

Barre City Transportation Advisory Committee

May 18, 2022 Meeting Minutes

Present: Michael Hellein (Chair), Joshua Akers, Arthur Bombardier, Ericka Reil, Joanne Reynolds, Tina Routier

Absent: Giuliano Cecchinelli (Vice Chair)

Staff: Bill Ahearn (Director of Public Works) Cpl. Jacob Frey (Traffic Supervisor)

1. Call to Order

6:46pm (Late start due to confusion from meeting invite. Chair will have executive assistant create invite for the next meeting.)

2. Adjustments to the Agenda

Added introduction of Jacob Frey as item 5.3.

3. Approval of minutes

Motion Reynolds, Second Reil, unanimous vote to adopt.

4. Public Comment

No public comment.

5. Department transportation report.

1. Ahearn noted that in addition to items included in the meeting packet, changes to traffic signal timing, to ensure vehicles that are too far forward to be detected by the light are still served with a turn arrow, have been effective at improving operation of the intersection and reducing complaints. Washington Street pedestrian crossing curb extensions are underway. The city will be asking the FHSA to clarify for VTrans that our previous use of the default manufacturer settings for digital speed signs should be acceptable - in the meantime we will follow VTrans guidance provided in the meeting packet.

2. Residents brought attention to dangerous speeding and crashes on South Main Street near Elmore, on Cassie Street, and noise concerns from truck jake brakes on River Street.
3. Cpl. Jacob Frey introduced himself. He is the new Traffic Supervisor at the Police Department and he stated he is passionate about traffic enforcement and changing driver behavior.

6. New Business

1. Election of Secretary

No secretary was nominated or elected. Minute-taking responsibilities will fall to Vice Chair or Chair for the time being.

2. Report back on City Council decision on Merchant Street Project

Hellein informed the committee that City Council decided to retain the existing design for this intersection from VTrans. He said he was very pleased that he and Ahearn were able to provide a joint memo and work together to inform Council, and that he especially wants to be sure that the committee respects council's time and priorities. Ahearn said the discussion of priorities was productive and the committee asking questions is good for the community at large.

3. Review of data collected from digital speed signs

Ahearn informed the committee that an 85th percentile speed 3mph or more above the posted limit suggests a digital speed sign does not need to be removed, and all locations met that threshold. He said that the signs should be operated in dark mode at times to capture the speeds that are prevalent without digital signs, as the presence of signs slows vehicles 3-8mph.

Akers asked if posted speed transitions caused any higher speeds. Ahearn said that all of these locations were selected to be well within the 25mph zone, so high speeds are not a result of the posted speed change.

4. Discussion of traffic calming and speed control options for city gateways

Ahearn noted that to slow vehicles, a gateway needs to engage the driver across their field of vision. For example, gate-posting signs (putting one on each side) can improve effectiveness at 35%. He

recommended targeting enforcement for the most effective times of day.

Reynolds asked if allowing parking on street would help. Ahearn said yes, just striping spaces can help establish a rhythm. He also suggested using foglines and pedestrian symbols will help. Hellein mentioned that parking stalls by themselves may not help, Washington Street between Perry and Spaulding for example, and it may be necessary to install something to protect spaces.

Akers compared two municipalities' approaches, noting that Burlington has parking on both sides (making him concerned about pedestrians emerging from between cars), while Proctor uses small signs just saying slow down (making him think, "there are families here I need to slow down")

Ahearn mentioned water-filled barriers that may be a good protection for parking. Hellein asked about the possibility of a median used for crossings in the gateway areas, but worried about cost. Ahearn said that it may be a good fit for these areas and the cost may not be prohibitive. Hellein asked if a speed table might be possible. Ahearn said that one could, but it would need to have a different design than our current speed tables because of the higher volume of traffic. He also mentioned that we should consider elevated crosswalks (Richardson road as example).

7. Confirm next date of meeting

Next meeting will be June 15, 2022.

8. Roundtable

Bombardier noted that he had observed dirt bikes on sidewalks, and staff acknowledged this is a police issue for enforcement (though it can be difficult to be timely enough).

9. Adjourn

8:13pm, **Motion Reynolds, Second Routhier, unanimous vote to adjourn.**