



# Town of Amherst, NH

## Highway Safety Committee

### Thursday, January 25, 2023

1 Attendees: Chief Ciampoli, DPW Director Eric Slosek, Fire Chief Matt Conley;  
2 Selectman John D'Angelo; Superintendent Mike Berry  
3 Residents present: Jeanne Ludt, Rand Peck, Doug Chabinsky, Kevin Grassett, Alex Rodd, and  
4 Mike Riccatelli.

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#### 6 **1. Call to Order**

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#### 8 **2. Citizen's Forum**

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10 **3. Boston Post Rd.** This meeting is a follow up to the January 4, 2024 meeting.  
11 They had a good discussion about some possible ordinances that the Town was  
12 considering. NRPC had given them a traffic count for commercial vehicles, but  
13 what they didn't have was speed. They returned to NRPC and were able to obtain  
14 that data. This information will be part of their discussion before a decision is  
15 made. Also, at a Board of Selectman meeting about a month and a half ago there  
16 were people who spoke out in opposition of it. They thought it would be good to  
17 have a trial run on what they might encounter if this goes to a public hearing.  
18 They are looking for some feedback.

19

20 Eric Slosek feels that they should be looking at two things; first, a "yes" or "no"  
21 do they support an ordinance of "No Through Trucking" and second; if you do  
22 support an ordinance, what would that look like.

23

24 On Boston Post Rd. The study was taken after the speed feedback sign was  
25 installed. Essentially the section that was analyzed is the 25mph section. The  
26 study showed a reduction in the 50 percentile speed and the 85 percentile  
27 speed. The average speed of commercial vehicles traveling through this section  
28 is 32 but the 85 percentile speed is 38mph or below. They normally use the 85-  
29 percentile speed to set the speed limit, this meaning that the speed limit for this  
30 area should be 30mph. Chief Caimpoli is disappointed with this finding. In 2022  
31 the average speed was 30 and the 85 percentile was 34. Doug Chabinsky states a  
32 speed limit 30mph that might be true through a less populated road. This road is  
33 going through the center of a village, with 2 schools and a lot of pedestrians. The  
34 Board of Selectman way back when decided 25mph was an appropriate speed  
35 because of this. We've got a problem, not so much that the speed limit should be  
36 higher but we've got a lot of people going over what the selectman felt was an

37 appropriate speed for the village, and that's what needs to be addressed. Chief  
38 states that is true, but factually based data is what is utilized by the State of NH  
39 and almost any person that is involved in traffic studies to set the speed limit.  
40 The 85-percentile speed is what they would use. He's not suggesting that they  
41 move the speed limit anywhere, he's saying that it's tough when the data  
42 suggests that the essential pace speed of the road is basically saying that the  
43 design of the road is that vehicles are moving faster. It's evident with the data, he  
44 would agree that the schools being in the area add to the argument but if they  
45 were going purely on the facts and feedback from a study, this is what they  
46 would use. Doug states that this tells him that a lot of people just don't care  
47 about what's posted. And if that is going to be the case then based on the village  
48 streets committee, they would have to change how Boston Post Rd. is configured  
49 in order for it not to support people wanting to go that fast. Chief states that  
50 those are good points to bring up to the Village Streets Committee.

51  
52 Chief Ciampoli reviewed past discussion regarding what the "No Through  
53 Trucks" options are. Currently they do not have any safety data. What they have  
54 is quality of life issues and will that translate into a recommendation from the  
55 HSC based on that alone or if it needs more? The Board of Selectman has looked  
56 to them for a recommendation. From the last meeting, noise pollution is  
57 definitely something they are concerned about, this is a quality of life issue, not  
58 safety. Quality of Life translates into a perception of safety. They do have a path  
59 to reduce that and he feels it is a reasonable path.

60  
61 Doug Chabinsky asked for some clarification. When they were talking about "No  
62 Through Trucking" it was going to be based on vehicle weight. Chief Ciampoli  
63 explained that Selectman D'Angelo recommended that they take a look at the  
64 weight, minimum of 40000 lbs. This would be the large tri-axels. If this caused a  
65 hardship because of the restriction they could go before the Board of Selectman,  
66 explain the hardship and they would have the ability to grant a waiver. The  
67 same applies to the engine braking, there would be a stipulation in any  
68 ordinance that emergency braking would not apply.

69 John D'Angelo states that they do have a dilemma in that if they were setting the  
70 speed limit based on what you see for the traffic it would be higher than the  
71 25mph and the road appears to be safe at higher speed since there has not been  
72 a speed related incident according to the records that we have. In regards to the  
73 "no air braking" there is no obvious reason why someone needs to use their air  
74 brake on the particular stretch of Boston Post Rd. We can give them an out in  
75 case of emergency. The "No Through Trucking" is a little more complex.

76 Matt Conley states that in terms of the engine braking, this feature can be turned  
77 on or off. It is not typical that the drivers are shutting them off, but they will if  
78 they have to. Kevin Grasset explained that the engine braking prolongs the life

79 of the brakes. Alex Rodd explains that the cost of his brakes are approximately  
80 \$1,000.00 each and he tries to make them last as long as possible.  
81 Kevin Grasset suggests that the bus count be removed from the traffic count as  
82 this is traffic that has to happen. Kevin feels that this is discrimination, as a  
83 trucker he pays an exorbitant amount in taxes to use the roads. Rand Peck states  
84 that he is looking at it as you are a taxpayer and I am a taxpayer, you have as  
85 much right to use the roads as I do. He is just asking that trucks do not go by his  
86 house at 45 mph. It is out of town trucks that are speeding by his house not local  
87 trucks. Kevin is not arguing and he doesn't disagree. Maybe the speed limit  
88 should be 25 through that area. As a compromise put a no Jake Brake ordinance  
89 in effect. But he'll warn you that you may be trading one noise for another. Chief  
90 Ciampoli explains that in the time everyone has sat here today, they could have  
91 applied for a waiver. There is a built in argument for hardship because all of  
92 their travel is within town. Matt Conley states that it is the speed and the noise.

93  
94 Chief Caimpolis' recommendation as chair is that he feels that the engine braking  
95 issue is something that is reasonable and easy for him to produce a report with  
96 the recommendation to the board. He hopes that others on the committee agree.  
97 Specifically, that the signs will be in place from Mont Vernon Rd. and  
98 Boston Post Rd. through the village to Amherst Gas on Rte 122, New Boston and  
99 through the village to be included in that. He would not support a blanket  
100 ordinance for no through trucking, this has the potential of being completely  
101 unenforceable. Theoretically he could never put the resources where they need  
102 to be to effectively enforce it. The time restriction ordinance would have more  
103 effect, because he can enforce it.

104  
105 Matt Conley would be good with the Jake Brake ordinance. In reference to the  
106 time frame he is ok with it but his question is: If we are addressing the safety  
107 issue with the kids and the kids are in school by 8am but they are out of school at  
108 3 or so are we doing an injustice by not capturing that piece of time? Chief  
109 Caimpoli states that that is the compromise. As long as there is an option for a  
110 waiver Chief Conley would be ok with that as well.

111  
112 Eric Slosek comments from a safety perspective he cannot support a "No  
113 Through Trucking" ordinance. His first point is that there is no accident history  
114 to support that there is a problem with safety. He has concerns about the  
115 vehicles speeding, looking at other data from NHDOT. They set and determine  
116 safe speed limits based on the 85-percentile speed, that means that this is  
117 appropriate speed for traffic there. He has heard a few comments that there are  
118 other things to consider, things to determining speed, and that is where political  
119 decisions can be made by the board of selectmen. But from a traffic safety point,  
120 if the NHDOT were looking at this, they would say that the appropriate speed

121 was probably 35 to 40 mph. And the Town reducing the speed to 25 mph might  
122 not have been an appropriate decision. Beyond that there is the safety of school  
123 kids. From a safety perspective there have not been any incidents with kids  
124 traveling to and from school. There is the presence of the 20 mph flashing lights  
125 through the segment of road that they are talking about, enforced by police  
126 during those commuting times, that traffic is observing those flashing lights.  
127 He's also concerned that with no data to back up a no through trucking  
128 ordinance that we may be setting a precedent for other ordinance to be put in  
129 place without data to support them. Regarding an ordinance for the nighttime  
130 hours, he has been around town in the nighttime and did not notice that there is  
131 too much of an issue during the nighttime hours. He is afraid that if they create  
132 an ordinance for a problem that they do not have supporting data for they will  
133 be setting a precedence for other ordinances without traffic data to back them  
134 up. He thinks that they could move the speed feedback sign further outside the  
135 village to the north on Boston Post Rd. Maybe that would slow people down  
136 before they get into the village.

137 In term of the no engine braking ordinance, he has some mixed feelings. It is a  
138 safety feature in trucks he has mixed feelings about supporting it. He's not sure  
139 that sound is a function of safety. He could support the no engine brake  
140 ordinance through the section on Boston Post that they are talking about.

141  
142 John D'Angelo stated that in regards to the Jake Brake, (engine brake), he can  
143 support it as a selectman as it is a quality of life issue and the Board of Selectman  
144 handle quality of Life issues. As a member of the Highway Safety Committee, he  
145 cannot support it as it is not a safety issue. This should be presented to the Selectman as  
146 a quality-of-life issue, at which time he would support it. As for the no through trucking  
147 with time limits, he is not convinced that there is a real problem there. If they create a  
148 "No Through Trucking" ordinance it would simply be relocating the traffic to a different  
149 neighborhood on some other road. Boston Post Rd. is obviously designed to handle 35  
150 to 40 mph traffic safely. Reducing the speed limit to 25mph had an initial effect but that  
151 apparently wore off. He is perfectly willing to try moving signs and try other things to  
152 get people to slow down sooner. He isn't sure if a "No Through Trucking" ordinance  
153 addresses the real problem which is people going faster than we want them to go on the  
154 section of road whether in trucks or in cars.

155  
156 Chief Ciampoli states that when we talk about precedence, if the argument is tailored  
157 toward school safety, we don't have any other neighborhoods aside from Boston Post at  
158 the high school. The layout is a little bit different and he doesn't think they are seeing  
159 the same complaints. Though we lack the facts of safety concerns, from a precedence  
160 standpoint we actually have a fall back, we are looking at it from "this" safety  
161 perspective.

162  
163 Mike Berry states that in reviewing some of the materials prior to this, when he talks to  
164 people who have been long time educators, this doesn't seem to be a concern. It is the

165 volume of vehicles in the morning that seems to be the concern. When he arrived at the  
166 beginning of the year he was impressed with the presence of police, there are already  
167 safety precautions in place. We are here to give the Selectman a recommendation and  
168 having a selectman here to let us know what our lane is and his perspective, that makes  
169 sense to him. The compromise of the engine brake, if that's what the group can get in,  
170 he's ok with that. At the end of the day whatever they put in; it has to be enforceable.  
171 He does like to other solutions, putting the signs in a different spot.

172  
173 Doug Chabinsky has a few things that he would like to make clear. This is a safety  
174 committee and a safety committee that says "Let's go put some safety measures in after  
175 the fact of something that is brought it up, is not a safety committee. You should be  
176 looking at what's going on addressing it. The volume of traffic in the past 18 years has  
177 gone up greatly, since the pandemic the volume of the trucks has gone up more, since  
178 the pandemic everyone seems to be driving faster. So, there is a problem. The issue  
179 really is speed, he has been trying to address this for over a dozen years. Time of day is  
180 important, in the morning he sees 6 to 8 Granite State 18 wheelers, in a 30-minute  
181 period, going North through the village to get sand or gravel before 6am. Controlling the  
182 time would help because they are still traveling when school has opened. He is asking  
183 the committee to make the village safe for people to walk in.

184  
185 Kevin asks of the residents there, Doug and Rand, since the speed limit sign has gone in  
186 do you noticed traffic slowing in front of their houses? They both answer no. He  
187 wonders if that is creating more noise because the sign is alerting them, and they slow  
188 down. Are you able to put one of the moveable ones (signs) back farther and put a  
189 counter in? He knows it would be difficult in the winter with the plowing and the  
190 weather. Maybe a counter ahead of it will let you know if the sign is slowing traffic down  
191 before they get to the school. They could determine the times and see where the peak  
192 times are, both for the cars, the trucks, and the speeds. See what the speeds are during  
193 school hours and what the percentages are. It's his understanding the speed is the  
194 problem, and the secondary issue is the trucks. The trucks are less than 11% of the  
195 traffic going through there and he would like to see what that is during the hour. And he  
196 would like to see the school bus factored out of there. Based on that, then we shouldn't  
197 be talking about a "No Through Truck" here.

198  
199 Eric Slosek asks if the Highway Safety Committee should recommend a "No Through  
200 Trucking" ordinance?

201 Chief Ciampoli makes a motion to propose an ordinance, time restricted, limiting traffic  
202 from 8pm to 8am on both New Boston and Boston Post Rd. through the village to Route  
203 122.

204 Seconded by John D'Angelo. 1 yea, 4 nay. Motion did not pass.

205  
206 Chief Ciampoli moves to enact an ordinance prohibiting engine braking on New Boston  
207 Rd. and Boston Post Rd. from Mont Vernon Rd and Old Mont Vernon Rd to Route 122 at  
208 the intersection of Amherst St. John D'Angelo seconds. 5 yea - 0 nay. Motion passed  
209

210 Eric Slosek makes a motion that the Highway Safety Committee recommend to the  
211 Board of Selectman that the Committee be tasked with looking at ways to reduce speed  
212 on Boston Post Rd. in the village. Seconded by Mike Berry. 5 yeas - 0 nays Motion passed  
213  
214 Chief Ciampoli will draft an ordinance for a "No Through Trucking" for the next meeting.  
215  
216 Eric Slosek makes a motion to adjourn at 2:40pm seconded by Mike Berry. All in favor.