



TOWN OF BEDFORD

HIGHWAY SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

June 22, 2021

A meeting of the Bedford Highway Safety Committee (HSC) was held on Tuesday, June 22, 2021 in the Bedford Meeting Room, 10 Meetinghouse Road (BCTV). Present were John J. Bryfonski (Chief of Police/Chair), Lori Radke (Town Council), Kelleigh Murphy (Alternate Councilor), Bill Jean (Resident) Jerry Gagne (Alternate Resident), Ken Peterson (Alternate Resident) and Anne Wiggin (School Bus Coordinator). Absent were Scott Hunter (Fire Chief/Vice Chair), Jeff Foote (Director of Public Works) and Madonna Lovett Repeta (Resident). Jeanne T. Walker P.E. (Town Engineer/Asst. Director of Public Works) present for Jeff Foote.

I. Call to Order: 7:15 A.M.

II. Quorum Count:

III. Approval of Minutes from April 27, 2021

Motion by Ken Peterson to accept the April 27, 2021 meeting minutes, **seconded** by Bill Jean.
Vote taken – Motion Passed

IV. Correspondence/Communications

- A. Correspondence sent to Town Manager reference the HSC's recommendation to install a Cross Walk at Joppa Hill Educational Farm.

V. Sub Committee Reports

- A. None-

VI. New Business:

A. Crosswalk Request County Road at Wright Acres:

On June 3, 2021, Ms. Celia Gatsas <Celiagatsas@yahoo.com> 34 Wright Acres Road wrote to the committee on behalf of several other residents of both Wright Acres Road and County Road to start a conversation regarding the acquisition of a safe crossing from Wright Acres Road across County Road.

According to Ms. Gatsas, there are a total of 17 children (ages 2 months-16 years) who have, are or will be walking or biking to McKelvie, Ross Lurgio or the High School. Due to the high volume of traffic, some at high speeds, safely crossing the street especially at arrival and dismissal times is challenging.

Ms. Gatsas indicated after school and evening activities at Preston Park increase the traffic in her area significantly. Ms. Gatsas indicated that most recently, on the evening of 5/24, upwards of 100 cars were parked within the SAU parking lot, County Road and throughout Wright Acres.

Ms. Gatsas stated that while these events are exciting to have so close to us, having a crosswalk would slow traffic down as well as provide safer crossing for pedestrians who need to park on Wright Acres to access the field.

Ms. Gatsas indicated Wright Acres Road is used by the Lurgio and High School cross country teams, during which these students need to cross County Road to access Wright Acres. In addition, County Road is used quite extensively by bikers, runners, families with strollers, etc.

Ms. Gatsas acknowledged a crosswalk is not in the master plan for the Town of Bedford, and without a sidewalk on County, a crosswalk is not in accordance with the ADA.

Follow Up Communication from Director Foote/DPW: Director Foote advised Ms. Robinson, our committee secretary on June 11, 2021 1:34 PM that a person who Director Foote did not recall from Wright Acres approached DPW about a crosswalk in the past.

Director Foote indicated his position is that crosswalks need infrastructure on each side of the road; Curbing/tip downs/ sidewalk to Liberty Hill Road for ADA compliance; crosswalks cannot cross and terminate into a gavel shoulder. Director Foote's quick estimate for such infrastructure and crosswalk is at least \$120,000.

[NOTE: This committee recently recommended a crosswalk at the Joppa Hill Educational Farm where this no supporting infrastructure. There will be improvements on both sides of JHF. On the barn side there is paved access to the barn, on the opposite field side a paved drive apron and an adjacent HC spot is proposed.]

Also note that at Wright Acres and County the field side has parallel vehicle parking along County for events with no separation between vehicles and road- same condition DPW eliminated in front of Memorial School in 2015, which was deemed hazardous.

If the committee wants to recommend a crosswalk based on safety, the next steps would be for the Council to act on the recommendation. The Council would ask DPW to design the improvements and develop a cost estimate for consideration in the 2022 budget or beyond if they so choose.

A sidewalk all the way along County Road would be a significant improvement to safety and is already recommended by the Town's Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan (Map on p. 16 of the attachment), but it is expensive.

The Council could also recommend we pursue grants to complete the project and only proceed if grants are obtained. Parking could also be eliminated within a recommended number of feet of the crosswalk that would help.

Celia Gatsas, 34 Wright Acres. I agree with what the Chief has said and adding a sidewalk would also be a benefit. The volume of traffic is especially heavy during school arrival and dismissal times and the use of Preston Field adds to the traffic which is causing a safety issue to cross the street.

Jennifer Rivers, 26 Wright Acres. A cross walk would be peace of mind for the families of Wright Acres when the children have to cross the street to go to McKelvie School.

This will also benefit the community as well going to and from events. Often times when people are walking, cars are going around the people and a sidewalk would be a great benefit.

Chief Bryfonski: Is it a regular occurrence that people using Preston Field use Wright Acres for parking?

Ms. Rivers: Definitely in the spring and there is a steady flow of people crossing the street.

Mr. Peterson: Is there a problem with people parking illegally?

Ms. Rivers: Yes, there is.

Councilor Radke: Is it possible to put "No parking Sign" on Wright Acres?

Chief Bryfonski: This would cause cars to park elsewhere, likely on County Rd.

Mr. Peterson: Is it illegal to park on the travel portion of the road?

Chief Bryfonski: Yes. From my perspective, sidewalks and crosswalks are the best way to keep people safe.

Mr. Peterson: Is there any COVID money coming to the town that could be used for the crosswalk and sidewalks?

Councilor Radke: There is money from the American Rescue Act, but none of that can be earmarked for sidewalks. There is a TAP GRANT that is 80/20 and we are the 20 and this would be a perfect project for this grant. There is a huge amount of traffic/pedestrians and if any sidewalks are needed in town this is where one should be, and I would be in support of this. I don't think I would be in support of just doing a crosswalk without the sidewalks, I believe we need to do this right.

Jerry Gagne: Is the crossing at the south entrance to Wright Acre?

Ms. Gatsas: We were hoping for one crossing close to McKelvie.

Chief Bryfonski: Is there pedestrian traffic that transits down to the SAU building and back into the fields?

Michael Kenney, 15 Wright Acres. Yes, I think it should go down all the way to the SAU. The SAU is where most of the baseball viewers park and there is a lot of activity at McKelvie's new track and field.

Bill Jean: Is there an enforcement component that goes along with the crosswalks to stop the pedestrian traffic?

Chief Bryfonski: Cautionary signage can be placed to recommend a slower speed upon approach to a crosswalk.

Bill Jean: I support this along with Councilor Radke that it is best to incorporate the sidewalk with the crosswalk as this is a prime location.

Ken Peterson: I totally support the package of a crosswalk and sidewalk and I would not want to discount just a crosswalk if that is all the funding we can get, at least start with the crosswalk, and then go with the sidewalks. Does the town have crossing guards?

Chief Bryfonski: No.

Jerry Gagne: The other thing to consider when putting in sidewalks to protect the pedestrian traffic, there is curbing, drainage etc. then this turns into a large construction project.

Chief Bryfonski: This particular location falls within the scope of a lot of pedestrian traffic that is associated with the schools and fields with various activities from Nashua Road all the way down to McKelvie.

Motion by Chief Bryfonski: The HSC recommends to the Town Manager and Town Council to explore and develop plans and a cost estimate to build sidewalks and required supporting infrastructure that extends from the intersection of County Road at Liberty Hill Road at McKelvie School along County Road terminating at the SAU building at 103 County Road and to incorporate one crosswalk with appropriate signage and highway markings at the intersection of Wright Acres (west) and County Road (closest to McKelvie School) contingent upon a grant or other funding that would support the project. **Seconded** by Bill Jean for discussion.

Councilor Murphy: Can we set a timeframe if for some reason we cannot obtain grant funding then we could revisit the issue for a crosswalk.

Chief Bryfonski: I **amend** my **Motion** to indicate that the committee would recommend the same motion with the acknowledgement that grant funding to any percentage that would be agreeable to the Town Council for a substantial portion of the project.

Ken Peterson: Should we be talking about the funding as opposed to the Safety Committee is recommending to the Town Council and Town Manager.

Councilor Radke: We need to open up options.

Motion by Chief Bryfonski to withdraw his motion.

Second Motion by Chief Bryfonski: The HSC recommends to the Town Manager and Town Council to explore and develop plans and a cost estimate to build sidewalks and required supporting infrastructure that extends from the intersection of County Road at Liberty Hill Road at McKelvie School along County Road terminating at the SAU building at 103 County Road and to incorporate one crosswalk with appropriate signage and highway markings at the intersection of Wright Acres (west) and County Road (closest to McKelvie School). The HSC recommends the Town Manager and Town Council prioritize the installation of the above proposed crosswalk if funding is not available to complete the entire project. **Seconded by Jean Bill.**

Councilor Radke: Bill Jean any idea of the cost of this project?

Chief Bryfonski: Previous correspondence from Director Foote estimated \$124,000 for a crosswalk only.

Ms. Walker: According to ADA rules you are not supposed to install crosswalks partially. Per Director Foote the whole thing can be built, and it would be expensive, but we cannot build a partial crosswalk. If we do not receive the funding for the sidewalk will this come back to the HSC because we will have the same issue.

Chief Bryfonski: I do not think it needs to come back to the HSC. The HSC recommends to the Town Council/Town Manager and if they choose to do something different that is their prerogative. There are no sidewalks on Joppa Hill Road, and we are installing a crosswalk there. There may be ways to meet ADA requirements to install a partial sidewalk.

Jerry Gagne: Part of the issue is the parking that occurs on County Rd and there was some consideration back when the ball field was being designed to put additional parking on the school property. The problem is, it is all ledge where the parking lot would go which would be costly. To be part of the project you are going to have to deal with the parking on County Rd and get it off of County Rd and put it somewhere else.

Chief Bryfonski: There is ample parking at the SAU, however no one wants to make the trip. If the sidewalk is installed and there is no parking it will force people to park at McKelvie or at the SAU or park on Wright Acres Rd.

Councilor Radke: Residents of Wright Acres – if there is a crosswalk wouldn't that encourage people to park on Wright Acres?

Ms. Gatsas: If the crosswalk is at the Wright Acres exit/entrance closest to Liberty Hill, there is an empty lot right on Wright Acres where there is no lawn for them to park on.

Chief Bryfonski: Getting the pedestrians off the road onto the sidewalk is always the safest thing to do as costly as it may be. What is more costly? Someone getting hit or building a sidewalk?

All in the favor of the Motion – Motion passed.

VII. Old Business

A. Cross Walk at Joppa Hill Farm: Update

B. Tirrell Rd & Stephanie Dr: Resident(s) concerns for traffic safety.

1. PD traffic safety and additional directed patrols conducted in the area.
2. Update from DPW on signage and intersection: No information available from DPW.

C. Ministerial Rd: Request for speed limit signage; concern for speeding

1. Update from DPW regarding the placement of an additional speed limit sign on Ministerial: No information available from DPW.

VIII. Comments or Concerns:

A. Community Announcements: Chief Bryfonski

1. See Something – Say Something-encouraging all residents to report suspicious activity.
2. While miles driven declined by 13% last year traffic fatalities are up.
3. Distracted Driving / Speed / Signal Violations and DWI are primary causes for personal injury accidents.
4. Motorcycle accidents have increased significantly with warmer weather.

B. Highway Safety:

1. Pedestrian – Joggers – Bicyclist SAFETY-follow the rules of the road; wear reflective clothing; give bicycles at least 3-feet of space.
2. Motorcycle Safety-watch out for motorcycles.
3. Distracted Driving is the main cause of collisions in Bedford.
4. Don't Drink & Drive and Drugged Driving is DWI

IX. Adjournment

Motion by Bill Jean seconded by Chief Bryfonski all in favor Meeting adjourned at 8:04.

**Respectfully submitted
Charlene Robinson**