



**ESSEX PLANNING COMMISSION  
Traffic Options Promoting Public Safety (TOPPS)  
Ad-Hoc Subcommittee**

**REGULAR MEETING  
Thursday, March 21, 2013  
10:00 a.m.  
Essex Town Hall  
Meeting Room A – 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor**

**MINUTES**

1. Call To Order : Claire Tiernan called the meeting to order at 10:05 p.m. In attendance were Subcommittee members Susan Malan, Janice Ehle/Meyer. Also in attendance were Essex Fire Chief Steve Olson and Town Planner John Guskowski.
2. Approval of Minutes: November 13, 2012: Minutes were approved by consensus of the subcommittee
3. Update on Traffic Counts: Janice Ehle/Meyer updated the group on traffic data collected on West Avenue, Main Street Ivoryton, North Main Street near Dennison Road and Mares Hill Road. Of particular note by the subcommittee were the high speeds noted on Mares Hill Road. The 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed was recorded at 45 mph, which is 20 mph over the posted limit.

The subcommittee agreed that traffic calming should take place on Mares Hill Road, noting its presence on the Transportation Study priority list. Claire Tiernan discussed the need of the subcommittee to identify a specific issue for traffic calming, draw on lessons from Grove Street, and propose measurable solutions. It was generally agreed that an 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed of 20 mph over the posted limit was a significant problem, and further exacerbated hazardous intersection issues downhill at the junction of Mares Hill and Westbrook Road. Given that Mares Hill is exclusively residential, the direct applicability of Grove Street-style approaches is limited.

Given that the intersection of Old Dobbin Lane is at a critical juncture of the road, at a point where cars are increasing speed going down the hill and also creating ingress/egress problems at Old Dobbin, a stop-sign controlled intersection would be an effective solution. This will require approval of the Traffic Authority. Short-term approaches would also include increased police presence on Mares Hill and the temporary placement of the speed monitoring sign to alert drivers of their vehicular speeds. Reconfiguration of the intersection with Westbrook Road is a more complicated but important improvement. It was also noted that there are no sidewalks or wide shoulders on Mares Hill, discouraging pedestrian usage.

The subcommittee agreed on several action items with regard to this area, including: Janice Ehle/Meyer will use the traffic-count tubes to record counts and speeds on Walnut Street between Comstock and Stonebrook Roads, John Guskowski will approach Trooper Kerry Taylor about placing the speed-monitoring sign on Mares Hill, and Claire Tiernan will request that the Planning Commission endorse the recommendations of increased police presence on

Mares Hill and the creation of a three-way stop at the intersection of Mares Hill and Old Dobbin Lane.

4. Grove Street Updates – Discussion with Selectmen and Fire Department: Susan Malan noted that the mid-crosswalk pedestrian seems to be effective as a speed-reducer on Grove Street. Many of the subcommittee's recommendations will be addressed by the Selectmen (Traffic Authority) after the town budget process has concluded.
5. Next Steps: The subcommittee reviewed the list of traffic calming priorities in the Transportation Study and discussed its potential action items or recommendations. The Centerbrook intersection of Main Street, Westbrook Road, and Deep River Road has a number of issues that are addressed elsewhere in the Transportation Study but should be followed up. The portion of Westbrook Road between Bokum and Centerbrook is a potential State DOT priority for the Region, and John Guskowski will track this with RiverCOG. The subcommittee will also follow up with the Selectmen on Grove Street work after budget season.
6. Other Business: There was no other business.
7. Adjournment: Chair Tiernan adjourned the meeting at 11:10 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John P. Guskowski, AICP  
Town Planner (Consulting)