Public Ways and Safety committee meeting

10/28/2020

In attendance: Mary Ciummo, Michael Keller, and Holly Lauer

Meeting called to order at 7:10

 There was discussion on the previous meeting with police Chief Nelson. He and most of the community liked the new traffic light in town. It has caused some backups now and we will see how the traffic flows when the traffic counts get back to normal. The chief informed Mary that they are going to increase traffic enforcement by 30 minutes each month and there are forms the community can fill out requesting areas where there might be concerns. The chief also mentioned that a mobile speed sign was applied for using a Federal Highway Grant. Waiting for approval.

 There was a brief discussion on Yield to Stop sign conversions that could still happen in town.

 Sampson Rd.- The brush clearing on the intersection with Main St. was done well for cleaning up sight lines. There are 4 signs on Main approaching Sampson travelling westward. We will follow up with ideas to reduce the amount and upgrade the appearance of the signs that are left. More investigation and discussion to follow.

 There appeared a 30 mph. sign on Sugar Rd has appeared. It is square in size and does not seem to be a regulatory sign. An investigation on who put the sign and authorization to follow.

 There has been no town budget request on the needs of the PWSC. We will check with Leslie to follow up.

 Mike has a report on what drives speeding and solutions:

 The top three reasons are traffic, disregard for the law, and running late. The other 4 are vehicle capabilities, environmental conditions, roadway features and speed limits. A couple of other factors are young male drivers and alcohol impairment.

 Running late and congested traffic increased road rage and aggressive driving while having too much to do on the drivers mind. Dropping the speed limit by five mph on highways contribute to more speeding. People have a perception of what a safe speed is on the roadways. Speeding on highways averaged eight miles per hour over the speed limit, with 16-19% drove in excess of 10 mph over the limit. 68% of traffic on limited access roads, 56% on arterial roads, and 58% on connector roads exceeded the limit in one survey. In 2012 speed killed 10,219 people while in 2017 it went down to over 9,700 people.

 The perception of a safe and reasonable speed by drivers, no matter what the speed limit, is contributing to speeding. Speed variance contributes to the risk of accidents because of obstruction of traffic flow and contributes to confusion on the roadways. Road conditions like weather, nighttime driving, and construction on the roadways result in this perception of a safe speed for drivers. Motor vehicles insulate the driver from the outside world. A driver can form a sense of detachment.

This can lead to feeling a sense of detachment and feel less constrained in their behavior.

 Traffic calming measures resulted in a reduction of speed at an average of 7 mph, and accident reductions of up to 97%. Vehicle activated signs have a positive impact reducing speeds of 2 to 7 mph. Cars can now be equipped with GPS roadside cameras that determine speed and warns the driver of excessive speed and can limit the speed electronically. These features are not standard on most vehicles. Safety cameras on roadways can also contribute to a decrease in speeds.

 Speed management means applying road design, engineering measures, and setting limits that are safe and reasonable. Effective marketing communication and educational messages that are focused on high-risk drivers are needed. Applying enforcement efforts and appropriate technologies that targets speeders are other ways to combat the habits of speeders.

 National Traffic Safety Board, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and DMV.com reports have been used to research this report.

Meeting ended at 7:45

Submitted by Michael Keller