

Vermont Traffic Committee
Minutes of Meeting Held
April 25, 2014

The Vermont Traffic Committee met on April 25, 2014. Committee Chair Brian Searles called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm in the 5th floor Transportation Board Room, Davis Building, Montpelier, Vermont. The meeting was adjourned at 2:00 pm.

Attendees:

Sue Minter, Deputy Secretary of Transportation, Traffic Committee Chair
Robert Ide, Commissioner of Motor Vehicles, Traffic Committee member
Major Walter Goodell, Delegate for Commissioner of Public Safety, Traffic Committee member
Amy Gamble, Traffic Operations Engineer, Traffic Committee Coordinator
Bruce Nyquist, Assistant Program Manager, Traffic Committee Coordinator
Thomas McCormick, Senior Assistant Attorney General

Tim Cloutre, Vermont State Police
Tyler Guazoni, AOT Traffic Operations
Marcos Miller, AOT Traffic Operations
David Crossley, AOT Traffic Operations
Joseph Kelley, AOT Traffic Operations

Agenda Items Discussed

Colchester, US 7: Amy Gamble presented the merits of the “No Parking Zone”. The “No Parking Zone” recommended for action was on the western side of the roadway. Large vehicles parking at this site obscure sight distance for vehicles leaving the Maplefield’s driveway. The official request from the town was for the eastern side of US 7. This was denied due to the fact that parking in this area does not constitute a safety hazard to road users. Commissioner Ide asked whether the business owners were contacted prior to the meeting to weigh in on this proposal. Amy interjected that the engineering study recommendations go to the Selectboard of the Town. Private business owners and citizens who were directly involved in the requests are sometimes cc’d on the recommendation letters. The Committee unanimously voted to approve the engineering recommendation.

Essex, VT 2A: In conjunction with the street scape enhancement project, the Village of Essex Junction requested that the 25 MPH zone be extended on the northern side of the village. All committee members were in agreement and voted to approve the engineering recommendation extending the 25 MPH zone to the entrance for the Champlain Valley Exposition.

Hartford, US 4: This request was precipitated by the owners of the KOA campground. They were concerned that large trucks parked directly adjacent to their driveway limited the ability of oncoming US 4 traffic to see pedestrians from the campground crossing US 4 to the store. Marcos Miller stated that an additional large vehicle parking space is available about 300 ft down the road. After a brief discussion, the committee voted unanimously to accept the engineering recommendation to install the “No Parking Zone”.

Pittsfield, VT 100: The town requested the Traffic Committee to investigate the possible safety issues caused by trucks parking along VT 100. The engineering study did show that large vehicles did restrict sight distance for vehicles leaving the Swiss Farm Market. However, in reviewing the crashes for this area there is no pattern that can be linked to this issue. Commissioner Ide asked whether the property owner of the business directly adjacent to the proposed “No Parking Zone” had been contacted about the recommendation. Bruce Nyquist received a phone call from Joyce Stevens, Swiss Farm Market Owner, stating her objection to the engineering proposal. She was concerned that this decision could impact her business and that she had not received adequate warning for the meeting. Discussion centered on how the engineering recommendations were disseminated back to the community. Commissioner Ide wants the Traffic Committee Coordinator to inform business owners adjacent to the proposed “No Parking Zone” prior to the meeting, especially in those cases where the business owners were not the generators of the recommended change. Deputy Secretary Minter stated that the engineering study recommendation letters to the towns should include a statement informing the Selectboard to contact the business owners. Major Goodell moved that the recommendation be tabled until the next meeting to give the effected business owners the chance to have their issues heard. The motion passed unanimously. Deputy Secretary Minter directed the engineering staff to contact the store owner, the industrial business owner and the town fire department prior to the next Traffic Committee meeting.

St. Albans, US 7: Amy Gamble explained that the engineering recommendation was to adjust the start of the 50 MPH zone to just north of the new drive to the Walmart driveway. Deputy Secretary Minter questioned whether the engineering recommendation specifically answered the town’s request. Amy stated that action on the town’s original request had been postponed to allow for traffic patterns to stabilize following the opening of the new Walmart. All speed studies along this portion are showing similar driver behavior with 85th percentile speeds of 50 MPH +/- 2 MPH. Even the northern section of US 7 that was dropped recently to 40MPH still showed 85th percentile of 50 MPH. The engineering recommendation did not support the requested speed reduction due to the most recent speed studies. The committee voted unanimously to approve the engineering recommendation. Commissioner Ide asked that the action letter remind Swanton that they verbally committed to enforcing the new 40 MPH section of US 7 in order to improve compliance.

Wilmington, VT 100: Amy Gamble explained that Traffic Operations has been reviewing this section of roadway for quite a few years. The latest request began from an inquiry from the local Representative. Joe Kelley informed the Committee that Traffic Operations and LTF staff reviewed the site because of some improvements made at the school. Following their review, they provided the school administration with a list of recommendations for maximizing the circulation around the school. As part of the school’s improvements, the existing “No Parking Zone” required modification. Selectboard Chair, James Burke called Bruce prior to the meeting to lend his support for the engineering recommendation. The Traffic Committee unanimously approved the engineering recommendation.

The Traffic Committee approved staff recommendation on all other agenda items.

Other business: Following the site discussions a general conversation ensued about the committee's desires for public notification. For issues such as "No Parking Zone" establishments where the new regulations could affect a business, the Traffic Committee would like the engineering staff to ensure that the business owners receive notification of the Vermont Traffic Committee meeting (date and time). The business owners then have the opportunity to inform the committee of any issues that they foresee with the proposed regulation. This way all stakeholders have a chance to be heard by the committee prior to the establishment of a legally enforceable regulation. The committee did not feel that notification was necessary for other types of Traffic Committee action.

The meeting minutes from the October 15, 2013 minutes will be mailed out to the committee members for approval.