

Ulster County Traffic Safety Board

January 10, 2021 Meeting Summary; approved March 7, 2022

Members In Attendance:

Giovanna Russo,

Eric Kight, Chair

Chief Egidio Tinti

Brian Slack, Coordinator

Chief Joseph Sinagra

David Corrigan, Resident Engineer, NYSDOT Region 8

Diane Beiti, Ulster County Safety

Brendan Masterson, Commissioner, Ulster County DPW

Guests

Tom Polk, Bicycle Program Dir, Kingston/Ulster YMCA

Donna Gabriel, resident, Town of Hurley

Sarah Burt, resident, Town of Hurley

Agenda & Meeting Summary

I. Welcome and Introductions

II. Public Comments

D. Gabriel, resident of Orchard Street, Town of Hurley identified a traffic safety concern regarding the intersection of Foertner and Zendhoek Rds which she explained experiences traffic speeds in excess of the posted speed limit of 35mph. The roadway curvature, obstructions, limited sight distance and lack of shoulder make it very difficult for pedestrians to be seen and to react to or shelter from oncoming traffic. A petition with 26 signatures reflecting these concerns was submitted to the town supervisor. A speed feedback sign was installed near the area but that has not seemed to be effective. Ms. Gabriel Dewitt Mills Rd. and Rte 32 was also raised as an area of concern regarding snow removal and storage. Commissioner Masterson indicated that signage in the area was inventoried and upgraded where necessary; otherwise, there is little right-of-way that would allow for any capital improvements. The pavement on Foertner was altered during the most previous paving to facilitate drainage but does make walking more difficult. Chairman Kight suggested that Ulster County Sherriff's Dept

be contacted for increased enforcement during peak hours; Slack agreed to submit that request. Construction of a speed hump or other similar traffic calming device was also suggested by an attendee.

III. Approval of Minutes – November

No comments; minutes accepted as submitted.

IV. Old Business (Open Items)

a. Status of Membership & Appointments

Slack provided an update regarding appointments; 4 members will be reappointed for 4 year terms. Russo, Brunner, Corrigan; and Kight will be reappointed; Tinti, Shiller, Sinagra, Gramaglia, Masterson will be new appointments; all four year terms. This leaves the TSB with three openings; Slack requested members to provide recommendations for filling those openings. Suggestions included: YMCA Bicycle Coordinator, UC DOH, UC Office for the Aging or Mental Health, a school resource officer, or a representative from municipalities not represented on the TSB, such as Ellenville or New Paltz, or the Safety Institute at SUNY Ulster. StopDWI was also recommended by T. Polk. Chairman Kight recommended a CSX representative might be helpful. All TSB member recommendations of individuals or agencies can be forwarded to Slack and he will provide them to the County Executive's Office who reserves the right of final selection.

b. Status of Grants

Slack provided a list of current Governor's Traffic Safety Committee open grants that are presently active in Ulster County. Slack requested members to provide updates on the status of individual traffic safety grants. Chief Sinagra indicated that there is a strong need for equipment among local enforcement agencies. He indicated that the Traffic Safety Committee for State Chiefs of Police and meets with the GTSC. The Association has found that there is a strong need/desire to reengage agencies with traffic safety enforcement. A comparison of traffic tickets being issued over time would likely show a decline in ticketing over the past 3 years. Aggressive or dangerous driving may likely be the result of the decline in enforcement. Slack again stressed the need to focus on effective traffic enforcement and would appreciate suggestions to encourage our local departments to seek GTSC grant opportunities.

c. Website Content

Slack indicated that the TSB website has been updated with his contact info and upcoming meeting information. If members have any other suggestions for website updates he is open to them. He indicated that he does not the website to be a resource page necessarily as it requires significant time to maintain content; it's more effective to link to partner agencies like the GTSC. The current activities/services that are shown on the page are those provided by SUNY Ulster at the Safety Institute. "Partner Agencies" will be added to the page and those services will be steadily drawn down. D. Corrigan indicated that NYSDOT has a generic mailbox for NYSDOT Traffic/Safety issues. He further suggested that identifying the appropriate agency for

a specific highway concern would probably be beneficial for the public. Strategic Highway Safety Plan should also be linked.

d. Development of TSB Rules or Procedures

Moved to New Business

e. Public Safety Message No. 1: Plowing Snow Across Roads

Draft press release titled, “Blowing or plowing snow into street is illegal and dangerous” provided for review; Slack requested suggested revisions by next week. Slack will issue the press release and request the County Executive’s office to also promote the release through social media. Slack also requested ideas for a spring safety message. Suggestions included motorcycles; bicycles; crosswalks; increase in crashes during daylight savings time; spring/summer work zone awareness.

V. Crash Reports, Complaints, and Concerns

Slack indicated that this is a new agenda item added to the meeting format; he wanted a focus on recent serious injury and fatal crashes where there may be deficiencies. Slack requested input as to whether this would be a necessary or productive item to remain on TSB agendas going forward. It was indicated that members should be cautious discussing details of crashes particularly when litigation might be pending.

VI. New Business

a. Development of TSB Rules or Procedures

Slack noted that he’s found other TSBs across NYS do use official rules or procedures to guide the operation of their safety boards. Slack is considering developing rules for the TSB if there is interest from members but all of the core details are already provided in the Ulster County Charter under Article XL. This information is currently provided on the webpage.

b. 2022 TSB Workplan Goals

Slack indicated that a Workplan can be a useful tool to help guide and focus the work of the TSB. Slack requested input from members to gauge interest in developing a workplan. He indicated that the NYS Strategic Highway Safety Plan can provide direction. Masterson indicated that the work that has already been laid out by Slack may be sufficient and not to be overly-ambitious within the first year. Slack also mentioned the goal of cooperating further with the City of Kingston in coordinating with their upcoming traffic safety campaign. Slack indicated that there is no shortage of public safety messaging and content available, but prioritization of that content is the challenge; therefore developing priorities for messaging may be a top goal. Corrigan mentioned that recent outreach effort coordinated by the FRA and CSX to discourage trespass. Literature development for circulation would be helpful as well. Polk indicated that outlining the 3 focus areas of Engineering, Enforcement and Education would be helpful to focus the discussion and identifying the groups or individuals who can be most effective in implementing the goal.

VII. Member Updates, News & Announcements

Slack noted that the MPO is presently developing the 2022/23 Unified Planning Work Program, the Transportation Improvement Program will also be updated in 2022. He indicated that the new transportation bill will include a 40% increase in federal aid for transportation projects but the UCTC is unaware of what the local fiscal targets might be; there may be more funding available.

UCDPW

Masterson indicated Hoagerburgh Bridge in Shawangunk was recently closed for reconstruction; Nearby Mckinstry Rd bridge is also under reconstruction; both bridges should be complete around mid-fall.

NYS DOT

Staffing issues have not had a major impact on service delivery; some equipment shortages are experienced. Rte 209 in Ulster from the NYS Trooper Baracks to the Kingston/Rhinecliff Bridge is scheduled for paving this season

NYC DEP

Routine maintenance incl. trees of hazard and culvert maintenance are under review. Diversion of water from private property is also being addressed. Reconstruction of the 5-arch bridge in Boiceville is underway and planning for the replacement of Ashokan Dividing Weir Bridge is underway.

Gianna

Bus driver shortages are causing problems for local districts; local state legislative members are working on revising NYS retirement rules so that retirees can drive school buses without significant penalty or hardship to their retirements. Dutchess County TSB is restarting the School Bus Driver of the Year award and is requesting support from Ulster TSB; this usually happens during Operation Safe Stop in the 3rd week of April. Slack will provide the necessary coordination and support for this effort.

Saugerties

Chief Sinagra traffic safety enforcement will begin again this spring. 4 pedestrians were struck by automobiles in 2021; in years prior as many as 14. Lots of aggressive driving being observed.

City of Kingston

Chief Tinti is focusing resources on problem intersections as staff are available.

Safety

Diane indicated that parking on Broadway has been interfering with UCAT operation somewhat, but this is being observed. She offered the suggestion of safety messages targeted toward construction worker safety as well as pedestrian safety.

YMCA of Kingston

Polk indicated that no programs occur in the winter; fundraising and planning for activities will take place in the spring incl. after school programs at community centers and schools for cycling safety. Summer bike safety programs will also occur with the City parks department. The YMCA also staff public repair clinics that are open to the public; those will begin again in March. Tom and his volunteers will also attend any and all public events with a both for distribution of literature and equipment. A ongoing focus will also be on the new infrastructure in Kingston, such as the Broadway cycletrack and the roundabout. Tom also emphasized that these programs can also be made available outside of Kingston on a limited basis if there is interest, including for other schools or the general public; requests can simply be forwarded to Tom. Equipment including locks, helmets, lights, and bells can also be made available for interested riders.

VIII. Adjourn

Next meeting will be scheduled as needed; Slack may need to postpone until March 7.

bcs