

City of Barre, Vermont

**REGULAR MEETING OF THE TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TAC)**

**January 19, 2022, 6:30 PM**

Conducted in City Council Chambers, City Hall and virtually via a Zoom link



**DRAFT MEETING MINUTES**

The [agenda](#) was posted online for the public and meeting materials were emailed to committee members.

**1. Call to order**

- a. Initially there was no quorum of the body, then the Chair called the meeting to order at 6:52 PM upon the arrival Of Joshua Akers.
- b. **City staff present:** Bill Ahearn, Director of Public Works; Eli Morgan (Public Works Engineering Technician)
- c. **Transportation Advisory Committee members present:** Michael Hellein (Chair), Jake Hemmerick (Secretary), Joshua Akers, Art Bombardier
- d. **Member absent:** Giuliano Cecchinelli (Vice-Chair), Joanne Reynolds
- e. **Public present:** None

**2. Adjustments to the agenda**

- a. No adjustments to the agenda.

**3. Approval of the minutes of [December 15, 2021](#)**

- a. **Motion by Akers to approve the minutes as presented, second by Hemmerick. Approved unanimously.**

**4. Visitors and communications: input from the public for items not on the agenda**

- a. None

**5. Department of Public Works monthly transportation report**

- a. **Department staff reports on transportation work and planning since the previous meeting**
  - i. Director Ahearn summarized some items prior to the meeting being officially called to order.
  - ii. The Department replaced a railroad crossing sign on lower Hill St., noticed by the railroad division.
  - iii. Salt stores high for this time of year -- should be in the range of 40 to 45% -- currently at 25%. Possible budgetary savings.
  - iv. For the annual report, logged 963 citizen comments last year – which the Dept. hopes to transition 1/3 to See Click Fix to reduce call volume.
  - v. Art noticed that a stop sign as Enterprise Alley now has a strobe.

**b. Note new resident concerns as raised to staff**

- i. No new concerns from residents reported by Departmen

**6. New business**

- a. **Consider design recommendations for Merchant Street Intersection with Route 14**
  - i. Hellein summarized conversations with VTrans, noting that the left turn lane no longer meet the warrant. Bombardier and Ahearn would like to make additional

inquiries about methodology. Akers noted the merits of the intersection design, and the turn lane may make sense in conjunction with the other improvements and get the realignment. Hellein expressed his support for the realignment, but not the turn lane from Rt. 14 to Merchant St. Hemmerick asked about cost savings by eliminating the turn lane and the possibility of installing sidewalks in anticipation of future sidewalk connections along Merchant and Maple. Bombardier noted the safety concerns in the report and crash. Hellein encouraged consideration of safety for all users – including residents walking to the cemetery. Hemmerick read a letter from a resident of Long Street into the record opposing the turn lane and expressing concerns about speeding through the neighborhood. The Chair and Bombardier debated the merits of and requirements for pedestrian amenities. Hemmerick suggested that there be a gateway traffic calming and pedestrian amenities (much like Danville’s Village gateways) in lieu a left turn lane and suggested that any Federal money that could potentially harm the City’s livability and neighborhood quality by the nature of its design should be carefully weighed and potentially rejected. Ahearn noted the construction timeline is 2024 and the group discussed the logistics of feedback. Akers asked if VTrans could reject the whole project without the turn lane. Hellein and Ahearn clarified that VTrans can reject the request, but the community can still request modifications.

- ii. Hellein moved that the TAC forward the information we currently have to City Council to request that they review the information and request that VTrans provide a design without the left turn lane (and if possible) include sidewalks within the project area along Maple Avenue and Merchant Street for future connection. **Second** by Hemmerick. **Ayes** by Hemmerick, Akers, Hellein. and **No** by Bombardier. **Motion did not carry.**

b. **Consider vehicle weight limit recommendations (30 minutes)**

- i. Bill summarized items in the meeting packet and requested feedback from the committee on how to approach designating streets, suggesting a start with the Class 3 highways and consideration of effective enforcement. Hemmerick suggested it’s important to start with why such action would be important from a financial and quality of life standpoint, the need for locally calibrated designation commercial routes linked to land use, reasonable allowances for residential trucking on residential streets, fair share fee mechanisms when overweight permitting may be necessary.
- ii. The immediate need, however, is to file prior to the once-annual deadline under state statute, versus general law to begin the process.
- iii. The Chair said he was enthusiastic about posting on Class I and encouraged the Department to proceed.
- iv. No official action was taken by the TAC on this matter.

**7. Confirm date of next meeting: February 16, 2022**

- a. Approved by unanimous consent with no objections.

**8. Roundtable**

- a. Hemmerick noted that things are back to normal in terms of speeding on Hill Street and the traffic enforcement program has not delivered lasting change. He suggested that it may be time to consider alternatives to conventional speed enforcement policing since the effort isn't working.
- b. Akers noted that the winter storm response has been going well.

**9. Adjourn**

- a. Motion to adjourn by Bombardier. Second by Hemmerick. *Unanimously approved.*