

MINUTES OF
FAUQUIER COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
February 28, 2007
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, Holder Trumbo, Harry Atherton, Erich Meding

Members Absent: Ray Graham (Alternate), Sam Poles, William Nace, and Jeffrey Walker

Guests Present: Michelle Beall, Bob Zwick, Mr. and Mrs. Scott Filling, and John Griffin

Staff Present: Liz Cook and Stacey Pell

1. Approval of January 31, 2007 Committee Meeting Minutes

ACTION:

On motion made by Mr. Trumbo and seconded by Mr. Atherton, it was moved to approve the January 31, 2007 Committee meeting minutes. The motion carried unanimously.

2. Receive an Update on the Request for a Speed Limit Reduction on Blantyre Road (Route 628) – William Hazel

Mr. Cabbage stated that this speed limit reduction has been approved and that the signs should go up within the next 4-6 weeks.

3. Receive an Update on the Roundabout Study at Broad Run Church Road (Route 600) and Riley Road (Route 676)

Mrs. Cook advised the Committee that she and Dave Cabbage attended a day-long seminar on roundabouts and traffic calming. It was not a design class but an educational one.

Mr. Cabbage stated the preliminary idea for a roundabout at the intersection of Route 600 and Route 676 is for a single lane roundabout with a 130-foot inscribed diameter and 28-foot width.

Mr. Trumbo inquired if tractor trailers will fit within those parameters, especially those 48 feet or greater in length.

Mr. Cabbage stated that tractor trailers will fit in this roundabout, but there may be a few instances where the larger trucks may go over the curb or traffic will need to be stopped.

Mr. Meding asked if this would be a traffic calming measure as well and if a roundabout would be better than a four-way stop at this intersection. Mr. Meding also inquired if this would change VDOT's notion of using Route 600 as a major or secondary major collector route. He also inquired how the road is designated and if that has restrictions and a possible lower speed limit.

Mr. Cubbage replied that Route 600 is a collector road, and VDOT looks at projects as they come online. As of right now, the speed limit is appropriate for that area, but as more development takes place, a lower speed limit may be necessary.

Mr. Trumbo inquired if the 130 foot diameter in the roundabout will potentially have an inside lane and accommodate four lanes of traffic entering.

Mr. Cubbage replied that it will be a single lane but cautioned that the roundabout has not yet been designed.

Mr. Atherton stated roundabouts are a hybrid and are designed to handle four lanes going into a single lane easily.

Mr. Cubbage stated he put the traffic numbers into the system and the result was a 130 foot diameter.

Mr. Trumbo inquired as to where this left the four-way stop request for this intersection.

Mr. Cubbage replied that the conditions on this road will stay the same until a process is established.

Mr. Meding stated that there is an inconsistency of speed limits along Riley Road and Broad Run Church Road. Mr. Meding also inquired as to how to close out the four-way stop request.

Mr. Cubbage stated a study was not done for a four-way stop. The County requested a roundabout study.

Mrs. Cook noted that if VDOT thought the road was more than a neighborhood type of road, a roundabout would not have been considered and is not throwing out a four-way stop as an option.

Mr. Meding stated that several study items are time-related and the Committee should put together what VDOT should look at overall, where the Comprehensive Plan is taken into account, and what warrants are relevant to a detailed study.

Mr. Smith stated he is not sure how involved VDOT gets beforehand.

Mr. Trumbo stated the Planning Commission takes into account traffic studies and VDOT work.

Mrs. Cook stated there are two Rezoning on Route 600 that are still under review. She also noted that the Six-Year Plan is at the Board for review and includes studies of Routes 600 and 605.

Mr. Meding inquired if those will be two separate studies or the same.

Mr. Cubbage stated Traffic Impact Analyses are submitted with Rezoning.

Mr. Meding suggested the Committee consider the potential build out based on the Comprehensive Plan and have traffic studies performed on those areas.

Mr. Trumbo requested that he be kept in the loop regarding this intersection and the roundabout.

ACTION: Mr. Cubbage will update the Committee at the next meeting.

4. *Receive an Update on the Request to Relocate or Mitigate Impacts of the Flashing Light Near the Intersection of Route 55 and Belvoir Road (Route 709) – Michelle Beall*

Mr. Cubbage had traffic engineer technicians inspect the area at night and is awaiting a proposal regarding a vertical change, reducing the lens size, or including shielding so the illumination is only visible from the road. VDOT will not be moving the post, but may move the actual sign up, down, right, or left on the post depending on how well the shielding works.

Mr. Mason stated he has seen signs with the lights that are only visible from the front.

Ms. Beall inquired if the location of the pole is permanent. She had initially been told of a different location for the sign.

Mr. Trumbo stated the original location for the pole has a gas line and sewer beneath it.

Mr. Cabbage stated the footers would not have been deep enough for the windage and weight of the sign.

Ms. Beall asked if the adjustments will eliminate the lights from shining inside her house.

Mr. Cabbage replied there is a high potential for a remarkable difference as the intent of the design is so that the lights are only visible to oncoming traffic.

Ms. Beall stated that the area around the sign is difficult to mow.

Mr. Cabbage stated VDOT mows once or twice a year.

Ms. Beall stated VDOT did not mow this area in the last year.

Mr. Cabbage stated this is not a landscaped area.

Mr. Smith noted that in the VDOT right-of way, it is their discretion whether to mow or not.

Mr. Trumbo stated the steep hill is very difficult to mow and maintain.

Mr. Cabbage stated that a change in vegetation is possible in the future, if a large enough area presents itself.

Mr. Trumbo stated VDOT is vested at this rate and will not change locations. The initial understanding was that the flashing lights were not a permanent solution and would not be there forever.

Mr. Cabbage stated that in essence anything is temporary but the lights may stay there.

Mr. Trumbo inquired about changing the speed limit to 35 m.p.h. all the way to the Northern Sports Complex. He stated if the speed limit were 35 m.p.h. in all directions, there may not be a need for the flashing lights.

Mr. Cabbage stated that a possible speed limit change was discussed but that the conditions are not yet available. There has not been a study on the speed limit change as VDOT would wait until the Sports Complex is open.

ACTION:

VDOT will make changes to the sign including a vertical change, reducing the lens size, or including shielding so the illumination is only visible from the road within 60 days.

5. *Consider a Request to Widen the Shoulder of Route 29 near the 9000 Block (South of Smith Equipment) – Gina Ritchie*

ACTION:

This item was postponed at Ms. Ritchie's request.

6. *Consider a Request for a Speed Limit Reduction on John Barton Payne Road (Route 732) Near the Orlean Baptist Church – Amos Kyhl*

Mr. Atherton stated the church would like to extend the 35 m.p.h. speed limit to the church property. This property is not in the village.

ACTION:

Mr. Cabbage will take a look at this stretch of road. This item will be held over until the April 2007 meeting.

7. *Consider a Request to Clarify the Transportation Committee's November 2005 Action on the Request for Shoulder Widening Along Route 17 – Scott Filling*

Mr. Filling stated he has been collecting data. The police do not have enough space to pull over speeders on Route 17. He inquired as to why the Committee voted down shoulder widening along Route 17 and what data was used.

Mr. Trumbo stated that a representative from the Sheriff's Office was at that meeting. When asked if shoulder pads would help, the reply was no, as the police cannot direct traffic where to pull over.

Mr. Filling replied that he had been told otherwise. Mr. Filling passed out data from VDOT and Sheriff Fox's office showing traffic and speeding along Route 17. The information showed there is a lot of speeding along Route 17, but the number of tractor trailers being pulled over is small as there were only three pulled over in the timeframe shown. He also noted that traffic is increasing along Route 17. Mr. Filling also brought a hand-out with previous Transportation Committee Meeting minutes regarding this issue. The hand-outs also included photos of electronic speed control devices on Route 17 between Delaplane and Paris. There were also photos included of site where vehicles have crashed through fences along Route 17 between Warrenton and Marshall. Copies of these documents can be found with the February 2007 Transportation packet in the Fauquier County Planning Office.

Mr. Smith stated that if the road meets VDOT's criteria, the Committee cannot do anything about the speed.

Mr. Filling stated that the police are not pulling over tractor trailers as there is no room allowed for that on Route 17.

Mr. Smith inquired why tractor trailers traveling at 70 m.p.h. are not being pulled over.

Mrs. Filling stated the data speaks for itself regarding that matter.

Mr. Zwick stated the police do not have the ability to pull tractor trailers over at a safe spot.

Mr. Meding noted that it is easier to pull over a small car than a tractor trailer.

Mr. Zwick stated that at times, he has to drive past his house as he cannot safely slow down and make that turn due to speeding tractor trailers driving so close behind him. He also noted that school busses seem to think that Route 17 is a dangerous area for loading and unloading students.

Mr. Filling agreed that another safety concern is school busses stopping in the travel lane along Route 17 and also connecting on and off Route 17. Mr. Filling noted that the police are hesitant to pull tractor trailers over where the shoulder may not be wide enough as the tractor trailers may tip over.

Mr. Trumbo stated the Committee acknowledges that there is a speeding problem along Route 17.

Mr. Filling stated that it is a problem and that CB radios as well as other factors work in favor of the truck drivers. He also noted that in the handout he provided, there is an email from Sheriff Fox regarding Route 17 issues.

Mr. Trumbo noted there were only 5 accidents involving tractor trailers from January 1, 2004 – February 15, 2005. Mr. Trumbo also quoted the October 26, 2005 Transportation Committee Meeting Minutes that read, "*Mr. Downey asked how a truck will know where to pull over and if law enforcement could direct drivers to a specified location. Mr. Mahler, with the Virginia State Police Department, stated that officers on the roads really have no idea where a driver will decide to pull over. Sheriff Fox stated that officers try to gauge it in common sense areas, but some drivers just pull over as soon as they notice the lights without judging their surroundings.*" Mr. Trumbo noted that this item was denied as it was deemed not worthwhile the expenditure of funds.

Mrs. Filling stated there are other speed deterrents such as signs indicating fines and electronic speed signs that can be installed.

Mr. Atherton stated that the 8-mile stretch between Delaplane and Paris, which has the electronic signs showing the driver's speed, has been effective for some time now. He noted the funding for the other signs came from the federal government as part of a T21 grant. Mr. Atherton stated Route 17 is a huge problem, but that the other stretch [between Delaplane and Paris] is not part of the truck system. That stretch could be done as there was a higher truck count with more than 35% of the daily interstate traffic being truck traffic and more accidents. Mr. Atherton acknowledged that there is a problem, but the solution is with enforcement. Mr. Atherton advised Mr. Filling that it would go a long way if he could get it in writing from the Sheriff's Office that widening the shoulders would be beneficial.

Mr. Zwick stated that at the rate the drivers are going now, there will be a horrific accident, possibly even involving a bus.

Mr. Cubbage stated that traffic has been increasing 3-4% over the last number of years.

Mr. Atherton stated with the Springfield interchange, there may be a reduction in truck traffic in this area but not a large one.

Mr. Mason stated the area between Opal and Warrenton shows to be a greater problem.

Mr. Zwick stated that turning onto Route 17 from Route 703, a driver has very little visibility.

Mr. Atherton stated the speed limit on Route 17 cannot be lowered by VDOT.

Mr. Zwick stated the real problem on Route 17 is tractor trailer drivers driving 70 m.p.h.

Mr. Filling noted that the Sports Complex on Route 709 will increase traffic in this area.

Mr. Atherton stated VDOT cannot create solutions for future projects unless stated by the Comprehensive Plan or in Rezoning Proffers.

Mr. Filling inquired that without shoulders, what is to stop the truckers from speeding.

Mr. Trumbo stated the police can enforce the speed limit and follow the drivers a distance.

Mr. Smith asked if there was data from the State Police Office.

Mr. Filling replied the State Police do not keep data. Mr. Filling requested that the cost of asphalt to widen the shoulder be researched.

Mr. Trumbo inquired if the cost estimates had been available in 2005.

Mr. Filling noted there were four sites. One site cost a lot of money and the other three sites were just the cost of asphalt.

Mr. Smith inquired if this item could be covered under maintenance funds.

Mr. Cubbage stated maintenance funds were not an option. Mr. Cubbage also noted that there is a DMV motor carrier unit with a weigh in motion system, which will be placed throughout the County. When the system is complete there will be a wireless connection that will be able to determine weight, class, and violations and if it is necessary the truck will be removed from the roadway. The locations will be the Bealeton Headquarters, Quarles truck stop, Route 29 facility, the turn lane at Great Meadow, and the rest area on I-66. There are two systems undergoing testing right now and if they prove to calibrate correctly, VDOT plans to have all systems in place by spring. This will target all vehicles traveling in all directions.

Mr. Meding inquired if this system will use Doppler radar.

Mr. Cubbage stated he will bring more information on this system. It will have the capabilities for enhancements such as video and infrared, which are not part of the initial installation. Mr. Cubbage cautioned that this system is a Motor Carrier system, not VDOT, and is virtually unseen by the traveling public. The electronic signs along Route 17 between Delaplane and Paris are part of a pilot program and are the only ones in the state. It tracks

the time of the highest number of speeders along this stretch. The data is also available to State Police.

Mr. Filling noted that a place where a tractor trailer had been previously pulled over created a large hole which was there about five months before it was fixed.

Mr. Smith stated that area must be one of the few places to pull over on Route 17.

Mr. Filling replied it is a good spot except that it has a soft shoulder.

Mr. Smith stated that he has a hard time believing that if trucks are speeding, they are not being pulled over.

Mr. Zwick stated the Sheriff's Office has another issue when tractor trailer drivers do not pay their fines.

Mr. Smith stated he has seen tractor trailers speeding along Route 17.

Mr. Trumbo inquired as to what action the Committee can take regarding this issue.

Mr. Zwick stated the problem exists and is a hazard to the County. The police state they have no place to pull over tractor trailers, and the courts do not go after the fines.

Mr. Trumbo stated Route 17 is in the primary system which is part of the federal system and the Committee has no local jurisdiction.

Mr. Smith stated if only one car is being pulled over on average every six days, then this seems to be an enforcement problem.

Mr. Zwick added that speeding tractor trailers are more dangerous on the roads.

Mr. Filling stated he has spoken with parents who do not put their children on the bus on Route 17 as it is too dangerous.

Mr. Meding stated there seems to be no consensus as to a solution. He stated it seems as if the Committee cannot resolve this issue.

Mr. Filling stated VDOT has the ability to pave the shoulders.

Mr. Cabbage stated funding has not been initiated at this time.

Mr. Smith stated that if the Sheriff's Office is pulling over one car every six days, they are not doing much enforcement.

Mr. Filling stated the Committee has heard from representatives from the Sheriff's Office.

Mr. Smith stated data from the State Police is missing. The Committee typically has the Board of Supervisors get in touch with the Sheriff's Office.

Mrs. Cook stated the Public Safety Committee may be an avenue to pursue.

Mr. Filling stated it would help a lot if the Transportation Committee could go to Sheriff Fox. Mr. Filling stated he will go to the Public Safety Committee as well.

Mr. Smith stated he, as Chairman of the Transportation Committee, can say something to Sheriff Fox. He also noted that based on statements from a deputy at a previous meeting and the funding not being available, the Committee moved to deny this request back in November 2005.

Mr. Trumbo stated that at the time of the vote, the Committee felt that there was enough information to take action. The Committee does not just base decisions on variable data but bases decisions on many factors.

Mr. Smith stated if there is ample room to pull cars over and the police officers do not, then they may not pull over trucks if there is room for that.

Mr. Filling stated if there is room to pull over trucks, then the police cannot use that as a reason for not pulling over trucks.

Mr. Griffin stated he lives off Meetze Road and has the same problem with trucks speeding; only Meetze Road is just two lanes. The speed limit has recently been lowered, but the trucks still speed and tailgate. There are many school bus stops along Meetze Road.

Mr. Filling stated the public has tried to give feasible solutions but no one has listened.

Mr. Mason stated this is a problem that does not exist solely on Route 17 but all over the County. When police officers give tickets, they need to then appear in Court.

Mr. Filling stated if truck drivers see the police pulling over trucks more often, they will know not to speed. Right now there is no shoulder and no weigh station, so there is no incentive not to speed.

Mr. Trumbo stated that he is not saying this is not a problem, but anyone can make an argument about many of the roads in this County. The problem is bigger than the Transportation Committee, Sheriff's Office, or the State Police. A lot would have to be done to change the overall mindset of drivers.

Mr. Filling stated he is attempting to bring solutions to the table.

Mr. Mason stated the Committee cannot solve this problem and other avenues may need to be researched.

Mr. Trumbo stated the Public Safety Committee should be the next avenue.

Mr. Filling inquired if this would go back to VDOT after the Public Safety Committee.

Mr. Cabbage stated that is not his jurisdiction.

Mr. Smith stated that he understands this is a serious problem but not for this Committee.

Mr. Filling stated he wishes he had been informed of this back in July.

Mr. Trumbo stated that based on Deputy Haas' comments and other factors, widening of shoulders will not work in the Committee's opinion.

Mr. Smith stated the shoulders can be put in but will not make a difference.

Mr. Filling stated he tried to get solutions which were not taken. Accidents will happen. The roads were not planned well enough with shoulder space.

ACTION:

Mr. Smith will speak with Sheriff Fox regarding this issue.

Mr. Filling will contact the Public Safety Committee.

8. *Consider a Request for Traffic Calming Measures For Route 17 Between Warrenton and Marshall – Scott Filling*

Mr. Cabbage e-mailed Mr. Filling several reports back in July. The e-mail contained all of the reports VDOT had, and Mr. Filling now has copies of all the reports.

Mr. Filling stated that in comparing to other reports, these did not seem official.

Mr. Cabbage stated what Mr. Filling has are the results.

Mr. Trumbo inquired as to what the results were.

Mrs. Cook stated there are traffic calming measures for residential areas.

Mr. Cabbage stated Route 17 is not eligible for traffic calming measures even in residential areas. Streets that are eligible in residential areas need to be able to meet the following criteria: Speed limit of 25 m.p.h. or less; not a primary road; twelve driveways per 1000 feet of roadway.

Mr. Filling inquired if Route 17 is eligible for the Highway Safety Corridor.

Mr. Cabbage stated the Highway Safety Corridor is for interstate highways.

Mrs. Cook stated that Mr. Atherton had advised the public had to go beyond the local government up to the state level regarding Route 17 between Delaplaine and Paris.

Mr. Cabbage stated other areas such as Stafford and Richmond had petitioned the state and were denied. Mr. Cabbage stated that he would find it unlikely that this would pass. Mr. Cabbage also stated the crash rate per million miles traveled does not measure up and there are other roads in the County that would be ahead of Route 17. There is no way this road would be ahead of Interstate 66 or Route 29.

Mr. Filling stated that it seems reasonable solutions are not implemented until the problems get very bad.

Mr. Cabbage stated if the accidents are not there, then the road is considered safe.

Mr. Zwick stated there is an accident in front of his house on average of once a month.

Mr. Meding stated VDOT has certain criteria and the Committee cannot change that.

ACTION:

Mr. Filling will take this to the Public Safety Committee as well.

9. Citizens' Time

No citizens spoke at this time.

10. Consider Changing the Format of the Committee's Meeting Minutes

ACTION:

Mr. Meding requested this item be postponed until the March 2007 meeting.

11. Other Items

Mr. Trumbo stated he gave Mrs. Cook a request for next month's agenda from Ms. Lamb.

Mr. Mason brought up the issue of the crossover work on Route 29. He saw the construction of one south of Opal.

Mr. Cabbage stated this is the first of ten crossovers slated for Route 29. There will be four turn lanes installed between Culpeper County and Prince William County. There was a crossover scheduled for the Buckland Bypass, but this is an area that cannot be touched, so that crossover has been moved to Remington. Also, the southbound turn lane at Remington will be extended.

Mrs. Cook stated there will be a request for an 'Autistic Child' sign next month.

Mr. Smith inquired if the VDOT funding had been approved at the state level.

Mr. Cabbage replied that some of the funding had been approved but will not measure up to what is needed.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

The next meeting will be held March 28, 2007.