



**City of Chicopee
City Council
Public Safety Committee**

Members

Robert J. Zygarowski, Chair
Frank Laflamme, Vice Chair
Jerry Roy
Gary Labrie
Shane Brooks

APPROVED 9-16-19

**MINUTES
June 26, 2019**

The following are the minutes of a public hearing held Wednesday, June 26, 2019 at 6:30 PM in the Senior Center, 5 West Main Street, Small Garden Room.

Members Present Zygarowski, Labrie, Brooks

Not Present Roy, Laflamme

Also Present Councilor Tillotson, Councilor Krampits, Councilor Courchesne, Councilor Dobosz, Chris Chaban (Acting City Engineer), Officer Michael Wilk (**Public Information Officer/Executive Aide to the Chief of Police**), Elizabeth Soja (Assistant to DPW Supervisor), Elizabette Botelho (DPW Superintendent)

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM

In compliance with the Open Meeting Law the Chairman asked if anyone in the audience was recording the meeting. Hearing none the meeting continued.

Robert Jewel, Western Mass News was audio and video recording the meeting.

ITEM #1

BE IT ORDERED THAT the Public Safety Committee meet to discuss Dallaire Avenue.

Councilor Labrie stated that since he was elected in 2013 he was approached by a resident on Dallaire Avenue and he conveyed his concerns to me about the speed of the vehicles and the number of trucks. He stated that he brought these concerns to the attention of the Police Chief and he asked for a speed trailer to be placed at that location and extra speed patrols for that area. He stated that he witnessed both a speed trailer and extra patrols at this location

Councilor Labrie stated that in the next five years that same resident conveyed to me about the speed of the vehicles and the number of trucks, he again passed it along to the Police Department. He stated in 2018 the same resident asked me if there could be a speed study conducted on Dallaire Avenue. He stated he contacted our current Chief of Police, requested a speed study and was granted. He stated after the speed study was completed in the fall of 2018 the Police Department ordered the DPW to remove the 15 mph speed limit signs. He stated that

there was never an ordinance to back up that speed limit. He stated about twenty five years ago it was asked to be put up without the proper paper work.

Councilor Labrie stated these past few years he's had discussions with the Police Chief, the DPW Superintendent, the City Engineer and numerous conversations with our City Attorney. He was told that the 15 mph speed limit could not be implemented and the current speed limit 25 mph would remain. He stated that the traffic study conducted in 2018 was not conclusive to order the necessary warrants from the State to do anything different with the street. He stated the traffic study according to state law does not support the reduction from 25 mph to anything lower than 25 mph. and it does not allow us to restrict commercial vehicles.

Cheryl DeJesus, 778 Grattan Street asked if there could be an ordinance set for the commercial vehicles. She asked about speed bumps.

Chris Chaban stated that the speed study done it was shown to have a combined eighty five percentile which is used to determine speed limits and speed zones at twenty eight miles per hour. He stated that it doesn't warrant doing anything drastic like a speed bump.

Steve Boutin 18 Dallaire Avenue stated that he checked the ordinance for "No Truck Signs" and we over qualify for those. He looked into nineteen ordinance speed reductions and we over qualify for those. He stated that it is not fair to hold us to a different standard just because you need somewhere for the traffic to go. He stated when cars are parked on our street we only have one travel lane, we have little kids and we are so thickly settled. He stated that the Police can't possibly enforce three or four hundred vehicles per day. He stated that we are a tiny little crowded street and people can do thirty five miles per hour legally.

Councilor Labrie stated we can't arbitrarily put signs up; the State has to approve them. He stated that the speed study speed was twenty eight and a half miles per hour. He stated that based on that he could not go for another ordinance.

Steve Boutin stated that he has invited everyone to come sit on his porch. He stated that we are not just numbers on a paper. He stated after the fifteen mile per hour signs were up and you did your speed study there were five hundred vehicles a day. He stated as soon as you took that fifteen mile per hour sign down that traffic went back up to eight hundred vehicles. He stated that they go faster now. He stated that he understands that the Police can't do a lot about it but he suggested one speed bump on the street.

Gary Labrie stated that he has been to Steve Boutin's house and his Uncle also live across the street so he has seen the amount of vehicles and speed.

Steve Boutin stated that homeowners are moving away and traffic is a big part of that. He stated that people who care a lot are giving up and moving away and you're not going to keep anybody here unless you help with the traffic and quality of life. He stated that the Police shouldn't have to do all that if there's an easy solution.

Elizabeth Botelho stated that there is a lot that goes into consideration on where it's appropriate to have these installed and one has to do with grade. She stated that she's driven down Dallaire Street several times and it is a hill. She stated that you can't put any kind of obstruction that could potentially be unsafe. She stated that she can't justify putting a speed table on a hill.

She stated that issues with speeding in a school zone is twenty and our speed study on Front Street shows that the eighty five percentile is thirty seven miles per hour. She stated that there are things you have to consider when you're looking at traffic and the physical road has to be taken into consideration.

Steve Boutin stated you say nothing can be done but you're not offering suggestions.

Elizabeth Botelho stated that there are no speed bumps on a hill in the neighboring communities the State won't allow it.

Steve Boutin stated that on Monday he went to all nineteen streets and we have more of a problem than any of them.

Robert Roy, 41 Dallaire Avenue stated that he has lived here for sixty years and every morning at five o'clock he here's the trucks coming from down Willamansett zooming up the hill in front of my house. He stated that he doesn't understand why they have to come up through thickly settled districts and not go on the highway. He stated to put up a one-way street and this will cut off half of the traffic that cuts through our street. He stated that no one wants to solve the problem.

Councilor Labrie stated that all the streets would have to agree on the one-way street.

Chris Chaban stated we would have to do the same to the three streets that are there.

Elizabeth Botelho stated that anything changing the traffic pattern in that area whether it be the one-way signs, no parking or speed limit signs all goes to Ordinance Committee and is posted publically and that is the opportunity for the public to come in and voice their concerns.

She stated she understands that you think it's a simple change but we have to take into consideration everybody around you.

Councilor Labrie stated he can't file an ordinance that can't be accepted by the State. He stated that he takes the advice of our City Attorney.

Steve Boutin stated there are only twelve homes on our street and look at the turnout tonight. He stated that some people wanted to be here but couldn't. Look at the children here tonight that live on this street. He stated we pay the same taxes. He asked why Ralph Avenue has a "No Truck" sign.

Jeremiah Hill, 35 Dallaire Avenue stated that we have a lot of kids here and so far what I've heard from you is that we have to wait for a major accident to happen in order to get anything done. He does not understand why we can't get as much as a sign.

Elizabeth Botelho stated that twenty five miles per hour is an appropriate speed limit for any thickly settled area. She stated that the studies show that signage does not reduce speed.

Domingo Martinez 45 Dallaire Avenue asked what can you do for us to solve our problem.

Officer Michael Wilk stated that we could put our emails and have the area cruisers make extra checks and put the speed signs back up. He stated that they are speeding everywhere

Officer Michael Wilk stated to call the Police Department if there are speeding trucks because it gets logged into our system and shows our traffic division a need for more enforcement in that area. He stated that the people who call us get the most traffic enforcement. He stated that we look at where there's a high call volume and we focus on that.

Councilor Labrie stated he could have the twenty five mile per hour signs put up.

Officer Michael Wilk offered a suggestion for those who have kids. He stated the green signs with the little orange flags signs that say "kids play here"; those seem to work. It seems to catch people's eye.

Brian King 77 Grattan stated that the trucks use the Jake-brakes in the wee hours of the morning. He stated they should have courtesy for the people who live in the neighborhood. He stated with parking on both sides of the street you'd be hard pressed to get an emergency vehicle through there. He stated he saw a truck come down the road and rip the wires down. He stated that cars go one hundred and twenty miles per hour down Grattan Street.

Officer Michael Wilk asked if anyone could get him video of the street.

Steve Boutin stated he will send him what he has and any new videos.

Steve Vaughn, 17 Dallaire Avenue asked if there was an Ordinance to say "No Trucks".

Chris Chaban stated it has to go through Mass DOT and they make the final decision. He stated we would have to do a different traffic study.

Elizabeth Botelho stated Dallaire is wider than our typical street and to put "NO Trucks" and push them to another street,. She stated that we could look into it.

Julien Beauchemin 778 Grattan Street stated that UPS and FedEx parks on the street because of the business on the corner and it creates a little problem because you can pass only one way.

Steve Boutin stated to ask him anything or come sit on my porch and he will answer anything you want.

Councilor Tillotson stated in order to eliminate the amount of trucks that you have you have to provide an alternate route; you have to count the trucks that have to exceed five to eight percent.

He stated that he got the names of the trucks that were going through Doverbrook and he called the company and he told them to take the main road and go to Westover Road and that helped.

Councilor Labrie stated to get the names of the truck company and he will call them and ask them to have their truck drivers refrain from going down Dallaire Avenue. He stated that he will also put up a twenty five mile per hour sign on both ends of the street.

Councilor Zygarowski stated if you see something call it in. He stated that Police can't be everywhere but certainly they need your help.

Councilor Brooks stated that there are three remedies that we are suggesting to all the neighbors; you have a call log system, a twenty five mile per hour sign put at both ends of the street, and take names of trucks and other offenders to report that out. He stated then no trucking company wants to hear that it's drivers, especially in light of what happen in New Hampshire recently, are acting and behaving poorly. He stated that this is going to be a wakeup call for a lot of transit companies to pay attention to the wants and desires of the neighborhoods. He stated that this is an opportunity from a tragedy to shape the way that the traffic behaves in your neighborhood. Be diligent about taking down the names and get them to Councilor Labrie and we could have the City Solicitor make the calls and that carries a little bit more weight.

ITEM #2

Councilor Labrie motion to accept the minutes of June 5, 2019 - Councilor Zygarowski 2nd the motion - motion passed

Meeting adjourned at 7:25 PM.