



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

**REGULAR MEETING**  
**Thursday, April 18, 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, Susan VanBenschoten, Dave Caroline, Joe Budrow, and John Guskowski
2. Approval of Minutes: March 21, 2013: Minutes were approved by consensus of the subcommittee
3. Update on Traffic Counts: There was no new traffic count/speed data to review. The subcommittee reviewed traffic speeds on Mares Hill Road and confirmed that the portion of the road with speed problems was primarily between Old Dobbin and Birch Mill. The posted speed for that area is 25 mph, and the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed recorded was 45 mph.
4. Grove Street Updates – Discussion with Selectmen and Fire Department: A general discussion was held on the preliminary design of the Town Hall parking area per the “Civic Campus” STEAP grant, as well as the pending removal of the traffic island at the mouth of Grove Street at West Avenue. There was general agreement that the in-road pedestrian sign between Town Hall and the Library had been highly effective, and the Subcommittee looked forward to seeing some formal plans to narrow the intersection and revise the crosswalk at West Avenue when the traffic island is to be removed.

Claire Tiernan asked if there were any “lessons learned” thus far on Grove Street that could be applicable to other roads for traffic calming purposes. John Guskowski stated that the Board of Selectmen still intended to address the Subcommittee’s recommendations on Grove Street, but were waiting until after budgetary discussions had concluded, so many lessons are still yet to be learned. Susan VanBenschoten stated that in many ways Grove Street is unique and techniques used on that street may not be directly applicable to other areas of town.

5. Mares Hill Road Discussion - Recommendations: The Subcommittee reviewed their discussion from last meeting and the commentary provided via email by Susan VanBenschoten. Because there is no sight-line issue or other contributing factor, Susan suggested that a stop sign at Old Dobbin and Mares Hill was not appropriate or supported by MUCTD. She suggested that a series of speed humps be placed between Old Dobbin and Northwinds to slow traffic. The group agreed with the wisdom and approach of the recommendation, and discussed the concept of temporary humps versus a permanent modification of the pavement. Dave Caroline believed that the permanent humps would be more cost effective and easier than dealing with temporary structures. The Subcommittee agreed that the placement of these speed humps, and recording

differences in speeds, on Mares Hill could serve as a good template for other areas in Town, such as Walnut Street. The Subcommittee agreed, by consensus, to forward that recommendation to the Planning Commission. Susan VanBenschoten volunteered to make specific recommendation as to the design and placement of the speed humps along Mares Hill Road.

Other discussion took place regarding plantings and street trees, agreeing that street trees could be an effective traffic calming and beautification approach along Main Street in Ivoryton between Walnut Street and Bushy Hill/Pond Meadow, but the type of tree should be carefully chosen so as not to interfere with the pavement of the new sidewalks.

6. Other Business: Because of a conflict with a regular Town Hall Department Head meeting, First Selectmen Needleman had inquired about the potential of moving the time of the TOPPS meeting. It was decided that moving the time of the TOPPS meeting to 9:00 a.m. on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday was acceptable.
7. Adjournment: Chair Tiernan adjourned the meeting at 11:05 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John P. Guskowski, AICP  
Town Planner (Consulting)