

**TOWN OF SOUTH BETHANY
TRAFFIC (AD HOC) COMMITTEE MEETING
APRIL 22, 2016**

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

Committee Chair John Janowski called the meeting to order at 10 a.m.

ATTENDANCE

PRESENT: John Janowski, Jay Headman, Mike Trentadue, Carol Stevenson, Frank Weisgerber, Town Manager Melvin Cusick, Sgt. Lee Davis, Mike Somers (DeIDOT Senior Transportation Planner), Guy (Glenn) Pusey (RK&K), and Administrative Assistant Pam Smith

PRESENT BY REMOTE ACCESS: Steve Farrow

An overview and purpose of the Traffic Committee regarding roadway safety issues between Kent Avenue and Route 1 was discussed. Introductions were made by each member and each member stated their involvement/representation with the roadway safety issues between Kent Ave. and Route 1.

The committee began developing a Scope of Work regarding roadway safety issues between Kent Avenue and Route 1.

Motion and Vote: After discussion, a motion was made by Mike Trentadue to recommend to Council that the counters for a May DeIDOT Daily Vehicle Volume Report be at Black Gum Dr. and Russell Rd., and the location of the counters will be determined based on the expert. The motion was unanimously carried.

Below is a summary of comments made during the meeting:

John stated that he hopes the traffic committee transcends into a transportation committee at some point.

John does not want to slow down measures already worked on.

John would like to refer to the group of property owners that gave the "Roadway Safety issues between Kent Ave and Route 1" PowerPoint Presentation at the February 12, 2016, Town Council Regular Meeting as the Cat Hill Traffic Group.

DeIDOT representative Mike Somers said his department has been defunded for FY 2017. DeIDOT's FY 2016 ends June 30 which really leaves April and May for any design work or engineering work. Mike S. said the Town needs to act fast.

John has asked Guy Pusey to look at what options are available for the intersection of Canal Dr. and Tamarack Dr. Guy has some conceptual sketch drawings that may or may not work.

Jay asked Mike S. to get input from the families on the corner of Tamarack Dr. and Canal Dr. John said their input would be good for DeIDOT and this committee.

Mike S. said some things like signing can be done quickly. DeIDOT has a traffic calming program and anything that falls under that program DeIDOT can fund (do). Mike S. suggested calling the legislators and ask them to support the traffic calming program.

Regarding modeling, Mike S. said the State has a complete model for the entire state but he does not know if the 5,000 housing units referred to in the Cat Hill Traffic Group's presentation are in the model.

Mike T. would like to understand who owns the roads in South Bethany, if changes are desirous who makes those changes, where does DeIDOT get involved (what is the interaction with DeIDOT), and who has the final say. Mike S. said essentially the roads in the Town other than Route 1 are owned by the Town. Mike S. said the Town gets State money to maintain those roads because they have been designated public use. There is some oversight from the State. As long as the Town does not do something unorthodox like close the road completely and as long as it is maintained for public use, then the Town can pretty much do what they want. Most towns have an agreement with the State regarding Route 1. DeIDOT has ultimate authority and maintenance responsibility for Route 1, but the signage is usually done by the Town and maintained by the Town. Mike S. said he does not know if it is different in South Bethany. The Town Manager, Melvin Cusick, said it is different in South Bethany – anything on Route 1 is maintained by DeIDOT. The only agreement the Town has with DeIDOT is that DeIDOT allows the Town to cut the grass and put in landscaping. Mike S. said it varies a little by town - the bigger towns that have big Public Works offices are expected to do more. Mike S. said there are two parts – the State owns Route 1 and the Town owns everything else. Mike T. said if he understands Mike S. correctly, exclusive of closing the road completely to all traffic, the Town has the wherewithal and the authority to make changes in the roadway surface and or through traffic such as signage, stop signs, humps, etc. Mike S. said there is another piece to this. The Town has looked to DeIDOT for technical support. When you make changes to a roadway and you use national standards or state standards, if something happens then you are shielded because this is state practice or this is national practice. DeIDOT uses a manual called the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), and if we do a project based upon those guidelines and someone has a crash and someone is injured we are shielded because we did it based on national standards. The Town is kind of doing the same thing by looking to DeIDOT to help them maintain appropriate practices. If the Town went off on its own and put some crazy sign out there and somebody got hurt the argument could at least be made that it wouldn't have happened or it was less likely to happen had the Town used national or state standards. Mike S. said we are just all trying to be in the same place and the Town also does not want to go off too far on their own. Mike S. said that is generally the practice – you want to have a valid reason why you do things the way you do based upon sound practices. John asked Mike S. if DeIDOT's funding would be pulled if a measure was implemented not to DeIDOT's standards. Stating that he has not been able to talk to the legal office, Mike S. said there is a certain level of flexibility. He said the big thing is the road has to be maintained for public access. However, something like making a road one way might be possible because you are still maintaining access. Or the case of closing part of the entrance part of the time. Closing the whole entrance part of the time might be another issue. Mike S. said you can't close a road and expect the State to pay for it.

Melvin stated that a closed road would be deducted from the MSA funding formula. He added that there are other issues to think about such as Police Department funding from the State.

Mike S. said the folks on Evergreen Rd. should have a say on if they can go out Cat Hill.

It was noted that evacuation routes are Route 1, Route 54, and Route 26.

It was mentioned that Middlesex owns Pine Rd. Melvin stated that there is a verbal agreement that in an emergency South Bethany can use Pine Rd.

There was a discussion regarding ownership of Evergreen Rd. John said the map he was looking at showed ownership. Center line of road to the right is South Bethany. Center line of road to the left is Middlesex. Lee Davis said from the Town Hall to the stop sign on Evergreen Rd. is owned by Middlesex.

Regarding the Scope of Work, Mike S. said the report will define what is to be done and from that the Town or DeIDOT will establish a budget.

Mike S. said this committee cannot oversee construction.

In response to a question from Frank Weisgerber, Mike S. said DeIDOT can direct the Town to normal funding programs, but the Town will have to seek federal funding opportunities on its own.

Purpose – John made the following comments: To evaluate the issues associated with the traffic volume on a defined route and the safety issues associated with it. John is concerned about maintaining the view shed of the route. He believes one of the purposes is to maintain the value to the community and the homeowners in that corridor. John wants to keep it aesthetically pleasing. John referred to a map with a highlighted route saying that he has a good sense as to the specific route that the committee should be evaluating. John believes it is more than a Cat Hill issue.

John defined the study route as starting at Kent Ave. to Black Gum Drive to Cattail Road to Tamarack Drive to Canal Drive to Russell Road to Evergreen Road to Route 1.

At John's request, Jay and Mike T. will be the principals in disseminating information to Cat Hill owners.

Mike T. said the highlighted route is the only route through all of South Bethany that directly connects Kent Ave., which is a major east/west road, with Route 1. All of the rest of South Bethany terminates in dead ends. John said that is not to say that there are not residual effects – the issues with cut through spill over onto other roads (Mays Way, Cleveland Avenue, Peterson Drive) particularly in the middle of the summer. John said there is a possibility they should be evaluated.

Sgt. Davis said the small roadway is not set up to handle pedestrian traffic and unless the Town improves on that he does not see it getting any better. Sgt. Davis said the only way to make it safer is to separate the pedestrians from the cars. Jay said the Cat Hill Traffic Group's response to that is slowing down traffic does increase safety. Sgt. Davis agreed.

John has asked Melvin for a road inventory for the study route and information on the lane width.

John asked Sgt. Davis if it was a seasonal issue. Sgt. Davis said it is more seasonal. There is a 4–6 month period where in his opinion it becomes very unsafe. John said that will be quantified through the counts. Jay said the Cat Hill Traffic Group already has information from the Police Department that identifies that, and those counts are in the group's presentation.

Mike T. – Is the speed right for the roads that are currently built.

John – Ocean Drive is a destination. Cat Hill is not a destination.

Mike S. said on the study route you could have a pedestrian pathway with a one-way road. Keep in mind that all good intentions have their consequences. He said making it one way was one of the things he thought about, but what would that mean to the whole town. It could affect traffic patterns for most of South Bethany west of Route 1. Mike T. – We have to take that litmus test with anything we come up with. Sidewalks would be as difficult as one way.

Saying that he does not know all of the issues, Mike S. asked why you wouldn't want sidewalks if you are talking about pedestrian safety.

Mike T. and Jay spoke to the following section of the Town Code regarding Cat Hill and how the houses in Cat Hill lay (houses cannot be equal distances to the road – houses are staggered) and the difficulty of getting a plot map with the right of way:

§ 145-38

E. Residential lots west of and abutting on Canal Drive and abutting Cattail Road, Black Gum Drive, Kent Avenue (County Road No. 361), Periwinkle Road, Russell Road (west of Canal Drive), Tamarack Court and Tamarack Drive (standard lot width: 70 feet)

(1) Front setbacks shall be staggered so as to prevent construction of dwellings in a straight line, with a minimum of three feet difference. Front or rear setbacks of dwellings on lots on a street of this subsection shall be determined by the first permit issued on that street.

Jay said some houses are close to the road some are not. It is a very unique development and very small lots.

Mike S. questioned if it would be feasible to coordinate a path and not actual sidewalks.

Melvin said the Town has a road inventory from the University of Delaware that includes the width for every road in town. He noted that there is a property on Tamarack Dr. that has survey stakes on it which would help to see the right-of-way at that location.

In response to a comment from Jay, Mike S. said if you want to count cut through traffic the only way is an origin destination study which takes time to organize and is not cheap and Mike S. can't be certain DeIDOT will have the money in the summer time. Melvin suggested putting a counter on Russell Road which would probably include the cut through traffic.

Public Comment:

Dennis Roberts (107 Canal Dr.) – Stated that not many of the items the Cat Hill Traffic Group produced have been considered and the discussion jumped right to sidewalks. Dennis said the Cat Hill Traffic Group's issue was safety and the group associated that with traffic volume. The committee should be tasked with controlling the traffic volume and not the pedestrians. Dennis said he supports the barricade but in reality it addresses only half the problem. Dennis suggested putting up a temporary sign that only locals can use the cut through. Dennis suggested putting a sign stating "no left turn between the hours of 2 and 5" at the end of Black Gum Dr. so people coming back from the beach would have to turn right. Dennis said he is not saying no to sidewalks, but it is a long term solution. Dennis noted that in Fenwick Island and Dewey Beach the speed limit is 15 MPH on every residential road.

Mayor Pat Voveris – Council will address the new speed hump at the May Town Council Regular Meeting. The results of the Black Gum Drive property owners survey supports the new speed hump. Pat said it would be nice to have the Traffic Committee's support on the new speed hump.

Dennis Roberts said a temporary speed bump has a short term purpose. Mike S. said he will look into it and see what is available. Mike S. said they are hard to work with and that is why DeIDOT does not use them anymore. Mike S. said the contractors could do the work, but they are not cheap. John said if it is a cost effective alternative the committee will consider it.

The next meeting is scheduled for May 12, 2016, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Town Hall.

The meeting adjourned at 12:25 p.m.