



**TOWN OF BEDFORD
HIGHWAY SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES**

February 22, 2022

A meeting of the Bedford Highway Safety Committee (HSC) was held on Tuesday, February 22, 2022 in the Bedford Meeting Room, 10 Meetinghouse Road (BCTV). Present were John J. Bryfonski (Chief of Police/Chair), Jeff Foote (Director of Public Works), Lori Radke (Town Council), Bill Jean (Resident), and Anne Wiggin (School Bus Coordinator). Absent were Scott Hunter (Fire Chief/Vice Chair), Jerry Gagne (Alternate Resident) and Ken Peterson (Resident).

I Call to Order: 7:18 A.M.

II. Quorum Count:

III. Announcements:

Committee Member Changes: Since our last meeting in October, we've had some changes to our Town Highway Safety Committee as follows:

First, I want to acknowledge the work of former Town Councilor Kelleigh Murphy who recently advised the Town Council she was no longer able to serve in her position on the Town Council due to professional and personal commitments. As a result, Ms. Murphy is no longer serving as a Town Councilor Alternate on the Highway Safety Committee.

In the past 10-years plus as Chair, Ms. Murphy served on the Highway Safety Committee as a Town Council Member and later as a Town Council Alternate in separate terms.

Ms. Murphy was a dedicated, involved, engaged and insightful member and contributor to the issues before the Highway Safety Committee and the Town. She was diligent in representing her constituents, you the public, before the Committee addressing a plethora of highway safety related issues; many of which resulted in action taken by the Committee that made Bedford's roads, streets and highways safe.

On behalf of the Town of Bedford, Town Council, Town Manager, Highway Safety Committee and Bedford Police Department I want to express our sincere appreciation to Ms. Murphy for all the early mornings in attendance at our meetings and for providing keen insight and guidance to the Highway Safety Committee.

NEXT, I want to acknowledge Ms. Madonna Lovett Repeta, Resident Member of the Highway Safety Committee for more than 10-years. During her tenure on the Highway Safety Committee Ms. Repeta was keenly engaged in all matters brought forth before the Committee. She offered her insight based on her extensive knowledge of the Town, traffic and pedestrian patterns, volume and personal experience related to all things related to highway safety.

Ms. Repeta often brought forward ideas, options and offered guidance to the committee that helped us through any number of complex and difficult issues that impacted residents and visitors using our roads, streets and highways. She always kept the safety of our motorists, pedestrians, joggers, walkers, and bicyclists first and foremost. As Chair, when searching for a

motion on an agenda item, I could usually count on Madonna to offer up a motion for the committee to address and deliberate.

I have often said it takes a community to be safe; not just the police department but the community itself is a critical and integral part of how we address public safety issues, and it is volunteers like Ms. Repeta who take time out of their busy schedules for a decade or more to help keep us safe.

So again, on behalf of the Town of Bedford, Bedford Town Council, Town Manager and Bedford Police Department I want to express our deepest appreciation to Ms. Madonna Lovett Repeta for her many years of service to the Town as a member of the Bedford Highway Safety Committee.

With the departure of Ms. Repeta, I have the pleasure of announcing Committee Member Ken Peterson Resident Alternate has been appointed to a full member by the Town Council at its January 26, 2022, meeting.

As many of you know, Ken served for many years on the Highway Safety Committee in different capacities including Town Councilor, Resident and most recently Resident Alternate.

During his previous terms on the Committee Ken was responsible for bring a number of issues before the committee that resulted in recommendations from the Committee to the Town Council that later enacted ordinances or changes to ordinances. Probably the most notable of Ken's previous efforts involved his work in changing and upgrading the No Thru Trucking ordinance. This is only one example of his thoughtful and dedicated work on this committee. Although Ken was not able to be with us today due to a personal commitment, he's been a stalwart on the committee for many years and so we welcome him back as a Resident Member and look forward to his assistance in guiding the Highway Safety Committee forward making Bedford a more safe community.

Finally, I want to acknowledge all the members of the committee and especially the unpaid citizen volunteers including Town Council members, residents and alternates who disrupt their schedules to serve on the Highway Safety Committee.

You all do important work in keeping our community safe; its unpaid and sometimes a thankless position, but nevertheless so important to have your collective input, guidance, advice and leadership.

IV. Approval of Minutes from October 26, 2021

Motion by Bill Jean to accept the October 26, 2021, meeting minutes, **seconded** by Councilor Radke. **Vote taken – Motion Passed.**

V. Correspondence/Communications – No Correspondence to report.

VI. Sub Committee Reports – None

VII. New Business:

- 1. Request for reduction to the Speed Limit Sign from 30 mph to 25 mph in the vicinity of Presidential/Kennedy and Hamilton.**

On December 28, 2021, Town Resident Ms. Pamela Smart contacted the Highway Safety Committee by email to request an opportunity to make a presentation to the Committee regarding speeding in her neighborhood.

Pamela Smart resident of 11 Hamilton Way for the past 39 years. Many incidents have occurred over the years including damage to our trailer and fence. It is very difficult to back out of our driveway due to a curve and a hill coming. The most recent incident involved a six (6) year old boy that was nearly hit by one of the well-known speeders. Ms. Smart indicated the Police Department advised her to circulate a petition amongst the neighborhood residents relative to a reduction in the speed limit. Ms. Smart stated a petition was circulated that reflects support/signatures from 44 out of 48 homes in the neighborhood. Ms. Smart noted Kennedy Dr. is a straight away, that leads to increased speed up to the corner where Kennedy, Hamilton and Presidential all converge. Ms. Smart stated there have been too many close calls and we (Ms. Smart and her neighbors) request the HSC consider reducing the speed limit from 30 to 25 before something happens.

Kathy Johnson 14 Presidential Rd. This is a neighborhood of people, children and pets with a lot of people being out on the road. The speeding cars are a real issue. This is a closed neighborhood, so there is no reason for anyone to be speeding 30 to 35 mph. The signed petition shows the strong concern for the reduction in speed.

Margaret O'Connell 15 Hamilton Way. Prior to the child almost being hit, two (2) mailboxes were taken out, one (1) vehicle went into a neighbor's yard over the stone wall and totaled their vehicle. Two (2) other vehicles ended up in the ditch that is in front of my house.

Chief Bryfonski noted that speeding is endemic in the State of NH and not just in Bedford. The chief indicated NH ranks amongst the worst states in terms of compliance with speed limits and offered his opinion as to why NH and Bedford suffers from endemic speeding: First, the relative low number of law enforcement officers and troopers available to focus just on traffic enforcement. Every police department in the state is resource challenged including Bedford with 200 miles of roads to police with only four (4) officers who are also required to answer an increasing number of calls for service that takes them away from proactive traffic enforcement. Additionally, the state's fine and fee structure is, in the chief's opinion, much too low to discourage people from violating vehicle and traffic laws. The chief stated that traffic safety is one of the Bedford Police Department's top priorities and underscored the residents who stated the area under discussion is a closed neighborhood and most likely the majority of the speeders are residents or visitors. In response to a question from a resident the chief encouraged residents to report speeding vehicles to the police department every time it occurs and to provide the license plate number so the investigating officer can contact the owner/operator and discuss the complaint and make a record of it in our system so that other officers will know this operator had been previously accused of speeding.

Councilor Radke: Has there been any mitigation such as putting up the message board to track the speed?

Ms. Smart: Yes, the radar trailer was placed on the straight away so when people saw this they would slow down and then speed up again once they passed the trailer. I am not sure if lowering the speed limit will help, but we do not know what else to do and we do not want something (bad) to happen.

Ms. O'Connell: Is there a possibility to put a stop sign at the intersection of Kennedy/ Presidential and Hamilton?

Chief Bryfonski: The Bedford Police Department deployed our radar trailer in the neighborhood last year with some additional traffic enforcement noting motorists usually slow down if the radar trailer indicates they are speeding. However, once the radar trailer and traffic enforcement is removed, people tend to revert back to their regular practices. The chief also noted the police department acquired some traffic volume and speed data in July 2021 noting the volume was low and likely restricted to mostly residents in the neighborhood.

Director Foote: I am not in favor of these stop signs in a low volume area. When we introduce mid-point stop signs, people will stop the first couple of times, then it becomes a rolling stop which is not effective, which causes another level of offender. All too often we hear it's the residents in the area that are the speeding offenders. If we were to introduce a lower speed, where would you propose the sign(s)?

Ms. Smart: Probably place the signs somewhere entering the neighborhood and someplace else on Kennedy. It is not just the residents that speed, the Pinard truck flies around the corner coming and going past my home. If the stop signs cause a rolling stop doesn't that slow them down? Also, this is a bus stop, and one child stays in the mom's car until the bus comes and the mom will walk her in front of the bus because the cars are coming and going. Truthfully, I feel this is the worst spot to have a bus stop. They pick up where the three (3) streets come together, and it is just unsafe. There are three (3) buses in the morning and two (2) around 8-830 they fly through the neighborhood. I feel the stop sign would slow people which is a good thing.

Councilor Radke: What if you go back to all the residents and ask them how they would feel about the stop sign? I wonder if that would be the next step or an option.

Ms. Smart: That would be a project because everyone thought we were selling something.

Councilor Radke: Maybe even flyers in the mailbox?

Director Foote: People living in the area would probably not be interested (in introducing a stop).

Mr. Smart: No one will support a stop sign as it is an inconvenience to them.

Chief Bryfonski: I agree that you would not get support for a stop sign. This committee does have precedence for setting/lowering speed limit in certain closed loop neighborhoods. This may help a little and also help the officers lower the tolerance for issuing summonses. If recommended, there is a procedure/process, and it will take some time to get approval from the Town Council etc.

Director Foote: I do support lowering the speed based on the testimony today. Public works is the one who determines where the signage should go and sometimes the abutters are not too happy. If you have any indication as to where you want the signage that would help public works.

Ms. Smart: Doesn't the town own 10 feet?

Director Foote: The right of way varies depending on the road and we also try to be good neighbors.

Ms. Smart: I would be happy to put the sign in front of my house.

Director Foote: Is that a legitimate place to put it?

Ms. Smart: Probably right at that pole coming in at the curve.

Director Foote: The opposite direction?

Mr. Smart: Probably right near the intersection.

Director Foote: We really don't have to act on the location today.

Ms. O'Connell: Since we know who the speeders are, can we get the plate, vehicle and owner and contact the police department and give them the information is this still an option?

Chief Bryfonski: Yes, no legal action can be taken because the officer did not witness the violation, but the offender will be contacted by a police officer to discuss the allegation. If residents report a repeat speeding offender multiple times, the information is recorded and if the speeder is stopped by another officer for speeding, the information in the system may influence the officer's determination to issue a summons.

Motion by Bill Jean: The HSC recommend to the Town Council to reduce the speed limit in the vicinity of Presidential, Kennedy, and Hamilton from 30 mph to 25 mph and that the location of signage will be determined by input to the DPW – **Seconded** by Councilor Radke – **all in favor Motion Passed.**

Chief Bryfonski: Anne Wiggin transportation person for the school district will contact the truck center regarding the bus drivers that have that route to make sure they follow the speed limit.

VIII. Comments or Concerns

Community Announcements

1. Clean Up Bedford Day Saturday April 16, 2022

Meeting adjourned 7:56 am
Respectfully submitted
Charlene T. Robinson