

**Special Meeting of the Barre City Council
Held October 18, 2012**

The Special Meeting of the Barre City Council was called to order at 6:30 PM by Mayor Thomas Lauzon. In attendance were: From Ward I, Councilors Charles Dindo and Paul Poirier; from Ward II, Councilors Michael Boutin and Michael Smith; and from Ward III, Councilors Anita Chadderton and Lucas Herring. Also in attendance were City Manager Steven Mackenzie and Clerk Carolyn Dawes.

Main Street Truck Bypass & Elm Street Intersection – Traffic Signals or Flashing Beacon.

Manager Mackenzie reviewed the history of the Big Dig detour and said the contractor is expected to open North Main Street to through traffic on Monday. The Manager said VTRANS and the contractor are scheduled to remove detour signs and change intersection signalization over the weekend in anticipation of opening North Main Street to through traffic. The Manager introduced some of the people in attendance, including Rick Hale (VTRANS), Chris Kepney (Luck Bros.), Reg Abare (City Engineer), Fred Ford, Real Maurice, Art Bombardier, Frank Demell & Paul Beyor (members of the Transportation Advisory Committee – TAC). Manager Mackenzie said he spoke with representatives from VTRANS who said from an agency standpoint a truck route trial period is acceptable, however, written notice would need to be provided to the agency tomorrow so field staff can be alerted to the change.

Roland Bellavance of Bellavance Trucking said he is against the truck route, and talked about making turns from Maple onto Summer and from Summer onto Elm, safety on Summer where there are schools and churches, whether Summer Street is built to handle the weight of truck traffic, and traffic light timing.

Mr. Beyor said he doesn't like the idea of trucks running the street where there a large number of kids, and that the parked cars on North Main Street provide a buffer between the trucks and pedestrians.

Resident Russell Belding said he owns property on Wellington Street and is concerned about that street remaining one way. He said signage needs to be removed and changed so routing is clearer, and that people are still driving down Wellington when they shouldn't be.

Mike Monte, of Monte & Monte on Summer Street, said truck traffic won't bother the business, but he is concerned about the condition of the underlying structures under the street. Mayor Lauzon said the granite culvert under Summer Street will not fail.

Rick Hale from VTRANS said he spoke with the feds about the proposed truck route. The feds have no opinion and said it's a City facility, and that they would not be looking for any refund of funds due any change from the original contract.

Paul Carbonneau from Pruneau-Polli Funeral Home on Summer Street said with schools and churches on the street, the truck route would be asking for problems. Mr. Carbonneau said the truck route will affect 9-10 businesses located on Summer Street, and it's not fair to the businesses and residents on the street. He said on-street parking spaces would be lost.

Summer Street property owner Robert Charter said there are a number of children that are picked up and dropped off at a bus stop on Summer Street, there are multiple crosswalks, playgrounds, churches and elderly residents, and truck traffic wouldn't be safe. He asked about the condition of the infrastructure under Summer Street, and talked about the effect on property values and loss of parking.

Mayor Lauzon said he wants to see the effect of a 30 day trial with vehicular traffic on North Main Street and through truck traffic on Summer Street.

Mr. Beyor said super-sized trucks will need to travel down North Main Street, as they will not be able to make the turns on the truck route. Mayor Lauzon said that it true, as long as the super-sized trucks have the appropriate permits and a police escort as per ordinance.

Mr. Monte said regardless of the decision on the truck route, he would like to see the traffic signals maintained at either end of Summer Street. Mr. Bombardier said if the signals at the Summer/Elm Streets intersection reverts to flashing yellow, the pedestrian crossing poles and signals will be removed.

Mr. Chartier asked about the public's opportunity to comment during any trial period. Mayor Lauzon said any discussions at Council meetings will be warned as public hearings.

Mr. Carbonneau asked about starting a petition to get the public's response, and there was discussion about placing an item on the March Annual (Town) Meeting ballot.

Mr. Abare said in answer to Mr. Chartier's question about the Summer Street infrastructure, that the underground utilities are not as old as those replaced under North Main Street. He said there has not been much deterioration to the pavement on Summer Street due to the detour.

Councilor Poirier made the motion for a 30 day trial, and included in the motion that during the 30 days, the TAC hold a public hearing on the issue and make a recommendation to Council. He also included that a recommendation be made to Council by Manager Mackenzie and Reg Abare. Mayor Lauzon requested that Councilor Poirier amend his motion to include 2 public hearings held by the TAC, and that the TAC's presentation to Council also be warned as a public hearing. Councilor Poirier amended his motion as requested. Councilor Smith seconded the motion as amended.

Mr. Abare said there are two issues for consideration, the truck route and traffic signalization at the Summer/Elm Streets intersection. Manager Mackenzie said signalization would remain as it currently is through any trial period. Councilor Poirier said his motion includes a request for recommendations on both issues.

There was discussion about this weekend's removal of the construction zone detour signs and the need for the City to install truck route signs.

Councilor Boutin asked Bob Sager of Bob's Camera if having the through truck traffic on Summer Street will have a positive effect on the Main Street businesses. Mr. Sager said it would. Councilor Boutin said he supports the truck route through the end of December, but not beyond. Councilor Herring asked when the winter parking ban goes into effect, and Clerk Dawes said November 15th. Councilor Herring asked for information about traffic incidents and accidents during the detour, and Mayor Lauzon said such information can be gotten from the police department. Councilor Chadderton suggested extending the trial period through the end of the year to allow the TAC additional time to conduct its public hearings and gather information. Mayor Lauzon said Council can extend the trial if necessary, and that his intention behind the 30 days is to keep the end date of the trial period as close as possible to the original Big Dig completion date of November 15th.

There was discussion about the effect of the trial period on striping and painting the pavement on Summer Street, and the plans for reconstruction and repaving on Summer Street scheduled for next spring.

Mr. Bellavance requested that the curbs on the corners on Summer Street be rounded so as to protect truck tires from being cut by the sharp edges of the granite curbing. He offered Council members the opportunity to ride along in a truck on the Summer Street route.

To be approved at 10-23-12 Barre City Council Meeting

Councilor Poirier said the general public wants the trucks off Main Street. He recommended that the TAC hold one of its public hearings in the Opera House to accommodate a large turn-out.

Mayor Lauzon said he would have no problem calling a special election and letting the voters decide the issue.

Council voted on Councilor Poirier's motion. **Motion carried with Councilors Boutin and Chadderton voting against.**

Council adjourned at 7:36 PM on motion of Councilor Herring, seconded by Councilor Smith. **Motion carried.**

An audio transcript of the meeting is available through the Clerk's Office.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn S. Dawes, City Clerk

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