

**MINUTES OF
FAUQUIER COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
October 28, 2009**

7:00 P.M.

*2nd Floor Conference Room – Warren Green Building
10 Hotel Street
Warrenton, VA 20186*

Members Present: Matthew Smith, Chairman, Laurence Mason, Vice-Chairman, J. David Cabbage, Peter S. Eltringham, Adrienne Garreau, and R. Holder Trumbo

Members Absent: William D. Nace, Sam Poles and Jeffrey Walker

Guest Present: Deirdre Clark, RRRC

Staff Present: Susan Eddy and Cynthia Porter-Johnson

1. *Approval of September 30, 2009 Committee Meeting Minutes*

ACTION:

On motion made by Adrienne Garreau and seconded by Peter Eltringham, it was moved to approve the September 30, 2009 Committee meeting minutes. The motion carried unanimously.

2. *Consider a reduction in the speed limit to 25 mph on Route 605 (Airlie Road) (Center District) – Scott Horsburgh*

Mr. Scott Horsburgh requested that the entire length of Airlie Road be posted at 25 mph. There are no sidewalks along Airlie Road and it is unsafe.

Mr. Horsburgh mentioned that when you pull off of Route 17, the speed limit is 25 mph. However, when you turn onto Airlie Road, the speed limit is 35 mph. Mr. Horsburgh showed the committee members the area where the speed limit is 35 mph on the map.

Chairman Smith stated that even if the road meets the qualification for the speed limit to be reduced, it will have to be enforced.

Mr. Horsburgh stated that it makes sense to reduce the speed limit for safety purposes as cars are flying down the road. Mr. Horsburgh indicated that he has spoken with deputies and will continue to work with them to enforce the speed limit on the road. Also the deputies have talked about the possibility of placing an unmanned car on the road to slow people down.

Mr. Eltringham stated that the committee needs to get the advice of the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) with regard to Airlie Road. Mr. Eltringham stated that he has driven this road many times and that VDOT should take a look at this.

Mr. David Cabbage stated that VDOT did a review of the area in June looking specifically from the intersection of Blantyre Road out to about a mile. VDOT collected counts on two occasions, October 3rd and 4th for a 24 hour period. Another count was taken on October 21 through October 22 to validate what was taken during the first of the month. The median speed for 468 vehicles was 37 mph. The posted speed limit is 35 mph. This study was done in the year 2000. According to Mr. Cabbage, it is fairly common to have a speed increase the further down the length you go to a point where the speed limit is unposted and that is statutory 55 mph or 45 mph in certain counties.

Mr. Cabbage further explained that the roadway characteristic for Airlie Road is straight. The road is classified as a collector. The accident history from 2006 – Dec. 31, 2008 showed 1 collision involving a deer that did not result in any injuries. There has been no fatalities on this section of the road, which puts the crash rate of 110 per 100 million vehicle miles travelled, which is very low. The residence district code section does not apply. VDOT did not measure pedestrians, but automated equipment was used. Using the technical data, it is difficult to justify reducing the speed limit. Mr. Cabbage encouraged enforcement specifically near the front side of the intersection on Airlie Road.

Mr. Horsburgh stated that he understands the data, but is concerned about the occasional car travelling 60 mph. Mr. Horsburgh believes that it is important to lower the speed limit to 25 mph for safety and then make sure it is enforced. Mr. Horsburgh will work with the deputy on enforcement.

Mr. Frank Tollson stated that he and his wife, Joyce Tollson, have lived on Blantyre Road for 20 years before the speed limit was changed to 25 mph. According to Mr. Tollson, he and his wife have seen the way the reduced speed limit controls traffic. It made a big difference on Blantyre when the speed limit was lowered and signs were posted which indicated additional fines of \$200. Mr. Tollson further explained that he has seen close accidents and it is getting bad in the morning. He suggested that VDOT allow counters to sit at this location for a longer period of time.

Ms. Joyce Tollson added that the neighbors in their community are elderly. Ms. Tollson witnessed an elderly woman almost hit just trying to get her mail. There are no sidewalks and there is a blind curve there so it is not safe. Ms. Tollson suggested putting up a sign indicating additional fines to get people to slow down.

Chairman Smith asked Mr. Cabbage if he needed a recommendation from the committee. Mr. Cabbage stated that he would like to hear from law enforcement. The sign can be changed, but Mr. Cabbage questions whether it will produce any changes in the field.

Mr. Horsburgh stated that he thinks the sign will make a difference in addition to working with law enforcement.

Mr. Trumbo stated that speeding is a county-wide problem. People are driving on back roads and finding cut throughs in neighborhoods. Mr. Trumbo suggested that Mr. Tollson have a conversation with the sheriff first. Mr. Trumbo added that lowering the speed limit on Airlie Road to 25 mph is probably premature at this time.

Mr. Trumbo encouraged the property owners to contact Supervisor Nyhous and ask him to attend the meeting with the sheriff.

Mr. Tollson suggested that someone should sit on Cadet Lane and monitor traffic.

Mr. Trumbo informed Mr. Tollson that those suggestions should be made to the sheriff.

Mr. Horsburgh explained that he talked to a sheriff who said VDOT has to lower the speed limit so that they can enforce it.

Mr. Cabbage indicated that if Mr. Horsburgh arranged a meeting with law enforcement and Supervisor Nyhous, that he would be happy to attend and share the traffic data.

Chairman Smith suggested that Mr. Horsburgh talk to law enforcement and that the committee will not make any decisions on this item right now.

3. Determination by VDOT as to whether Grays Mills Road for its entire length and Baldwin Street (between Grays Mills Road and Route 29) qualify as “Residence Districts” per the Code of Virginia §46.2-874

Mrs. Susan Eddy informed the committee that this item was discussed at the last meeting. It was suggested that the committee talk about it again and look at Baldwin Street and Grays Mill Road as two separate items.

Mrs. Eddy indicated that she was asked to draft a resolution. The resolution would not be from the transportation committee, but from the Board of Supervisors requesting that VDOT reduce the speed limit because the road qualifies as a residence district.

Ms. Garreau asked Mr. Cabbage by VDOT’s standards, does the area have to be entirely business or entirely residential. Ms. Garreau asked if an area is 75% built up on one side of the road with businesses and on the other side of the road it is residential, would it qualify.

Mr. Cabbage responded saying that type of scenario would not meet the definition of the code.

Mr. Cabbage indicated that the speed limit on Baldwin Street is 35 mph from Route 29 to where the turn is for Grays Mills Road. From that point to the end of Baldwin, the speed limit is 25 mph.

Mrs. Eddy indicated that all of Baldwin could become 25 mph.

Mr. Cabbage stated that for Grays Mills Road, the area from Baldwin Street for 1.5 miles north qualifies as a residence district.

Mr. Cabbage stated that the Board of Supervisors would need to adopt a resolution.

Mrs. Eddy read an example of a resolution that could come from the Board of Supervisors. She indicated that a recommendation would have to come from the Transportation Committee.

Mr. Trumbo asked if this action required a public hearing.

Mr. Cabbage responded saying this did not require a public hearing.

Ms. Garreau asked Mr. Cabbage if he had done a lot of these in Fauquier County

Mr. Cabbage responded that this is the first one.

Mr. Eltringham asked for clarification on the area of Grays Mill Road.

Ms. Garreau asked if there was any merit in looking at Grays Mill Road as it goes South toward Dumfries Road.

Mr. Cabbage responded that given the length of the road, it would be the same situation as Airlie Road. Mr. Cabbage is concerned with posting that much length at 25 mph.

Ms. Garreau asked Mr. Cabbage what is the concern with having a longer length of road at 25 mph.

Mr. Cabbage responded saying that it is mainly enforcement.

Chairman Smith suggested that the committee take a vote.

Mr. Trumbo indicated that he would be recusing himself from voting.

ACTION:

On motion made by Adrienne Garreau and seconded by Laurence Mason, it was moved to recommend that the Board of Supervisors request of VDOT that the speed limit of applicable sections of Grays Mill Road and Baldwin Street be reduced to 25 mph as they qualify as “Residence Districts” per the Code of Virginia §46.2-874. The motion passed with 4 ayes, 0 nays and 1 abstention.

Mrs. Eddy will place this item on the Board of Supervisor’s November agenda.

4. *Citizens’ Time*

Mrs. Eddy introduced a request to reduce the speed limit on Milestone Road and provided members with a copy of the letter and a map.

Ms. Ohrstrom asked her designated driver to speak on her behalf.

Mr. Greg Salter indicated that he drives for Mrs. Ohrstrom, who lives on the bend of a very narrow road. There are a lot of farmers with big trucks and people using the road as a cut through. At both ends of the road, the speed limit is 35 mph and in the middle it is 45 mph. It is a blind spot and an accident waiting to happen with deer and foxes. Mr. Salter realizes that this is a rural road, but does not understand why the speed limit goes up for that stretch of the road.

Mr. Trumbo stated that this road was originally created for horses and buggies and it is a short cut for people headed out of the plains to Route 709.

Mr. Eltringham stated that a study needs to be done on this road.

Mr. Cabbage stated that he would need to collect the study that put the two ends to 35 mph and to find out what the current average daily traffic. He could then make a determination of whether or not to study this road.

Mr. Trumbo asked Mr. Cabbage to consider the driveways although they may be difficult to see.

Mr. Eltringham asked the committee what is the desired result.

Mr. Trumbo stated that 35 mph along the entire road should be the desired result.

Ms. Garreau stated that she cannot imagine traveling 35 on that stretch of the road since the road has great traffic calming.

Mr. Cabbage stated that he will get some background information by doing a field assessment with geometrics, access points, crash history and average daily trips of the area.

5. *Other Items*

Mr. Chuck Medvitz thanked the Committee for working on the Baldwin Street and Grays Mills Road speed limit issue.

Mr. Eltringham asked for the status of the 29 Corridor Study.

Mr. Trumbo thanked those who participated in drafting the recommendations to the Board of Supervisors. The Board submitted comments. The recommendation by the VDOT consultants for the Buckland Bypass has been withdrawn.

Mr. Trumbo stated that the committee may want to have Supervisor Schwartz come and talk about the study. He is concerned that the study may end up on the shelf.

Mr. Eltringham indicated that there are a lot of good things in the study.

Mr. Cabbage informed the committee that this is the first phase of the Route 29 Corridor Study. The next phase in the process would be funding and implementation. Without the government taking that step, it remains information.

Ms. Garreau added that the data gets old fast, if it is not used.

Mr. Cabbage stated that until VDOT can get a source of funding to implement the recommendations, they are at a stalemate.

Ms. Garreau asked if a new report had to be generated every so many years.

Mr. Cabbage responded by saying no.

Chairman Smith stated that the committee comments have been put to record. Chairman Smith stated that he is still concerned with the choke you're going to have on Route 29.

Mr. Trumbo thinks four (4) lanes would flow better. He indicated that the County needed to do our job with controlling access on Route 29.

Cabbage explained that the Route 29 Study is now in the hand of the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB). Mr. Cabbage further explained that the Route 29 Study is its own document. The draft is already on VDOT's website.

Chairman Smith notified the committee that after 9 years the December meeting will be his final meeting of the Transportation Committee. Supervisor Ray Graham will need to find a replacement. Chairman Smith suggested that the committee members keep in mind those they may want to be the next chair. Chairman Smith will check with Mr. Sam Poles and Mr. William Nace.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:11 p.m.

The next meeting will be held on **Wednesday, December 16, 2009.**