be a
68 separate ordinance from the rest. As far as "No Through Trucks", the attorney's
69 advice at the time was that it wouldn't be enforceable. He thinks that if the town
70 is going to do this, he believes there should be a weight limit, and would start it
71 high (40,000 lbs.) and bring it down rather than start low and receive
72 complaints from people driving 6-wheel dump trucks. Between the noise
73 restriction and the weight limit and restricting the time (Chief Campoli has seen
74 a lot of 8pm to 12am), it would seem reasonable to him. The fact that there
75 weren't any tickets recently given to CDL drivers makes him believe that we
76 don't have a truck problem. So, banning trucks isn't going to help the speed
77 thing, but it will reduce the noise.

Chief Ciampoli makes a motion that the recommendation be that we draft an ordinance that there would be no engine braking 24/7 on Boston Post Rd. from the New Boston Rd. split to Amherst St. traffic lights, excluding Town vehicles. This motion is seconded by John D'Angelo. Vote Chief Ciampoli yea, Eric Slosek; yea, Mike Berry; yea, Matt Conley; yea, John D'Angelo; yea. Motion passes 5-0.

Eric makes a motion that they recommend a draft ordinance for "No Through Trucking" to be inclusive of Boston Post Rd. from the lights on Amherst St. to the Town line on Mont Vernon Rd., New Boston Rd., in its entirety, and Lyndeborough Rd. in its entirety, to be in effect from 8pm to 8 am with a weight limit of 40,000 lbs. ish. John D'Angelo proposed a change to clarify that the motion served only to "draft" an ordinance for consideration by the committee, not to "recommend" an ordinance to the BOS at this point.

This motion was seconded by John D'Angelo. Motion passed unanimously 5-0.

Chestnut Hill Road Petition: Chief Ciampoli visited a resident on Chestnut Hill and witnessed vehicles traveling around 45 or 50 MPH in the lower section. Eric asked if there are any reports of accidents on that road. Chief Ciampoli states that there aren't any. Discussion follows regarding truck traffic and the sharp turns along the road. He also asks if there are any studies that can be done? Eric states that they would need a traffic engineer, there are a few working for the Town that could give us an estimate for a study. Eric doesn't think it would be a large amount of money, but whereas it is a Highway Safety Committee request and not a DPW request it should go before the Town Administrator for approval. The study should focus on looking at the hair pin turn and a vehicle cannot stay in their lane.

Grater Rd. Complaint: Two residents have complained about the speed on this road. The speed limit on Grater Rd is 35 mph, by statute. Eric would agree to a 30mph posting. The Chief will do a speed study and discuss it at the next meeting.

John D'Angelo moved to approve the meeting minutes as presented from the last meeting. Matt Conley seconds the motion, all in favor, motion passes.

The Chief makes a motion to include Merrimack Rd., Austin Rd., and Courthouse Rd. in their consideration for "No through Trucking", they would be different as they would be 24/7 and then would amend the absence of weight restriction. Eric Slosek seconds this motion, all in favor, motion passes.

John D'Angelo made a motion to adjourn at 3:20. Seconded by Chief Ciampoli. Motion passes.