



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

**SPECIAL MEETING
Thursday, October 18, 2012
1:00 p.m.
Essex Town Hall
Meeting Room A – 2nd Floor**

MINUTES

1. Call To Order : Claire Tiernan called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m. In attendance were Subcommittee members Stacia Libby, Susan Malan, Dave Caroline, and Janice Ehle/Meyer. Also in attendance were First Selectman Norman Needleman, Essex Fire Chief Steve Olson, and Town Planner John Guskowski.
2. Approval of Minutes: September 19, 2012: Minutes were approved by consensus of the subcommittee
3. Update on Traffic Counts: Janice Ehle/Meyer updated the group on traffic counts collected on West Avenue. High traffic volumes were noted on, as well as speeds posted limits. Over 90% of vehicles exceeded posted limits. Next locations for traffic counts will be North Main Street near Dennison Road and Main Street, Ivoryton, near Ebony Street.
4. Grove Street Updates – Discussion with Selectmen and Fire Department: First Selectman Needleman and Chief Olson discussed the issue of the island at the Grove Street/West Avenue intersection and the desire to remove it (and the telephone pole in the island) for safety reasons. Chief Olson indicated that fire trucks have significant difficulty with the left turn from West to Grove around the island, and even simply removing the pole was not a solution. Members of the Subcommittee expressed the desire to ensure slow travel speeds entering Grove Street and worried that island removal will facilitate unsafe turns. Selectman Needleman shared these concerns and offered that narrowing the mouth of Grove Street by changing curbing to “T-up” the intersection will help slow turning movements both inbound to and outbound from Grove Street. The Subcommittee generally agreed that this was a reasonable approach. Selectman Needleman also discussed the increase in traffic enforcement that would be happening thanks to the increase in coverage by the Resident Troopers. He believes increased enforcement will substantially help calm traffic and reduce speeding.

Selectman Needleman also discussed the removal of shrubs along the Town Hall driveways and crosswalk area to allow pedestrians to be seen more easily for the crosswalk. He discussed potential signage or marking improvements at this crosswalk, and also how many of the Town’s crosswalks are very inconsistent in their road-surface marking and warning signs. He and Dave Caroline will be working to codify the Town’s approach to crosswalks. Crosswalk paint and treatment standards were discussed.

Finally, Selectman Needleman discussed the need to start increasing the size of street signs, particularly those Town roads that intersect with State Highways. The traffic sign sizing standards were discussed, and Selectman Needleman asked if the Subcommittee could help with this effort. It was noted that the original charge of the Subcommittee was somewhat narrow, but could be broadened upon approval from the Planning Commission.

5. Next Steps: The Planning Commission will be asked to consider expanding the scope and charge of the Subcommittee to include assisting the Traffic Authority with analysis and recommendations for crosswalks and road signs. Resident Trooper will be invited to participate on the Subcommittee, beginning in November. Following discussion with Troopers, Subcommittee and Planning will seek to carry Grove Street recommendations to Traffic Authority.
6. Other Business: There was no other business.
7. Adjournment: Chair Tiernan adjourned the meeting at 2:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John P. Guskowski, AICP
Town Planner (Consulting)