



Town of Hudson

Internal Traffic Committee

78 Main Street, Hudson, MA 01749
Tel: (978) 562-9963 Fax: (978) 568-9641

Minutes of 8-29-2022

A meeting of the Town of Hudson's Internal Traffic Committee (ITC) was held on Monday August 29, 2022 in a hybrid fashion—in-person in the 2nd floor conference room Town Hall and via Zoom. Eric Ryder convened the meeting at 10:10 AM.

The following ITC voting members were in attendance:

Richard DiPersio, Police Chief
Bryan Johannes, Fire Chief
Eric Ryder, Director of Public Works

Absent: Jeff Wood, Building Commissioner

The following non-voting ITC members /guests were in attendance:

Kristina Johnson, AICP, Director of Planning and Community Development

Discussion of Wheeler Road Directionality

Mr. Ryder started the discussion and noted that this item was put on the agenda at his request. He stated that with the recent paving of Wheeler Road, it was his recommendation that this roadway be made one-way from Forest Avenue to Broad Street. Mr. Ryder expressed concerns that with the narrow roadway and the recent paving, high speeds with two-way traffic poses a safety issue.

Chief Johannes stated that he received correspondence from the resident at 16 Wheeler Road who expressed opposition to making Wheeler Road a one-way as it will cause blockage of his driveway. Chief Johannes inquired if Wheeler Road is a public or private roadway, to which Mr. Ryder stated that Wheeler Road is a private road under the Town's jurisdiction since the Town has been maintained the roadway for over twenty-five years. Mr. Ryder noted that this recommendation would require a vote of the ITC Board and an approval by the Select Board. Chief Johannes stated his concern regarding the vehicle site lines for exiting traffic onto Forest Avenue, and noted that access for the Tower truck may be impeded. He recommended that before any action was taken the truck swing radius can be accommodated.

Ms. Johnson noted that the ITC board could vote subject to a review and sign off by the Fire Chief.

Chief DiPersio noted his desire to hear from the abutters on the roadway about this proposal, and stated his appreciation of the concern about causing additional travel times for the residents to access local shopping areas.

Marco DeMartino, 46 Stevens Road, Westridge, stated that with and the Intel redevelopment's anticipated increase in the volume of traffic, Wheeler Road will be used as an alternate route. Mr. DeMartino noted that the Westridge residents will be most likely be using the back entrance rather than Technology Drive, which will increase the congestion and backups on Wheeler Road.

Mr. Ryder noted that he took this into consideration when bringing this recommendation forward, and spoke to a resident who lives in Westridge.

Chief Johannes seconded by Chief DiPersio moved to table the matter until the next ITC meeting to allow for the Fire Department to conduct a site visit with their apparatus and the resident of 16 Wheeler Road a chance to address the Board. 3-0-0. Unanimous

Discussion of ADA Issues Lakeshore Drive

Richard Mingus of 8 Lakeshore Drive re-iterated the discussion that transpired at the last ITC meeting about the roadway being a private way, and he noted his understanding that the Hudson/Marlborough municipal boundary runs through Memorial Beach. Mr. Mingus also stated that because Lakeshore Drive is a private way, it was his understanding that the Police Department cannot enforce parking violators. Mr. Mingus furnished a map to the ITC Board, which he believes illustrates the exact location of the municipal boundary, and he pointed out the location of his property. Mr. Mingus noted that based on his reading of the map, a portion of Memorial Beach (closest to his property) and the adjacent handicap parking area is actually located within the Hudson Town limits. He expressed his frustration that the Town is not able to ticket vehicles who block the entrance to the handicap parking area, and he asked the Board whose jurisdiction is that area.

Mr. Ryder stated his understanding that the handicap entrance at Memorial Beach is under the jurisdiction of the City of Marlborough, and that the Hudson Municipal boundary is in the location where the Town stops paving. Mr. Mingus pointed to the maps he furnished and stated that Mr. Ryder is incorrect about the location of the municipal boundary, and maintains his understanding that the gate to the handicap area is actually owned by the Town of Hudson. Mr. Ryder stated that he would have to double check the maps that the Department of Department of Public of Works uses currently and in the past. Mr. Ryder noted that his Department maps show handicap parking gate at Memorial Beach as being located in the City of Marlborough. Mr. Mingus re-iterated his frustration that the Town of Hudson will not ticket vehicles that are blocking the ramp or parked along the roadway. Mr. Ryder re-iterated once again that he has to back and double check the maps that his Department has used, and that have been used for the past 30 years.

Mr. Mingus noted that the City of Marlborough installed a sign for Memorial Beach that points vehicles in the direction of Lakeshore Drive and that there no municipal boundary marker. Chief DiPersio stated that he has been in communication with the Marlborough Police Chief to discuss the spillover parking from Memorial Beach that reached into many of the adjacent residential neighborhoods. Mr. Ryder recommended that the Hudson Public Works Department along with the Hudson Police Department meet with the City of Marlborough to

determine the actual municipal boundary, and who is responsible for maintenance and management. Mr. Ryder stated that it is clear that the City of Marlborough owns Memorial Beach, not the Town of Hudson, and expressed his belief that the next step is to meet with the City to develop strategies for mitigating spillover parking on the street and handicap ramp blockage. Mr. Ryder also recommended that the residents of Lakeshore Drive post a private way no parking sign, and if vehicles are illegally parked, they can then call the Police Department to notify of a car being towed.

No further action was taken relative to this item.

Discussion of Jake Braking and Truck Restrictions

Ms. Johnson provided some introductory remarks to help frame the discussion. Ms. Johnson noted that she has been approached by residents of the Quail Run and Westridge neighborhoods about what the Town can do to regulate truck traffic and truck noise. She noted that she had researched what other municipalities have codified with respect to prohibiting the use engine compression brake systems, also known as “Jake brakes.” She mentioned Northborough, Amherst, Cambridge, and Waltham as examples of municipalities that have codified prohibitions against the use of Jake brakes. Ms. Johnson noted that the Commonwealth of Massachusetts regulates the movement of all truck traffic and is responsible for approving any truck exclusions requested by a municipality. She further noted that the Massachusetts Department of Transportation strongly recommends that no prohibitions on jake braking be placed on roadways that are functionally classified as a principal arterial, or on a State numbered route under local jurisdiction because of safety concerns with vehicles needing to stop when traveling at a higher speed. She concluded her remarks by stating that any prohibitions on Jake braking would have to be codified in the Town’s General By-laws, requiring the vote of Town Meeting, and a fine would need to be established either via the Traffic Rules and Order or a non-criminal disposition.

Mr. Ryder opened up the floor to any comments from the ITC Board.

Chief DiPersio noted that it will be important to identify where the Jake brake prohibitions would be established, and inquired if MassDOT offered any guidance on this subject. Ms. Johnson re-iterated that MassDOT does not prohibit municipalities from prohibiting Jake braking; however, MassDOT recommends that municipalities exercise caution with establishing such prohibitions on roadways functionally classified as arterials. Chief DiPersio followed up and asked how Northborough went about establishing a prohibition on Jake braking, to which Ms. Johnson stated it was accomplished via Town Meeting, and Chief DiPersio stated that he will contact the Northborough Police Department to get some information.

Chief Johannes noted that his large apparatus utilize engine compression brake systems, and such a prohibition would pose a safety issue, and strongly recommends that emergency vehicles be excluded from any prohibition on the use of Jake braking systems. He also stated that the DPW vehicles would need to be excluded from any prohibitions, to which Mr. Ryder concurred. Chief Johannes shared his personal experiences hearing truck traffic from his residence, which is adjacent to a state numbered roadway, and noted that the Route 85

Connector was constructed to facilitate economic development in the Technology Drive area. Chief Johannes also noted that his call volume for that area of Town has increased dramatically.

Mr. Ryder stated that he is not opposed to moving forward with a prohibition on Jake brakes, but recommends exercising caution as to how any prohibition moves forward. He expressed his understanding that this proposal is being brought to the attention of ITC in response to the proposed redevelopment of Intel. Mr. Ryder underscored that the Town staff have spent a significant amount of time reviewing this project and meeting with the development team to identify all impacts within the Town's jurisdiction and development mitigation strategies. With respect to the prohibition of Jake braking, Mr. Ryder noted that the appropriate roadways need to be identified to ensure community equity town-wide, and that the Town's peer review traffic engineer should review any proposal for a Jake braking prohibition.

Ms. Johnson expressed her understanding that residents are looking to file a citizen petition for a Jake braking prohibition; however, she stated that it would be better if the Town could take a little time to craft the best possible by-law based on the needs of the entire Town and the recommendations of the Town's peer review traffic consultant.

Chief DiPersio stated his support for a prohibition on Jake braking; however, he underscored that traffic patrol officers cannot be everywhere in Town at the same time. He also stated that just because a sign is installed does not guarantee the issue will disappear.

Janice Habermehl, 4C Rotherham Way

Ms. Habermehl inquired as to what speed trucks need to engage their Jake brakes. Chief Johannes explained how the Jake braking systems work on his fire apparatus, and noted that the compression brakes are engaged to slow down the vehicle without having to use the regular braking system to save on pads and rotors. Mr. Ryder stated there are a combination of factors that would necessitate the use of compression brakes including speed, roadway topography, and turning movements.

Elizabeth Brown, 1G Autumn Drive

Ms. Brown noted that she had spoken to the Director of Planning and the Police Chief about moving forward with a prohibition on Jake braking. She stated that her neighborhood has been severely impacted by the noise caused by trucks engaging their Jake brake systems when descending down Reed Road onto Marlborough Street, and that this issue is longstanding. Ms. Brown specifically requested that the consideration of the prohibition be taken up separately from the redevelopment of Intel, as she believes that the noise cause by Jake brakes should be addressed prior to any future activity on the Intel site. And she concluded her remarks by stating that this issue affects the quality of life for many other residential neighborhoods throughout the Town, and proposed an amendment to the noise by-law within the general by-laws that she would like to see on the November 2022 Town Meeting Warrant.

Mr. Ryder stated that filing a citizen's petition is an option, and Chief Johannes reminded attendees that the Warrant for this meeting closes on Wednesday, August 31st at 4PM. Ms. Brown replied that she wanted to gauge the feedback of the ITC Board before moving forward. Chief Johannes noted that petitioning Town Meeting is well within any citizen's rights; however, he stated that Department Heads will raise all the issues being discussed at today's meeting if the by-law is not constructed properly. Chief DiPersio, Mr. Ryder, and Ms. Johnson all expressed their opposition to having a Jake braking prohibition be incorporated in the noise by-laws, and recommended that the Jake brake prohibition be a separate by-law. Mr. Ryder stated that it would best if the Town's peer review traffic engineer and Town Counsel review a proposed by-law to determine whether its constructed properly and can be enforced. Chief DiPersio cautioned against moving ahead too hastily with a prohibition without proper review by Town Counsel and the Town's traffic engineer.

Marco DeMartino, 46 Stevens Drive

Mr. DeMartino inquired about the timeframe for when the Town would advance the prohibition, to which Mr. Ryder stated that the Town could have something ready for the May Town Meeting. Mr. Ryder stated that moving forward for May would allow some time to properly put together a new by-law and discuss the proposals at a future ITC meeting, and noted that it could be addressed as part of the review of the Intel redevelopment.

Ms. Johnson stated that it's imperative that a prohibition on Jake brakes be addressed as part of the Intel redevelopment for trucking activities during demolition, construction, and operation, and such prohibitions be outlined in a development agreement that will pass on to any successor property owner.

Many other of the meeting attendees (names were not stated) expressed serious concerns about the projected number of truck trips associated with the Intel redevelopment. Mr. Ryder stated that traffic-related concerns regarding the Intel redevelopment will be addressed by Town staff during its review of the proposed project and at the Planning Board Public Hearing on Tuesday, August 30th. Chief DiPersio concurred that the concerns being raised regarding the Intel redevelopment are beyond the scope of the discussion before the ITC board.

Chief Johannes seconded by Eric Ryder moved to forward with a Jake braking prohibition for May 2023 Town Meeting which will be reviewed by the Town's peer review traffic engineer and Town Counsel. 3-0-0. Unanimous.

Main Street/Lewis Street Intersection

Shanna Weston of 25 Cortland Drive noted that she sent a letter to the Town Administrator who included it as part of the Select Board correspondence regarding the safety issues at this intersection, and stated that one of her close friends was involved in a bad accident at this location. Ms. Weston stated that there is significant traffic entering and exiting Ferjulian's parking lot, and that causes a safety issue for vehicles turning out of Lewis Street onto Main Street.

Mr. Ryder noted that there was a Warrant Article put forward in 2015 to provide funding to signalize that intersection, which was ultimately passed over at Town Meeting. Mr. Ryder

stated his concerns for installing a traffic signal at the bottom of that hill, which could result in more rear-end accidents with vehicles having to stop at a signal. Mr. Ryder stated that he is planning to put forward a Town Meeting article that will set up an account to pay for traffic studies, with this location being a priority. Also, Mr. Ryder said that he is investigating the feasibility of installing speed indicators.

Ms. Weston asked for an estimated cost for a traffic study, to which Mr. Ryder stated approximately \$20K. Ms. Weston concluded her remarks by stating her belief that someone is going to get killed at the location, and that \$20K is not a lot of money to spend in order to improve safety.

No further action was taken relative to this item.

Adjournment

Eric Ryder seconded by Chief DiPersio moved to adjourn the meeting at 11:25 AM. 3-0-0.
Unanimous