

Vermont Traffic Committee
Minutes of Meeting Held
June 26, 2015

The Vermont Traffic Committee met on June 26, 2015. Committee Chair Robert Ide 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 2:40 pm.

Attendees:

Kevin Marshia, Deputy Chief Engineer, Delegate for Secretary of Transportation, Traffic Committee Member

Robert Ide, Commissioner of Motor Vehicles, Designated Traffic Committee Chair

Capt. Timothy Clouatre, Delegate for Commissioner of Public Safety, Traffic Committee member

Thomas McCormick, Senior Assistant Attorney General

Amy Gamble, Traffic Operations Engineer, Traffic Committee Coordinator

Michael Golden, AOT Traffic Operations

Marcos Miller, AOT Traffic Operations

Charles Safford, Town Manager, Stowe

Richard Menge, Public Works Director, Hartford

Tad Nunez, Parks and Recreation Director, Hartford

Laura Gans, resident, Moretown

Bob Almeida, Select Board Chair, Orwell

Bob Fields, Select Board, Orwell

Amy Roy, School Board, Orwell

Chris Roy, Fire Department, Orwell

Furious Roy, student, Orwell

Agenda Items Discussed

Hartford/Hartland US 5: Ms. Gamble explained that the town of Hartford requested that the existing 40 mph speed limit be extended southerly to the Hartford/Hartland town line, due to development including new recreation fields for which a new left turn lane on US 5 southbound is being designed and built. The design is affected by the speed limit. The engineering study was expanded to include the northerly section of US 5 in Hartland, to the beginning of the 35 mph zone for the village of North Hartland. The speed studies showed that the 85th percentile speeds ranged from 47 to 53 mph, including in the portion of US 5 in Hartford that was reduced to 40 mph four years ago. In that segment, the 85th percentile speed was unchanged, at 47 mph, compared to the measured speeds prior to the speed limit reduction. Two possible recommendations were provided – either “no change”, or to establish a 45 mph zone between the two 35 mph zones (raising the existing 40 zone to 45, and lowering the existing 50 zone to 45.)

After discussion with the Hartford Director of Public Works and Parks and Recreation Director, the Traffic Committee voted to establish the 45 mph zone as recommended.

Orwell VT 73: Ms. Gamble explained that the town had requested that the village speed limit be reduced from 35 to 25 and that the existing 35 mph zone be extended easterly a short distance. The engineering study showed that the 85th percentile speed ranged from 36 to 42, and that there were only two reported crashes in the past 5 years. The road was recently paved and a sign project upgraded signs throughout the study area. The recommendation was made to retain the 35 mph zone, and also make a modest extension easterly as requested in order to better locate the speed limit transition point on the other end of a curve.

The town provided both written and oral testimony to the Committee. Concerns discussed included trucks travelling at a high rate of speed westbound downhill into the village, pedestrians crossing between the village green and the library, limited sight distance eastbound over the crest approaching the bank parking area where vehicles back into the road, and a school play area close to the road protected only by a split rail fence with snow fence attached. The Committee discussed speed enforcement with the town representatives, and found that while the town does contract with the county sheriff that most enforcement is concentrated on VT 22A and back roads rather than Main Street. Speed management concepts and tools were discussed, including traffic calming, access management, in-street pedestrian signs. The town is not prepared to make any changes in those areas.

The Traffic Committee voted to establish a 30 mph speed limit from VT 22A to a point just east of the fire station, and a 40 mph transition zone for the remainder of the existing 35 mph zone including the proposed extension. The Committee recommended to the town that they increase enforcement and ticketing of locals on VT 73, and that they work with parents on safe driving practices near the school.

Stowe VT 100: Ms. Gamble explained the town was concerned about the location of the “end no passing” sign being in a place where passing is not desirable. The town had requested that the passing zone be extended to the northerly end of the Class 1 portion of VT 100. In reviewing the files pertaining to the establishment of the no-passing zone, it was determined that the zone was established primarily for the possible traffic calming effect of the signs, rather than an actual passing problem, so the recommendation was made to eliminate the passing zone rather than extend it. The town agreed with this recommendation. The Traffic Committee voted to rescind the no passing zone as recommended.

Stowe VT 108: Ms. Gamble explained that this was a continuation of parking modifications discussed at the last meeting. The town requested that a seasonal no parking zone be established in order to prevent overflow on-street parking adjacent to the Stowe Mountain Resort driveway, which blocks sight distance, and when snow banks are present, also blocks the travelled lanes. The request for seasonal no-parking was to accommodate the scenic highway committee’s desire to minimize signs during the summer season, during which time the town proposed to remove the signs. Since parking was observed to occur in the summer months as well, and sight distance is an issue whenever this occurs, staff recommendation was for a full time parking ban on both

sides of VT 108 from Barnes Camp to Bridge 10. The town did not oppose this change. The Traffic Committee voted to establish the no parking zone as recommended.

Moretown US 2: Ms. Gamble explained that the town requested an extension of the existing 40 mph zone easterly beyond Gallagher Acres Road. The speed study showed that the 85th percentile speed was 42 in this segment, supporting the speed limit reduction. Resident Laura Gans, who lives in the study area, testified in support of the recommendation. The Traffic Committee voted to extend the 40 mph speed limit as recommended.

Other Agenda Items:

Ms. Gamble gave brief explanations of the remaining agenda items, including certificate adjustments that were identified as part of an effort to re-establish an electronic database of traffic regulations. Many obsolete no parking zones were identified, and speed limit site descriptions outdated due to changes in town highway numbers or route mileage since the speed zone was established. There will be more of these to come in upcoming meetings.

The Traffic Committee approved staff recommendation on all other agenda items, including certificate adjustments.

Other business:

Interstate Minimum Speed Limit: Ms. Gamble explained that the question has arisen whether the minimum speed limit of 40 mph posted on the interstates has any legal basis. No records have been found showing that Traffic Committee established the minimum, and AAG McCormick does not recall any legislative action in this regard. The Committee recommended that Ms. Gamble check with FHWA to see if there is federal code, and if not, bring a recommendation to the Committee at their next meeting for official action.