

Vermont Traffic Committee
Minutes of Meeting Held
July 10, 2014

The Vermont Traffic Committee met on July 10, 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. At 2:30 Secretary Searles had to excuse himself and Richard Tetreault took his place on the Committee. Robert Ide assumed the duties of Chair upon Secretary Searles departure. The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 pm.

Attendees:

Brian Searles, Secretary of Transportation, Traffic Committee Chair
Robert Ide, Commissioner of Motor Vehicles, Traffic Committee Member
Lt. Garry Scott, Delegate for Commissioner of Public Safety, Traffic Committee Member
Richard Tetreault, Delegate for Secretary of Transportation, Traffic Committee Member
Amy Gamble, Traffic Operations Engineer, Traffic Committee Coordinator
Bruce Nyquist, Traffic and Safety Engineer, Traffic Committee Coordinator

John Durkee, Fire Chief, Town of Tunbridge
Joyce Stevens, Owner, Swiss Farm Market, Pittsfield
Sue Janssen, Select board member, Town of Benson
Tyler Guazzoni, AOT Traffic Operations
Marcos Miller, AOT Traffic Operations
David Crossley, AOT Traffic Operations
Joseph Kelly, AOT Traffic Operations

By phone:

Franz Rosenberger, Real Estate Agent, North Hero
Kathleen Banks, Resident, North Hero
Charles Jacien, Town Manager, Town of Castleton

Agenda Items Discussed

Benson VT 22A: The town of Benson precipitated this speed reduction request. Bruce Nyquist presented the merits of the engineering study. Select board member Sue Janssen informed the Committee that the town felt that they were one of the few towns along VT 22A which did not have a reduced speed zone through their town. She spoke about the dangerous conditions that existed on this road for the emergency responders. The towns request was also based partly on a recommendation in a recent corridor study done by the Rutland Regional Planning Commission. After a fairly lengthy discussion, all Committee members voted to deny the request. Traffic Operations Staff agreed to look at the signing for the town highway intersections along this corridor as well as adding some additional 50 mph speed limit signs. In addition Traffic Operations staff will work with farms along this stretch to ensure that appropriate signing is

installed. The Agency of Transportation will also pursue upcoming opportunities to provide wider shoulders and pullouts for police to use for enforcement activities.

Pittsfield: The town of Pittsfield on behalf of a resident requested that a “No Parking” zone be instituted in front of the Swiss Farm Market. Bruce Nyquist presented the engineering study that agreed with the Town’s request. This was based on the limited sight distance for vehicles exiting the easterly driveway for the Swiss Farm Market. Joyce Stevens, Owner of the Swiss Farm Market gave her concerns with the proposal. First, she said that trucks were parked for very short periods of time. Second, cars creep out to where they can see or they use the westerly driveway. She cited the fact that there had been few reported crashes. Finally she mentioned that VTrans has a project coming through this area within the next couple years which will change the island configuration in front of her store. The proposed new configuration will make it impossible for trucks to park on the street side of the island. She requested that the Committee deny the proposal and wait for the project to physically change her access. Bruce also mentioned that town resident, William Oren, was a staunch supporter of establishing a “No Parking Zone.” After a thorough discussion of the issue, all Committee members voted to reject the proposed “No Parking” zone at this time and to wait for the upcoming project to change the access.

Tunbridge VT 110: The Town of Tunbridge requested a permanent temporary speed reduction for VT 110 for 4 days during the Tunbridge World’s Fair in September each year. Amy Gamble provided the engineering report which recommended denying the request and have the fire department utilize changeable message signs and static signs to warn motorists of event traffic and to be prepared to stop. John Durkee, Tunbridge Fire Chief provided the Committee with additional information concerning the request. The fire department in order to continue their annual coin drive and comply with VTrans policies on coin drops, desire a reduction in speed for their location south of the Tunbridge Village. Apparently, per VTrans policy, coin drops are to be only conducted on roadways with speed limits of 35 mph (or less). Several options were batted around and discussed. All Committee members voted to approve an annual speed reduction for four days beginning the second Thursday after Labor Day of each year going forward. The limits of reduction will be determined by Traffic Operations in conjunction with the Tunbridge Fire Chief prior to the certificate being signed by the Traffic Committee. The town will be required to secure a 19 VSA 1111 permit to install and maintain the required signs during the fair.

North Hero: The town requested a speed limit reduction on US 2. Bruce Nyquist provided a synopsis of the engineering study and subsequent recommendations. The engineering study recommended denying the request for speed reduction and focusing on increasing the conspicuity of the school drive. Kathleen Banks, home owner, and Franz Rosenberger, real estate agent participated via phone. Several home owners along this stretch had their houses and lake accesses on the opposite sides of US 2. They relayed to the Committee the hazards for pedestrians crossing US 2 between the docks and the houses. After a lengthy discussion and several questions from Committee members, the Committee voted to retain the 50 mph speed limit. The Committee directed Traffic Operations Staff to install “Pedestrian” signs in order to increase driver awareness of the presence of pedestrians in this area.

At this point Secretary Searles excused himself from the meeting and Richard Tetreault participated in his stead. Commissioner Robert Ide took over as the Chair of the Committee.

Castleton, VT 4A: The Town of Castleton requested on behalf of a resident that a “No Parking Zone” be established on VT 4A. The property owner operates a senior housing facility and was required by a state fire inspector to establish a “No Parking Zone” in front of his property to ensure that the driveways were not blocked for emergency vehicle access. Bruce Nyquist talked about the merits of the request and that the engineering report recommended establishing the “No Parking Zone” across the width of the driveway. Charles Jacien, Castleton Town Manager joined the meeting via phone. He expressed his support for the establishment of the “No Parking Zone” however, the property owner and the Town were requesting that the “No Parking Zone” be lengthened to cover not just the width of the driveway but it be extended to cover the entire width of the road frontage of the property. After numerous questions were asked of the town manager, all Committee members voted to approve the establishment of a “No Parking Zone” across the entire width of the property.

Berlin, Berlin State Highway: This request was generated by Traffic Operations. Bruce Nyquist gave a synopsis of the engineering study. The recommendation would change the Berlin State Highway speed limit from 50 mph to 40 mph from VT 62 to the existing 40 mph speed zone near the airport. Committee members voted unanimously to accept the recommendation of Traffic Operations Staff.

Cambridge, VT 108: The Town of Cambridge requested a reduced speed limit. The request encompassed an area which was previously reduced to 40 mph. Bruce Nyquist discussed the engineering study recommendation to retain the existing speed limits. There is a high crash location within the area of this request, however, it falls within the portion that is already signed at 40 mph. After a brief discussion, Committee members voted unanimously to accept the engineering study recommendation.

Cambridge, VT 109: The Town of Cambridge also requested a reduced speed limit on the first 0.8 mile section of VT 109. Bruce Nyquist provided the findings of the engineering study. All Committee members voted to approve the engineering study recommendation to reduce the speed limit from 50 mph to 40 mph.

Fairlee, Fairlee State Highway: The Town of Fairlee precipitated this request to reduce the speed limit on the Fairlee State Highway. Bruce Nyquist gave the findings of the engineering study. The Committee members voted unanimously to approve the recommendation of the engineering study to reduce the speed limit from 50 mph to 30 mph.

Hartford (Wilder) US 5: The Town of Hartford, on behalf of several residents, requested that VTrans look at speed limits on the section of US 5 near the Dothan Brook Elementary School. Bruce Nyquist presented the recommendations of the engineering study. The engineering study reviewed the entire stretch of US 5 from Wilder village to VT 10A. Following a brief discussion, the Committee voted unanimously to accept the Staff recommendation to reduce a significant portion to 35 MPH.

Hartford-Woodstock-Bridgewater US 4: This speed limit analysis was brought forth by Traffic Operations Staff. As part of the overall safety improvement project from a year ago, speed limits, on US 4 from the intersection with US 5 in Hartford west to the intersection with VT 100A, were reviewed for consistency and with an eye towards consolidating speed zones. The highest speed limit recommended along this stretch was 45 mph. The recommendations were vetted with the various enforcement agencies that patrol this road. The Town of Bridgewater did send in a letter objecting to the most westerly speed limit revision which would change the speed limit from 40 mph to 45 mph. After several minutes of discussion on the goals of the recommendations the Committee voted unanimously to go with the recommendations of the Staff proposal.

Moretown VT 100B: The Town of Moretown requested that the speed limit on VT 100B through the village be reduced. Bruce Nyquist provided a synopsis of the engineering study recommendations. After a short discussion, the Committee voted unanimously to follow the Staff recommendation and leave the speed limit unchanged on this section VT 100B.

Richmond US 2: This request for the establishment of a “No Parking Zone” came from the District. Bruce Nyquist gave a brief description of the district’s rationale for desiring the “No Parking Zone” at this pull-off used by maintenance vehicles to change direction. The Committee agreed with the recommendation and voted to establish the “No Parking Zone.”

Richmond(Jonesville) US 2 : This request came from the Town of Richmond on behalf of some residents. Bruce Nyquist presented the merits of the engineering recommendation. Some brief discussion centered around the area of the intersection of US 2 & Cochran Rd. The Committee voted unanimously to retain the existing speed limit through this area. They also instructed Traffic Operations Staff to review and upgrade the signing around the above-mentioned intersection. In addition Traffic Operations will work with the district to cut brush to improve sight lines.

Stowe VT 100: The Selectboard requested a speed reduction on VT 100 in the area near the intersection of VT 100 and Moscow Rd. Bruce Nyquist gave a synopsis of the engineering study and accompanying recommendation to retain the existing speed limit. Some discussion ensued concerning the needs of the Moscow Rd. intersection. The Committee voted unanimously to follow the Staff recommendation but they also instructed the pavement management section to consider a left turn lane for inclusion in their upcoming project through this area.

Sudbury VT 30: The Selectboard requested that the speed limit be reduced along a stretch of VT 30 from the intersection with St. Johns Road north to the intersection with State Numbered Route 144. Bruce Nyquist provided a synopsis of the engineering study and Joe Kelly provided specific details. Joe also provided information on some additional actions to be taken to mitigate some of the issues. After some discussion, the Committee members voted to accept the recommendation from the engineering Staff. Advisory speed plaques are also going to be added to the Hidden Drives signs that are on this stretch of VT 30.

Waterbury VT 100: On behalf of a business owner, the Town of Waterbury requested the establishment of a “No Passing Zone.” Bruce Nyquist gave findings of the engineering study and the recommendation to retain the existing passing zone. A brief discussion was had concerning the section of VT 100 in question. It was also noted the few passing opportunities that exist from the interstate to Stowe village. The Committee voted to accept the engineering recommendation which included retention of the existing marked passing zone and the addition of a “Watch for Turning Vehicles” sign for south bound traffic.