

COMMITTEE ON INFRASTRUCTURE

DECEMBER 17, 2020

A meeting of the Committee on Infrastructure was held Thursday, December 17, 2020, at 7:00 p.m. via teleconference.

Chairman O'Brien

As Chairman of the Committee on Infrastructure, I find that due to the State of Emergency declared by the Governor as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and in accordance with the Governor's Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, this public body is authorized to meet electronically.

Please note that there is no physical location to observe and listen contemporaneously to this meeting, which was authorized pursuant to the Governor's Emergency Order. However, in accordance with the Emergency Order, I am confirming that we are:

Providing public access to the meeting by telephone, with additional access possibilities by video or other electronic means:

To access Zoom, please refer to the agenda or the City's website for the meeting link.

To join by phone: 1-929-205-6099 Meeting ID: 816 0680 0015

The public may also view the meeting via Channel 16.

We previously gave notice to the public of the necessary information for accessing the meeting, through public postings. Instructions have also been provided on the City of Nashua's website at www.nashuanh.gov and publicly noticed at City Hall and Nashua Public Library.

If anybody has a problem accessing the meeting via phone or Channel 16, please call 603-821-2049 and they will help you connect.

In the event the public is unable to access the meeting via the methods mentioned above, the meeting will be adjourned and rescheduled. Please note that all votes that are taken during this meeting shall be done by roll call vote.

Let's start the meeting by taking a roll call attendance. When each member states their presence, please also state whether there is anyone in the room with you during this meeting, which is required under the Right-To-Know Law.

Alderman Schmidt called the roll and asked them to state the reason he or she could not attend, confirmed that they could hear the proceedings, and stated who was present with him or her.

The roll call was taken with 4 members of the Committee on Infrastructure present:

Alderman-at-Large Michael B. O'Brien, Sr.
Alderman Jan Schmidt
Alderman Ernest Jette
Alderman David C. Tencza

Members not in Attendance: Alderman Thomas Lopez

Also in Attendance: Alderwoman Elizabeth Lu

ROLL CALL

Chairman O'Brien

Present and I am alone and I can hear the proceedings.

Alderman Schmidt

Alderman Jan Schmidt is here.

Alderman Jette

I'm here, I am alone and I can hear the proceedings.

Alderman Tencza

I am here, I am alone and I can hear everyone.

Alderman Schmidt

And I am alone as well. That is four out of five are here tonight.

Chairman O'Brien

OK and also in attendance is Alderman Lu. And I don't see anybody else. So I will now move on to Public Comment. Is there anybody from the public that wishes to comment? I don't see anybody on the screen.

PUBLIC COMMENT - None

COMMUNICATIONS - None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS - None

NEW BUSINESS – RESOLUTIONS

R-20-101

Endorsers: Mayor Jim Donchess
Alderman Linda Harriott-Gathright
Alderman Skip Cleaver

AUTHORIZING RELEASE OF CERTAIN PEDESTRIAN WALKWAY EASEMENTS

MOTION BY ALDERMAN WILSHIRE TO RECOMMEND FINAL PASSAGE BY ROLL CALL

ON THE QUESTION

Ok, I think my Clerk broke up and if anybody did not hear her, it's R-20-101 authorizing the release of certain pedestrian walkway easements. And Alderman Schmidt makes her motion to recommend final passage by roll call? Is there any discussion on the motion? OK just to remind yourselves and to the public, this was heard by the Aldermen in 2017 I think. It has to do with Loft 34 and it is part of the plan for the Riverfront to make a pedestrian walkway. So, again, any further discussion? Seeing none, will the Clerk please call the roll?

A viva voce roll call was taken which resulted as follows:

Yea: Alderman O'Brien, Alderman Schmidt,
Alderman Jette, Alderman Tencza 4

Nay: 0

MOTION CARRIED

NEW BUSINESS – ORDINANCES

Chairman O'Brien

And without exception, both of these Ordinances have to do with establishing a 25 mile per hour speed limit. One is on Robinson Road and the other is on Charlotte Avenue. So without objection, I am going to have the Clerk read both by title with a motion of final passage and I think we could both discuss these two Ordinances at the same time. So if there's any objection to that? Seeing none, Clerk could you proceed please?

O-20-037

Endorsers: Alderwoman Elizabeth Lu
Alderman Richard A. Dowd

ESTABLISHING A 25 M.P.H. SPEED LIMIT ON ROBINSON ROAD

MOTION BY ALDERMAN SCHMIDT TO RECOMMEND FINAL PASSAGE BY ROLL CALL

ON THE QUESTION

Chairman O'Brien

On both motions, 20-037 and 20-038, your motion by Alderman Schmidt is to recommend final passage by roll call, correct?

Alderman Schmidt

That's correct sir.

Chairman O'Brien

We will take in order O-20-037, Alderman Lu this is your Ordinance, would you like to give a brief explanation on this please?

Alderwoman Lu

Yes, thank you Alderman O'Brien, Mr. Chairman. And by the way, I am hearing the Clerk perfectly. I turned my video off a couple of times thinking maybe that would improve things but you are coming through loud and clear for me.

Alderman Schmidt

Thank you.

Alderman Lu

You're welcome. So Robinson Road is a short road on my street, in my Ward rather. I got a call around May from a resident who was concerned about the speed. I went out at that time and I spoke with about almost half the people on the road, there aren't that many. All of them support this, all of them complained of speeding on Robinson Road. Robinson Road is only 6/10ths of a mile. It is parallel to East Dunstable Road so there are some temptations for people to avoid some of the backups on East Dunstable Road by jumping over to Robinson Road. Robinson Road is a very old – it was established many years ago. It's not a wide road, at points it is about 21 feet across and there are no sidewalks on either side.

The reason that is important is to keep in mind that East Dunstable Road, which is parallel and very close to it is the regular or typical width of a city road but there are sidewalks on every part of it and it has the same speed limit. Now Robinson Road has at 6/10ths of a mile it has 8 separate intersections within that 6/10ths of a mile. It also has a ballfield that you come to just over the crest of a hill. There's a ballfield just over the crest of the hill and a Tot Lot, and also on that road is a very popular ice-cream eatery, a popular eatery that attracts neighborhood families that walk to it. So for all these reasons, I agree with my constituents it is a – you know, we should lower the speed limit to make this as comfortable as possible of a road to live on.

One thing I didn't mention is that – so the Police Department did do a speed study in June and that speed study showed within a 6 hour period, 20 people speeding over 45 miles an hour which is 15 miles over the speed limit. So their concerns are certainly substantiated with that speed study. Thank you.

Chairman O'Brien

Thank you Alderman Lu. Any further comments from members of the Committee? OK seeing none, I'll open up discussion on O-20-038.

A viva voce roll call was taken which resulted as follows:

Yea: Alderman O'Brien, Alderman Schmidt,
Alderman Jette, Alderman Tencza 4

Nay: 0

MOTION CARRIED**O-20-038**

Endorsers: Alderman Richard A. Dowd
Alderman Elizabeth Lu
Alderman Patricia Klee
Alderman Thomas Lopez

ESTABLISHING A 25 M.P.H. SPEED LIMIT ON CHARLOTTE AVENUE**MOTION BY ALDERMAN SCHMIDT TO RECOMMEND FINAL PASSAGE BY ROLL CALL**ON THE QUESTIONChairman O'Brien

This prime sponsor is Alderman Richard Dowd. Unfortunately Alderman Dowd cannot be with us this meeting because he's double booked with the Joint School Committee Meeting this evening. So he asked me to a brief presentation; he has gone through the traditional backgrounds to make this kind of change. I do remind you at Charlotte Avenue, there is a school in the area and so again for many of the same reasons that Alderman Lu mentioned, a 25 mile hour speed limit seems to be prudent. I think on both these roads posted speed limit at this time is 30 miles an hour, so it's only lowering it down an additional 5 miles. So any further discussion on O-20-038? (There was none.)

A viva voce roll call was taken which resulted as follows:

Yea: Alderman O'Brien, Alderman Schmidt, Alderman Jette, Alderman Tencza	4
Nay:	0

MOTION CARRIED

Chairman O'Brien

Nobody has been brought to my attention that we do have several items that have been tabled in Committee; nobody has brought them or made a request to bring them forward.

TABLED IN COMMITTEE

O-20-004

Endorsers: Alderman Thomas Lopez
Alderman Patricia Klee
Alderman-at-Large Shoshanna Kelly
Alderman Linda Harriott-Gathright

ALLOWING PERMITTED OVERNIGHT ON-STREET PARKING ON EIGHTH STREET

- Tabled at 2/26/20 meeting

O-20-006

Endorsers: Alderman Thomas Lopez
Alderman Patricia Klee
Alderman-at-Large Shoshanna Kelly
Alderman Linda Harriott-Gathright

ALLOWING PERMITTED OVERNIGHT ON-STREET PARKING ON A PORTION OF PRESCOTT STREET

- Tabled at 2/26/20 meeting

O-20-032

Endorsers: Alderman-at-Large Brandon Laws
Alderman Thomas Lopez
Alderman Jan Schmidt
Alderman Skip Cleaver
Alderman-at-Large Shoshanna Kelly
Alderman Elizabeth Lu

REDUCING THE FINE FOR OVERNIGHT PARKING VIOLATIONS

- Tabled at 10/28/20 meeting

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Alderman Jette

Thank you Mr. Chairman. I voted for both of these motions and I think the Aldermen whose Wards that there are in are best able to judge what is appropriate. I would like to point out, generally speaking, lowering a speed limit from 30 to 25, you know, if people are going 45 in a 30 mile an hour zone, changing the speed limit to 25 is probably not going to have the desired effect. I hope it works but I think that generally speaking people – if we could get the Police to do something to enforce the speed limit, if they were enforcing the 30 mile an hour speed limit, I don't think people would be upset with people going 30 on that road. The problem isn't that they are going 30, the problem is they are going 45.

And I don't know the answer; I've got the same problem on some major streets in my Ward. How we get people to slow down I think is probably more to do with enforcement. Like on West Hollis Street, we did get those flashing signs to tell people how fast they are going, to try to make them aware of their speed. I think people just fall into a habit, you know, you just go the speed that seems to – that the road seems to be able to handle, forgetting that there are pedestrians, that there are especially children and that it creates a dangerous situation.

I hope that lowering it to 25 helps, but I think more has to be done to achieve the desired affect and that is to slow the traffic down so that people, especially on a road like Robinson Road, where there apparently are no sidewalks, makes it very unsafe, you know, when you're mixing pedestrians and motor vehicles. So I applaud Alderman Lu and Alderman Dowd's efforts to try to remedy a situation and I supported both of these Ordinances and voted for them. But if Alderwoman Lu knows anyone in the Police Department or on the Police Commission, she might try to get them to assist in stricter enforcement. Thank you.

Alderman Schmidt

Mr. Chairman, if I may?

Chairman O'Brien

Yes, Alderman Schmidt.

Alderman Schmidt

I only wanted to say you are exactly right Alderman Jette. I've had so many complaints about speeders and you know what is going to happen. The minute you put up the sign, people are going to just continue to speed, because speeders are going to speed. It's a shame it'll take an accident or something worse before people realize that their speed really matters. We've got flashing signs, people still speed, we have stop signs, people still speed. It's a shame, but it's good to try to slow people down. There is no question that this is a good idea. It's just a shame it doesn't work. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman O'Brien

Alderman Tencza.

Alderman Tencza

Thank you. So I think where this does make a difference is in the fine schedule, because if someone is going 35 in 30, the fine is \$93.00. If they are going 45 in a 25 the fine is \$124.00 and if they are going 36 in a 25 mile an hour zone, the fine is \$248.00. So I think that will deter people from speeding but the Police Department is busy. It would be great if they could devote more of their attention to traffic enforcement and I am sure that they do when they can but hopefully this will get people's attention, make people drive a little bit more safely on Robinson Road. Charlotte Ave. is school zone anyway so people should be driving carefully anyways especially when school is in session.

Alderman Schmidt

Mr. Chairman, if I may. It would be a marvelous idea if we had those electronic signs that actually told people what Alderman Tencza just said. You know, we lower the speed, have a sign show if you are traveling 45 and you are caught, now this is going to be your fine. And that alone might make a difference right there. Thank you Mr. Chairman.

Chairman O'Brien

Well before there were electronic signs we paid for those little light things that we hung on sign posts and telephone poles and unfortunately I don't – as you know by light (audio cuts), yellow means recommendation but this is law. And I have to agree with Alderman Tencza what this will do will increase the fine. If anybody does speed it would jeopardize when they are caught. So that in itself should be a deterrent. Unfortunately, I wish we could put a cop on every street. Wouldn't that be wonderful? But I don't think that is equally as prudent. So we try to do the best we can and I think this, I'm going to say it's 100% panacea of a solution but at least it's a small step hopefully to remedy a speeding situation. Alderman Jette, did you have a further comment?

Alderman Jette

Yeah I just wanted to say I thank Alderman Tencza for bringing that out, I had forgotten about the fines and the fine schedule and that this would increase the amount of fines and perhaps that would be an additional disincentive to people for speeding. Wouldn't it be wonderful if those electronic signs could not only advertise the amount of the fine but would automatically, you know the way that they can photograph your license plate, automatically fine you if they see you speeding, you know, automatically send you a fine, just joking.

Chairman O'Brien

Well Alderman Jette, you are welcome to come up with \$100 a year club up at the State Legislature and introduce that. Right now Live free or die, I don't think you'll come up with anything that going to photograph your license plate, you know, particularly where there are people trying to cover theirs (audio cuts out). Further comment? Seeing none, I'll open up to public comment.

PUBLIC COMMENT - NoneREMARKS BY THE ALDERMEN- NonePOSSIBLE NON-PUBLIC SESSION – NoneChairman O'Brien

And prior to that I would like to say it might be me, my computer said my internet was unstable. So we made it through the meeting somewhat, so I am happy as a clam here. So Motion to Adjourn, can the Clerk please call the roll please?

ADJOURNMENT**MOTION BY ALDERMAN SCHMIDT TO ADJOURN BY ROLL CALL**

A viva voce roll call was taken which resulted as follows:

Yea: Alderman O'Brien, Alderman Schmidt,
Alderman Jette, Alderman Tencza 4

Nay: 0

MOTION CARRIED

The meeting was declared closed at 7:23 p.m.

Alderman Jan Schmidt
Committee Clerk