

1 **TRAFFIC SAFETY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TSAC)**

2 **June 23, 2022**

3 **MEETING MINUTES**

4

5 Committee Members: Jason Plourde (TSAC Chair), Gary Daniels (BOS Representative), Nick Darchik
6 Local Officials: Leo Lessard (DPW Director), Mike Viola (Police Chief), Captain Craig Frye, Paul Dargie
7 (BOS Chairman)
8 Public: Bill Parker, Chris Lebonte
9
10 Absent: David Wheeler (TSAC Vice Chair), Wade Scott Campbell (TSAC member), Lincoln Daley
11 (Director of Community Development)
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14 Chair Plourde called the meeting to order at approximately 5:00pm, welcomed everyone in attendance, and then
15 outlined the duties of the TSC for everyone's benefit - reminding everyone that the Board of Selectmen (BOS) refer
16 traffic-related items to the TSAC and the TSAC provides recommendations back to the BOS. The TSAC does not
17 make decisions.

18 He then addressed the one item on the agenda referred by the BOS:

- 19 1. Melendy Road – Traffic Safety Concern: Nick Darchik, the resident making the request, was present.
20 Darchik would like center line striping NOT to be provided along Melendy Road. Chair Plourde stated the
21 item had been brought to the TSAC several years ago, resulting in a lot of information being discussed by
22 this Committee, then becoming part of the DPW's Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) and guidelines
23 for center line striping on different roadways throughout the Town. He also noted that since the last
24 discussions and recommendations to the BOS, we have a new DPW Director, Leo Lessard. Chair Plourde
25 asked Darchik to discuss what in his opinion has changed.
26

27 Darchik discussed how in 2017, the TSAC generated a baseline list of streets needing to get striped with
28 center lines to create some sort of uniformity for pavement markings. He recalled many meetings held
29 between 2017 and 2019, and a decision made to adopt the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices
30 (MUTCD) baseline as the criteria to put pavement markings down to be consistent with the rest of the
31 state. Using this information, the SOP list was created that consists of three lists: presently striped list,
32 roadways that should be striped, and roadways that need to be striped. Now, it's 2022 and the SOP list
33 has been thrown away. His road wasn't supposed to be striped, but now suddenly it is. He questioned if
34 there's a lack of communication between the TSAC, the BOS, and the DPW on whether that the list even
35 existed and if we were supposed to have been following this list. Chair Plourde then discussed the various
36 reasons why road striping is used.
37

38 Lessard said the only roads he added to the list were Foster, Ledgewood, and McGettigan to Mason. And,
39 that the only thing he added was white line fog lines (aka, edge lines). He then discussed his 40 yrs. of
40 safety experience. In his opinion, white line striping on back roads/secondary roads that are a major
41 artery is a must for safety reasons. He said he went to the BOS, they agreed on the striping and passed it 4
42 to 1. Daniels voted no because he felt the process should have come to the TSAC first for discussion.

Lessard stated that the BOS saw the list, and he explained everything about the edge lines and about adding the three roads. The road in question (Melendy Rd) has remnants of double yellow center lines. Melendy Rd comes off of Route 13, is a cut through, a good secondary, has bad curves on it and, in his opinion, needs the striping treatment for safety. Melendy Rd warrants a double yellow center line because it's wide enough in that area. He reiterated Melendy Road, from Route 13 to Ball Hill, must be striped. He said the MUTCD is a guideline – you can go above it, but you can't go below it.

Chair Plourde asked Lessard if he knew if any traffic counts had been conducted out there. Lessard said not by him. Chair Plourde said the former DPW Director had set up a counting program to make sure we had a database in case any concerned residents inquired or to support different items in the SOPs. Chair Plourde reiterated that Melendy Road is a very windy, with no overhead lights to his recollection and that he agreed that consideration could be given to striping it for safety. Chair Plourde asked Lessard to get the traffic counting program going. Lessard responded he doesn't know where the automatic traffic recorder (ATR) tubes are, but he'll look for them.

Chief Viola recalled the TSAC discussing doing a traffic count there and deciding against it because it wouldn't meet the minimum threshold count of 3,000 for traffic. Chair Plourde said when dealing with safety, the width of the road, the pavement, the horizontal and vertical curvature of the road, and things like that also come into play.

Darchik said he lived on that road before there were any lines there and that since the lines went down, traffic has tripled, and the speed has doubled. He called the state and spoke to Eric Healey of the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT) who told him the state does not have a state spec that is used for pavement markings. They have adopted and currently use the MUTCD as requirements and warrants in approving pavement markings. Lessard said and that is the state, the town can do whatever they want. They can go above, but they can't go below- the MUTCD is the minimum.

Chair Plourde reminded the Committee they were there to focus on the one section of Melendy Road from Route 13 to Ball Hill and asked Chief Viola as a safety expert for our town his opinion on the need for a double yellow center line. Chief Viola said he was in favor of striping Melendy Road saying white fog lines are necessary at night and in bad weather to help determine where the road ends, and we also need the double yellow center line for law enforcement to be able to tell who was at fault in a head on collision. Any type of striping that we do would only help the driver.

Darchik then referenced an email he sent to Kent's Towing on April 10th about his drivers using Melendy Road as a connector to get to Route 13 and speeding, telling them it was a 25-mph residential neighborhood and that one of their drivers sped by at 40+ mph that morning. Within three days, Kent's drivers were no longer going that way. If a double yellow center line is put down, drivers will think it's a main road and they can go as fast as they want. He said that was part of a conversation he had with Eric Healey at the state who told him a lot of the complaints they get at the State are about double yellow lines and drivers going faster than they were before double yellow lines were down. He's concerned people out walking with or without their pets will get hit by a car because now they will have to stay on their side of the line.

Chair Plourde then asked Darchik to clarify what he just said... that NHDOT is stating that traffic speeds increase when you stripe roadways with double yellow center lines? Darchik responded correct. Chair Plourde said he will reach out to Eric Healey and Bill Lambert to find out if DOT's stance is that striping

double yellow center lines increases speeds because the last conversation that he had with the NHDOT Bureau of Traffic was that double yellow center lines and edge line striping are used for traffic calming measures, the complete opposite. Darchik said he last spoke with Eric Healey on May 26th, later confirming it was a phone conversation.

Chair Plourde then pointed out that Melendy Road is not a NHDOT roadway, so the decision of striping is up to the town, and he wanted to rely on our safety experts in the audience, the police dept. and public works, to be able to help us make an informed recommendation to the BOS.

Selectman Daniels said we're lacking information. You say there is more traffic, but we don't have traffic counts. He recalled giving the BOS the list we created and telling them to pick which streets they want to paint - to which they said they didn't feel qualified. So, they sent it back to the TSAC, where we proceeded to spend more hours. And the plan going forward was to keep track of the counts and review them annually before striping took place to decide if anything changed in our opinion because the BOS was looking at us as the experts. He discussed how he objected after Lessard became DPW Director and he said he was going to start edge striping because of the process in which it was being done, which had always been, that it would be referred over to the TSAC, and then we would decide and make changes to the SOP as needed and work with DPW and law enforcement in the process. Daniels questioned if the TSAC was even needed anymore if the BOS is now making the decisions, and further if there is a lack of communication between the TSAC and the BOS, saying maybe the TSAC isn't meeting as often as possible as the last meeting was held October 26, 2021.

Chair Plourde asked Daniels what he would suggest at this point, that we go back to the SOP and have traffic counts revisited? Daniels said part of the problem is that the former DPW Director went out and painted when he wasn't supposed to, which is why you can see the remnants of the lines. He then addressed what constitutes safety or non-safety, saying he finds it hard to take something by itself and say it's going to make it safer. He'd like to see some history. How many accidents have we had along Melendy Road? Lessard said it only takes one. Daniels said driving itself is a risk. Lessard agreed and said all this other stuff we do is for safety.

Chair Plourde then discussed different reasons why the characteristics of the environment are also taken into consideration when determining whether to increase safety on low volume roadways. For example, if you have people walking in the road, you want to provide a safe measure for them. He noted that in this case, volume is not the only criteria that we'd be looking at. He also pointed out that Melendy Road is not listed out as specifically between Armory Road and Ball Hill, it's listed as Melendy Road – not a certain segment of Melendy Road. The date of the list the Chair Plourde was using was questioned by Darchik and Daniels as they both remembered a more recent list with Melendy being broken up.

Chair Plourde said we've heard from DPW and the Chief of Police, both in agreement that all of Melendy should be striped for safety reasons. Darchik questioned why that wasn't mentioned when the list was generated. Chief Viola recalled several discussions, one of which being how much it would cost per foot, and another being about the width of the road at certain places. He recalled discussing the need for it to go all the way through because it was a cut through road with a lot of people using it.

Captain Frye talked about how bright and blinding LED headlights are now, saying that having the white fog line is helpful at night for young and old drivers to find some sort of perspective of where they are on

the road. The lines also help at night when it's dark to tell if an animal is standing in the roadway, because you can see a break in the line. He also remembered discussing the costs and whether we should do half the town and do the roads on a rotation – noting we've missed three years now, so Lessard is playing catch up. As far as the vehicle speeds, in his opinion, drivers will go faster with no road markings. Chair Plourde also recalled prior discussions of going over the costs associated with having the lines painted and said now that has become secondary at this point- it's more about the safety. Where we were trying to remove roads from the list before, now we are like, okay what roads need it.

Selectman Dargie asked Darchik what his objection to having the striping was, what is the downside? Darchik replied it's because of vehicle speed and all the pedestrians that are out there. He then said it looks like everyone wants to put double yellow center lines down and he's ready to throw in the towel, but he wants more signs put out there that say pedestrians in roadway. Captain Frye said he believed there is case law against that now. Chair Plourde agreed and said they took those away.

Lessard said he has a bid for painting in hand. Captain Frye said we need to get these people soon because other towns are starting to paint. Lessard said he had Lorden ready to come in, but had to put them off. He called Lorden today and they said they might be able to move some jobs around and try to be here the first or second week of July, spending one long day here. As far as he's concerned, this has all been approved by the BOS.

Chair Plourde then addressed Daniels and said before us is a request that center line striping NOT be provided along Melendy. Daniels responded by asking what are we going to do with the SOP? Throw it out? Is that the intent? Chair Plourde said I think there are two different things that we can talk about right now: 1) what are we doing about the SOP, and 2) what are we doing about this specific request? Daniels said if we're not going to use the SOP, there there's no sense in us doing anything.

Chair Plourde then asked Lessard if he's looked at the SOP and if he was comfortable with the information in there or if he had any thoughts on revisions. Lessard replied yes, he's reviewed them and said for the most part, we are abiding by it because I'm painting everything that's on there, and he went to the BOS to have his revisions approved. Chair Plourde then asked Lessard specifically, as the new DPW Director, how he felt about the SOP. He said he had not read it word for word, but he went through the list and started working on it. Chair Plourde asked Lessard to go through the SOP to look for anything that he thinks needs to be changed and to make sure he's in agreement with it. And, if he's not in agreement with it, then we'll need to go through the proper process. Chair Plourde also asked Lessard to find the ATR tubes. Chair Plourde said we need to figure out what we're going to do with the table that's in the back of the SOP. Daniels again questioned if the Chair had the most recent list as he recalled the table had been started to be filled out. Chair Plourde asked Leo as we move forward, are you planning on filling out the table? He responded yes.

Chris Lebonte asked is there something in the SOP that says you must follow them or is it that they are guidelines? Chair Plourde responded that there are certain sections within the SOP that say you must/you shall/you should/under consideration. Shall means something has to be done. Lebonte said he assumed that this would fall in the above and beyond, bringing it to a higher standard. Chair Plourde responded correct. Lebonte said then you still in theory can be following your SOP. Chair Plourde said correct, we are not changing our SOP at all if we say all of Melendy should be striped because there are different sections within the SOP that talk about safety.

Daniels said he is going with no recommendation, and he will leave it up to the Board.

Chair Plourde asked if the TSAC's recommendation to the Select Board is that NO action be taken regarding the request and that Melendy would continue to be striped as presented by Lessard.

Daniels said he felt we should just throw the SOP list away and just let Lessard decide what he wants to do and how he wants to run the program and work with somebody else because it just seems to be a waste of time to be here talking about striping if all of the experts are sitting somewhere else. He's all for safe roads, but he hasn't heard that section of road isn't safe.

Darchik agreed with Daniels and said everyone put so much effort into all of this and it's all getting changed with no backing to change it. That was the whole reason to get it on paper – to have a baseline, and now all of our efforts have been thrown out the window. Chair Plourde said it comes down to the SOP is a minimum standard. You are still following the SOP here, but you are going to a higher standard for a higher priority. Daniels said it's the process that is being thrown out. The SOP was set up and the TSAC was to make a recommendation to the BOS. Then, the BOS would decide. You don't want that anymore. The decision makers now are going to be the DPW Director and the Police Dept. because they are the safety experts. It really doesn't matter what this Committee says. Chair Plourde disagreed and said that he still feels it matters what the Committee says. It's just that the BOS has the right not to always go with our recommendation.

Selectman Dargie said he felt it was inappropriate to blow off the SOP process. They should have been followed. And if there were exceptions, they should have been identified and brought to the BOS, specifically stating we recommend we do this instead, we're going to ignore the SOP and why. The SOP is a valuable document, a lot of work went into it. He would like to see it updated to whatever makes sense and moving forward, he thinks we should follow it.

Chair Plourde agreed with Dargie saying in the future, if there are going to be any changes to a roadway or roadway segment, they should be brought to the BOS. Lessard said that is what he did. Dargie said he didn't understand that at all.

Chief Viola said the BOS has the right to say they are making the decision without the TSAC. Chair Plourde said that is correct. Daniels said it's always been that the BOS can decide not to send something to the TSAC, but this process was all developed in this Committee. That's why he felt that if it was going to be changed or updated, it should go back to the TSAC for continued discussions, like done in the past.

Chair Plourde then read the relative Review Requirements section from the SOP regarding center line striping (which he said may have been updated) and then stated that Lessard did abide by the SOP by going before the BOS, stating which roadways he was looking to have done that varied from the list of roads to be striped, during a public meeting.

Chairman Plourde then said it is our recommendation to the BOS to keep Melendy striped as presented by Lessard, to NOT accept the request for the non-striping along Melendy, to take no action.

Acceptance of the meeting minutes from the October 26, 2021 meeting:

Motion to Accept meeting minutes was made by Gary Daniels, seconded by Nick Darchik, with **all in favor**.

218 Other Business:

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220 1) Chief Viola asked if the town gets involved with putting up reflective mirrors. Chair Plourde said no. Per

221 NHDOT, those convex mirrors are not a traffic control device because a traffic control device is something

222 that would be used throughout the year, under all conditions. The NHDOT does not support those devices

223 because they could become fogged, wet, or icy which would make the device inoperable. He said if a

224 resident wanted to work with a utility company and post them on a utility pole themselves, without the

225 town's involvement, then we are not opposed to that, but we cannot support or poses that as a town.

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227 2) Chief Viola asked about blind or hidden driveway signs. Chair Plourde said no, the MUTCD got rid of

228 those because those signs pretty much recognize that there is a safety problem. He said if there is a sign

229 already up, the town wouldn't necessarily need to take it down. Chief asked, can a homeowner put up

230 their own sign on their property? Lessard said it cannot be on the roadway or within the right-of-way; it

231 must be on their property. For liability reasons, the town would not get involved or be opposed to it.

232

233 3) Lessard mentioned a resident on McGettigan Road that asked him to discuss an issue with the

234 committee, but Chair Plourde reminded Leo that she would first have to bring her issue to the BOS.

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236 A motion to adjourn was made by Gary Daniels, Nick Darchik seconded. **All were in favor.**

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238 Meeting adjourned at approximately 6:42pm.