



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

**SPECIAL MEETING
Tuesday, November 13, 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 1:15 p.m. In attendance were Subcommittee members Susan Malan, Dave Caroline, and Susan VanBenschoten. Also in attendance were Resident Trooper Kerry Taylor, Essex Police Officer Russ Gingras, and Town Planner John Guszkowski. Claire Tiernan welcomed the police officers and provided an overview of the subcommittee's background and charge.
2. Approval of Minutes: October 18, 2012: Minutes were approved by consensus of the subcommittee
3. Update on Traffic Counts: Janice Ehle/Meyer was not in attendance to update the group on recent traffic counts. It is believed that the traffic counting devices were placed on North Main Street near Dennison Road and then along Main Street in Ivoryton, beyond Walnut Street. It is hoped that they could next be placed on Mares Hill Road, between Birch Mill and Northwinds. John Guszkowski will communicate this with Janice.
4. Grove Street Updates – Discussion with Police: Gingras and Taylor were both generally in agreement with the concept of removing the telephone pole and traffic island from the Grove/West intersection, but agreed that the curbing or intersection itself could be modified to slow traffic. Susan VanBenschoten discussed the possibility of making the island mountable by trucks so that it could remain in place and continue to serve as a gateway. She described the traffic system importance of gateways at both ends of Grove Street. Trooper Taylor reviewed the recommendations for traffic calming on Grove Street approved by the Subcommittee over the summer, and agreed with most. She disagreed with the idea of removing the centerline from Grove Street, believing it was an important visual cue to drivers. There was general consensus that the sharrows were a good first step, should be painted on both sides of the road, and should be accompanied by some public information about sharing the road.

The group was also in agreement that the in-street pedestrian crossing signs were excellent tools for slowing traffic, but responsibility for daily placement and removal of the signs were an issue. John Guszkowski suggested that either Town Hall staff or Library staff could be responsible for this, as whatever days the Town Hall or Library were open would be key days for pedestrian traffic. It was agreed that Library staff should be involved in this discussion.

A general discussion was held about enforcement, and the wisdom of lowering speed limits. Speed humps, which raise road level approximately 4" over 10', were good approaches, and may

be effective at the gateways to Grove Street as well as the intersection of High Street. Cost is a factor for this approach.

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. John Guskowski will initiate discussion with the Library staff about their willingness to assume responsibility for managing an in-road pedestrian sign. He will also confer with the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) to determine the best interval for painting sharrow on both sides of Grove Street. The Subcommittee's recommendation for the STEAP funds will be that the "shared street" design funds be extended to include a design for the Grove/West intersection to be a true gateway, particularly if the island is to be removed. It was also agreed that the Subcommittee would recommend and participate in a Public Information Session to discuss its work and the plans for the STEAP grant renovations.
6. Other Business: There was no other business.
7. Adjournment: Chair Tiernan adjourned the meeting at 2:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John P. Guskowski, AICP
Town Planner (Consulting)