

RACINE COUNTY TRAFFIC SAFETY COMMISSION

May 18, 2017 - Summary Minutes

Public Works & Development Services Conference Room
Ives Grove Office Complex
14200 Washington Avenue,
Sturtevant, WI 53177

Members Present:

Julie Anderson - Racine County Public Works & Development Services Director
Capt. James Weidner - Racine County Highway Safety Coordinator
David Maack - Racine County Emergency Management
Tom Knitter – TRIAD
Michael Payne - Racine County Medical Examiner
Sgt. Tim Koetting – City of Racine Police Department
Lt. Dan Klatt – Racine County Sheriff's Office
Lt. Gary Larsen - Caledonia Police Department
Pat Starcken – Racine Unified School District
Joe Davis, Sr., Bureau of Transportation Safety Regional Program Manager
Allison Blackwood – WisDOT, DTSD

Members Excused:

Chief Sean Marschke - Sturtevant Police Department
Sgt. Wendy Younglove - Wisconsin State Patrol

Members Not Present:

Sgt. David Stroupe – Mount Pleasant Police Department
John Barnes - Retired Caledonia Police Department
Erin Donaldson - Safe Kids Coordinator
Michael White - District Attorney's Office

Others Present:

Jacqueline Bratz – Racine County Communications Director
State Trooper Matt Barlar – Wisconsin State Patrol

1. Call to Order

Chairman Maack called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. Commission members introduced themselves and the meeting began.

2. Minutes of the February 9, 2017, meeting

PAYNE MOVED, seconded by Koetting, to approve the February 9, 2017, minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

3. Fatalities since last meeting

Lt. Klatt, Racine County Sheriff's Office, reported one fatality.

12/15/2017, Hwy 41/Seven Mile Off Ramp, Town of Raymond

- Two-unit accident
- While traveling southbound in Lane 3 on Highway 41, just north of Mile Marker 326.4, Unit 1 (automobile) failed to slow down when approaching southbound Unit 2 (semi-truck/tractor) and was killed. Operator trapped in vehicle and died days later from multiple blood force trauma and issues related to being compacted in the vehicle for some time.
- BAC of .165 and THC detected in blood and found in vehicle
- Factors: speed, following too closely, and alcohol/drug use

Payne updated the commission regarding the January 13 accident on CTH "G"/43rd Street in the Town of Raymond that was reported at the last TSC meeting. Driver failed to negotiate a curve, struck a traffic sign, then a utility pole and was ejected from the vehicle. Payne informed the commission that the toxicology report revealed a BAC of .271 and vitreous of .237.

Davis demonstrated how to view the scene of the accident on the community mapping database by using the satellite view.

Knitter asked how Wisconsin fatalities compare to national figures at this point in time. Davis replied that there have been 22 less reported fatalities thus far in Wisconsin compared to last year's numbers. Davis commended law enforcement for its high visibility enforcement efforts in helping reduce the number of fatalities.

4. Upcoming construction projects

Anderson noted the following projects:

- Large culvert project on 61st Drive
- Highway X resurfacing, continuing from Taylor Avenue to Bankers Road
- Highway U project, north of Highway K, through downtown Raymond (commencing after the 4th of July activities in Raymond)

The commission briefly discussed the work being done on Highway 31, between Highway MM and Highway 20. Blackwood then mentioned additional State projects:

- Highway 45, from Union Grove to Highway 20
- Highway K east and west frontage roads
- Highway 36 and Highway Y traffic signal upgrades
- Highway 142 roundabout

5. Review of Monthly Safety Campaign

Maack reminded commission members to pick up posters at the Journal Times, if not done so already. Mike Clemens has replaced Glenn Klein at WRJN as the radio host and, thus far, things have been going well with the monthly safety campaign radio spots.

6. Review and discussion of the *Racine County Anatomy of Traffic Safety Report*

Davis reviewed the Racine profile and data contained in the *Anatomy of Traffic Safety*. He informed the commission that under TSC resources on community mapping, regional contacts are now available online. Davis stated that when statistics for each county are analyzed, the approach now taken is to not look only at the amount of citations issued and enforcement deployments, but to also look at behavioral trends. He commented that inroads may be made by focusing on changing people's behavior patterns once they get behind the wheel, especially parents and young drivers. Davis briefly discussed the impact on traffic and safety in relationship to Racine County's economic profile, unemployment rates, liquor licensing, and number of county residents who travel the highways to go to work in surrounding counties.

7. Discussion of the "Click It or Ticket" mobilization (May 22-June 4, 2017) and the corresponding Law Enforcement Action Kit (LEAK)

Davis noted that the kick-off dates for the "Click It or Ticket" campaign are May 22 – June 4. Law Enforcement agencies that participate in this mobilization will be eligible for an equipment grant. Davis commented on the importance of high visibility enforcement. He noted the Racine County and Village of Mt. Pleasant and Village of Caledonia task forces and stated that if there is any additional State funding available, funding will be requested for a speed task force in Racine County.

8. Discussion and possible recommendation(s) concerning a request from the Town of Dover to reduce the speed limit from 45 to 25 or 30 mph on Sheard Road (CTH B), south of STH 11, in the Town of Dover

Anderson presented the request. The Town of Dover has received numerous complaints from residents regarding excessive speeding on Sheard Road/CTH "B", south of STH 11, primarily on weekends. The Town requested that the posted speed limit of 45 mph be reduced to 25 or 30 mph on this rustic road. The Town noted that increased traffic is in part due to spring/summer patronage of the Dirty Hoe Saloon located at 4614 Sheard Road. Residents stated that they feel unsafe to walk down the road or pull out of their driveways with the current speeds in place. The Racine County Sheriff's Office is aware of these concerns and have added additional patrols. The Town stated that they would appreciate feedback from a traffic study.

This issue is being brought before the Traffic Safety Commission today for any possible law enforcement input and/or recommendations. The matter will be placed on a future Public Works, Parks and Facilities Committee agenda as soon as additional data has been compiled by County engineering staff. Anderson noted that the initial response from Engineering staff is that although this road is a rustic road, as a county highway, enforcement of a 25- or 30-mph speed limit wouldn't be recommended.

Lt. Klatt stated that in response to several citizen complaints in past months, mostly focused around the Dirty Hoe Saloon (e.g., traffic, noise, music), the Sheriff's Office has added extra enforcement details along Sheard Road. The Sheriff's Office has discussed putting up a covert monitor in the next coming week in addition to the speed trailer already in place at this location. Klatt noted that increased enforcement hasn't yielded a lot of observed violations thus far. Blackwood added that Wisconsin State Statutes allow local government authority to lower the speed limit by 15 mph or

less on 45-mph rustic roads; anything more would need WisDOT approval. Further, all speed limit changes must be supported by a traffic engineering study.

The Traffic Safety Commission received and filed this information. Anderson will provide an update to the TSC at the next meeting, after more data has been gathered by the Engineering Division. Meanwhile, the Sheriff's Office will install a covert monitor at this location.

9. Around the Table

Julie Anderson provided the Commission with an update regarding past concerns about speeding on 7 Mile Road, east of Wind Lake Road. Anderson contacted the General Manager for Source Disposal regarding the resident's concerns about truck traffic. The Manager took immediate action, instructing his employees to either slow down or not use the road. In addition, added signage, installation of high visibility school bus signs, and an ordinance to lower the speed limit was adopted by the County Board in August of 2016. Since these measures were taken, no additional complaints have been received.

Anderson stated that summer highway construction projects will soon be underway. In order to take advantage of daylight hours, Public Works highway crew will work a 10-hour, 4-day week, with limited crew on Fridays. The safety of employees is being stressed (e.g., safety in work zones, chain saw safety, etc.).

Joe Davis briefly discussed the Wisconsin Strategic Safety Highway Plan, the statewide comprehensive plan that provides strategies for reducing traffic fatalities, injuries and crashes over a three-year period. The plan addresses the ten highest priority areas of concern. As the 2017-2020 plan is being developed, distractive driving and better education of teen drivers will be high priorities. Davis noted the importance of the four "E's" of traffic safety: enforcement, education, engineering and EMT services, with a fifth "E" referring to "everyone" since everyone has a stake in the safety plan. Davis will revisit the Strategic Safety Highway Plan at a later TSC meeting.

Tom Knitter commented on the TRIAD and AARP senior driving classes. As he had done at a past meeting, he suggested approaching the AAA Foundation to ask if a representative from the organization might be interested in attending TSC meetings. Anderson offered to contact the AAA about this possibility.

Jackie Bratz asked if the hands-on driving clinic for newly-licensed and teen drivers being offered on May 20-21 at Miller Park by the Ford Motor Company will be made available on a future date, possibly in Racine County. Davis indicated that he will work with the Ford Motor Company to try to bring the program to Racine County. Maack offered to assist with finding a suitable venue in Racine County for the program. More information about the "Ford Driving Skills for Life" program may be found on the Ford Motor Company website.

Pat Starken, who is retiring this summer, stated that he has enjoyed working with the TSC and being part of the team. Maack thanked Starken for his years of service on the TSC and commission members expressed their well wishes.

Allison Blackwood stated once the State budget has been finalized, it is hoped that the I-94 plans for Racine County that were put on hold should begin and be completed within the next budget cycle (namely, reconstruction from STH 11 to the area of CTH "G" and the "K" interchange).

10. Next meeting: September 14, 2017 @ 2:00 p.m.

11. Adjournment

There being no further business, Chairman Maack adjourned the meeting at 2:44 p.m.