

JAMESTOWN TRAFFIC COMMITTEE
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, January 21, 2021
Approved: 5/12/2021

I. A regular meeting of the Jamestown Traffic Committee was called to order via Zoon <https://zoom.us/j/95191430420> at 5:36PM.

II. The following members were present:

Thomas Tighe, Chairman
Mary Meagher, Vice-Chairman
Michael Junge
Vincent Moretti
Valerie Southern
Timothy Yentsch
Bill Munger

Also present:

Police Chief Edward Mello
Kim Devlin, Clerk

III. READING AND APPROVAL OF MIUNTES

A) August 27, 2020

Vice-Chairman Meagher moved to approve the minutes; Commissioner Junge seconded. So voted; 7 ayes, 0 nays.

Vice-Chairman Meagher moved to move Open Forum down until after New Business; Member Munger seconded. So voted; 7 ayes, 0 nays.

IV. OPEN FORUM

A) Scheduled Requests to Address

There were no Scheduled Requests to Address.

B) Non-Scheduled Requests to Address

There were no Non-Scheduled Requests to Address. Chief Mello verified that no one had joined the meeting.

IV. COMMUNICATIONS

- A. Chief Edward Mello - Dumpling Drive Traffic Report - Review, discussion and/or potential action and/or vote
- B. Letter from Kathryn Conway – Re: Speed on Beavertail Road; 10/27/2020 - Review, discussion and/or potential action and/or vote
- C. Letter from Janice Bell – Re: Parking Restrictions at the Lawn Avenue School Crosswalk; 9/27/2020 - Review, discussion and/or potential action and/or vote
- D. Transportation Study Fact Sheet – Submitted by David Cain; 11/18/2020 - Review, discussion and/or potential action and/or vote
- E. Letter from Clay Boden – Re: Dumpling Drive Parking Study, request for discussion; 11/2/2020 - Review, discussion and/or potential action and/or vote
- F. Letter from Paula Shevlin – Re: Dangerous Incident in the Dumplings area Summer of 2020; 12/4/2020 - Review, discussion and/or potential action and/or vote
- G. Letter from Town Administrator Jamie Hainsworth – Re: Emergency Vehicle Access on Dumpling Drive; 1/24/2020 - Review, discussion and/or potential action and/or vote
- H. Letter from Andrew Schmidt – Re: Request for Speed Sign on North Road; 12/10/2020 - Review, discussion and/or potential action and/or vote
- I. Letter from Tom Stolarz – Re: Traffic Complaint; 1/6/2021 - Review, discussion and/or potential action
- J. Jamestown Boat Yard Parking Plan; 1/11/2021 - Review, discussion and/or potential action and/or vote
- K. Second Letter from Paula Shevlin – Re: Parking Problem at JBY; 1/11/2021 - Review, discussion and/or potential action and/or vote
- L. Letter from the State Traffic Commission – Re: Bike Lanes and Crosswalks; 11/16/2020 - Review, discussion and/or potential action and/or vote

M. Letter from the State Traffic Commission – Re: Safety Study on Walcott Avenue; 11/16/2020 - Review, discussion and/or potential action and/or vote

Commissioner Junge moved to accept all Correspondence items; Vice-Chairman Meagher seconded. So voted; 7 ayes, 0 nays.

V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There is no Unfinished Business to discuss.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

A) Dumpling Drive Traffic Report - Review, discussion and/or potential action and/or vote

Chief Mello reviewed his Traffic Report and stated that at the February 2020 Town Council meeting residents expressed concern about parking on Dumpling Drive in the area of Jamestown Boat Yard. Chief Mello stated that the Town Council requested that he prepare a report without specificity, so Chief Mello focused on the aspects of parking that he has control over per the Town ordinances.

Chief Mello stated that he did not see a need for parking changes, but that he also did not say there were no problems. It is difficult to determine where the road ends and private property begins. Chief Mello asked Steven DeVoe, the manager at Jamestown Boat Yard, to determine where the property lines are, which he did.

Chief Mello stated that this is a marina trying to operate across a public roadway, which is not uncommon in Jamestown. There are parking concerns at Clark's and Dutch Harbor Boat Yard's customers park in a public parking lot and their equipment operates on Town property. Conanicut Marine launches boats from the ramp on Conanicus Avenue, so this is the island we live on. It is difficult to determine if the parking problems are from the boat yard, from the Dumpling's Association members using the beach, or people visiting private residences. Chief Mello stated that Dumpling Drive has a low volume of traffic compared to other roads in Town.

Chief Mello stated that Jamestown Boat Yard is permitted for 79 commercial moorings and 2 private moorings. Jamestown Boat Yard has been asked to develop a parking plan, which they did. They are required to have 1 parking spot for every 1.5 moorings.

Member Southern asked Executive Director Chief Mello what he means by saying there is a "low volume" of traffic on Dumpling Drive.

Chief Mello stated that the traffic in the area is seasonal and Dumpling Drive is not a main road on the island like Hamilton Avenue or Southwest Avenue. Unless you are going to the boat yard, the beach or a residence there is not a need to be on that road.

Member Southern stated that she would like to know the actual volume of traffic.

Chief Mello stated that the type of study which would provide that type of information would be done by a traffic engineer.

Chairman Tighe allowed the public to speak.

Stuart Ross, 1026 East Shore Road, stated that the Parking Study conducted by Chief Mello should not be approved and there is no indication that this was a systematic study conducted during the summer. Mr. Ross also stated that the parking plan submitted by Jamestown Boat Yard is theoretical and was not made by parking engineers.

William Hutchinson, 79 Hamilton Avenue, stated that he grew up at 4 Ft. Wetherill Road and traditionally Jamestown Boat Yard was a small community boat yard that serviced the neighbors. Mr. Hutchinson stated that now there are problems with congestion and parking and the season has extended and it is now busy from April until the end of September. Mr. Hutchinson also stated that he is on the EMS and emergency access is difficult.

Mark Sertl, 34 Dumpling Drive, stated that parking is illegal in front of their property, but cars park illegally on both sides of the road. Mr. Sertl stated that the plan Jamestown Boat Yard submitted for parking is not feasible.

Will Laurie, 15 Dumpling Drive, stated that there has been an increase in traffic since Safe Harbor purchased Jamestown Boat Yard and that he has felt unsafe while riding his bike around the neighborhood.

Louise Potter, 9 Plymouth Road, questioned why there is a JBY staff only parking sign on Dumpling Drive. Ms. Potter stated that Jamestown Boat Yard does allow customers to park on their property.

Chief Mello stated he will look into the sign.

Paula Shevlin, 24 Hamilton Avenue, stated that on July 4th there was an incident where an ambulance was trying to back out of the Dumpling's Association parking lot and, in trying to make way for the ambulance, she was also trying to avoid a big drain hole and ended up dragging a large cone under her car.

Tom Shevlin, 24 Hamilton Avenue, stated that he makes a point to walk by Jamestown Boat Yard every day and often views parking issues. Mr. Shevlin stated that this used to be a local boat yard and not a large corporation with a large budget that has the ability to make big changes. Jamestown Boat Yard is now owned by Safe Harbor, which has been purchased by Sun Communities which is a worldwide corporation advertising worldwide.

Robert Trout, 14 Lawn Avenue, stated that his wife's family owns a house in the Dumplings. Mr. Trout stated that when Jamestown Boat Yard built the new building and added landscaping, they planted trees in the public roadway. Mr. Trout stated that he witnessed two fires in the area where there was difficulty getting water and that this is a safety issue.

Brandon Sommers, General Manager at Jamestown Boat Yard, stated that he has been with the company for 15 years. Mr. Sommers stated that the parking plan is just that; a plan to show that Jamestown Boat Yard has the ability to park the required number of cars in a conventional manner. The parking areas are constantly in flux, as can be expected for an operational boat yard. Mr. Sommers stated that he looks forward to working with the community to develop a plan that everyone is happy with. Mr. Sommers also noted that the JBY staff parking sign on the road is to control the parking in front of their railway. If a staff member parks in that location it is easy to have the car moved when they need to launch a vessel, but that when a member of the public parks there it blocks the boat yard from being able to use their equipment and stops operations.

Peter Converse, 162 Narragansett Avenue, showed pictures of potential discrepancies of hedges in the road and a fire hydrant being blocked by vehicles. Mr. Converse stated that the boat yard is not cleared of boats in the summer and there are a number of vessels stored on the hard. Mr. Converse also stated that the traffic has increased since Safe Harbor purchased Jamestown Boat Yard. Mr. Converse also stated that he has had two near miss accidents on Dumpling Drive.

Vice-Chairman Meagher asked the community members present at the meeting if they have addressed the Harbor Commission or Zoning Board about their concerns, as the increase in moorings happened 5 years ago and it seems that the boat yard is not increasing the number of vessels, just that they would like to be able to work on larger vessels throughout the tide cycle.

Member Munger asked the Dumpling's Association representatives at the meeting how many members access the bay from Dumpling Drive, and stated that we may be falsely blaming Jamestown Boat Yard for the congestion when it is actually other organizations.

Commissioner Junge stated that if he saw something everyday that was a problem, he would have thorough documentation of the issue, and he can't ask the Town to spend money on a traffic study because things aren't the way they used to be.

Mr. Hutchinson stated that the usage by the Dumpling's Association has increased.

Maria Shevlin, 24 Hamilton Avenue, stated that there used to be an Emergency Access Only sign by the hydrant that has been removed. Ms. Shevlin stated that she has called the police for parking issues and that she does have pictures, but that the police did not do anything about the parking issue and did not write any tickets.

Chief Mello stated that he was able to look up the parking complaint Ms. Shevlin was referring to and that the officer was able to locate the owners and had them move their vehicles.

Member Munger asked what information a traffic study will provide.

Member Southern stated that it will tell us the volume of traffic, where the road ends and private property begins, the condition of the road and the amount of traffic it can handle. Member Southern stated that she is recommending a comprehensive traffic study that is not limited to only Dumpling Drive.

Member Munger stated that it seems like the Dumpling's Association does not have enough spaces to accommodate their usage and that Jamestown Boat Yard does.

Chairman Tighe moved to bring this back to the Town Council and to recommend a traffic study; Member Southern seconded. So voted; 5 ayes, 2 nays (Junge, Munger).

D. Request for Speed Sign on Beavertail Road - Review, discussion and/or potential action and/or vote

Commissioner Junge moved to ask the Town Council to review the request for a Traffic Sign on Beavertail Road; Chairman Tighe seconded. So voted; 7 ayes, 0 nays.

E. Request for Speed Sign on North Road near the North Reservoir - Review, discussion and/or potential action and/or vote

Chief Mello stated that there are two ways the Committee could handle this request; the first being to wait for the speed limit to be determined to decide if a sign is necessary or to add this to the list of sign requests and set a priority for all of the requests.

Member Moretti asked what the status of the project is.

Chief Mello stated that the road and drainage are completed and the project should be finished in the spring.

Andrew Schmidt, Sampan Avenue, stated that he is not asking for a reduction in speed and that he would be willing to raise funds for the sign if that would be helpful.

Chief Mello stated that he appreciates the gesture but allowing the public to fund signs for Town roads could potentially be problematic.

Chairman Tighe suggested not taking any action until the road is completed.

Member Southern stated that the State Traffic Committee has approved the request for bike lanes, as indicated by their letter of approval.

Chief Mello stated that the bike lanes would be approved with the installation of a safety sign at the intersection of Freebody and East Shore Road and that Public Works Director Mike Grey has already sent a request to the State Traffic Commission to install the sign.

Chief Mello is also suggestion the reconstruction of the intersection of the off ramp for Route 138 and East Shore Road and Conanicus Avenue, to slow traffic in the area by installing a 3-Way Stop Sign.

B. Ambulance Barn - Review, discussion and/or potential action and/or vote

Member Munger asked for an update on the Ambulance Barn.

Vice-Chairman Meagher stated that the Town Council has not discussed the Ambulance Barn recently but that she will report back when there is more information.

C. 2021 Meeting Dates - Review, discussion and/or potential action and/or vote

Commissioner Junge moved to approve the 2021 meeting dates; Member Munger seconded. So voted; 7 ayes, 0 nays.

VII. OPEN FORUM - CONTINUED

There was no continued Open Forum.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Committee, a motion was made by Member Munger and seconded by Member Moretti to adjourn the meeting at 7:43 PM.

So unanimously voted.

Attest:

Kim Devlin
Clerk