

Town of Washington
Board of Selectmen
January 15, 2009
Public Hearing
East Washington Road

Board Members Present: Guy Eaton, Richard Cook and Ken Eastman

The meeting was called to order at 6:30PM.

Public Present: Susan and Bob Hofstetter, Sandy Robinson, John Hyland, Dave France, Jennie and Al Bruno, Bill Kraus, Ed Thayer, Steve and Gayle Terrani, Phil Barker, Bill Cole, Colleen Duggan, Sandy Poole, Thomas Tanner, John Hofstetter, and John Pasioka

Eaton informed the public that the reason behind tonight's hearing was to address the concerns brought before the Selectmen regarding the speed on East Washington Road. Eaton read letters the Selectmen had received on the subject. Eaton stated that the Selectmen propose to place a 25MPH sign at Poole's bridge.

Steve Terrani asked that if the sign is placed that it is far enough away to be effective in advising motorists of the narrow bridge.

Thayer informed the attendees of the process in determining the placement of a sign.

Thayer suggested that the sign be placed on another pole until spring when a proper pole could be installed.

John Hyland asked for the reason on lowering the speed on East Washington Road. He asked has there been many more accidents on this stretch of road? Cook replied that there have been a few accidents. Eaton stated that there is a potential hazard for accidents and this was the concern that has been brought before the Selectmen. Hyland stated that he felt there should be reasoning behind changing the speed limit such as a change in the road. Sue Hofstetter asked if the new radar board can collect motorist's speeds stating that many people may be perceiving that a vehicle is traveling faster than it actually is. Chief Marshall stated that the board is equipped to gather such data but would not be available until spring. Jennie Bruno discussed her issue with the blind area near her home. Bruno requested a mirror be placed for the corner. Thayer advised that mirrors do not seem to hold up to weather. Bruno asked to be included in the proposal before the Board in reducing the speed limit in front of her home. Bob Hofstetter voiced his opposition in reducing the speed limit on East Washington Road. He stated that the State sets the speed limit for drivers to operate at a prudent and reasonable speed and that you are going to have drivers that will not obey the rules. Hofstetter stated if the speed limit is reduced to 25MPH Chief Marshall may be able to ticket more operators but they may get thrown out of court.

Chief Marshall collected information from the Washington Police Department computer system and reported that since January 2002 to present there had been nine crashes reported to the Police Department.

Bill Kraus said that drivers are more aggressive and people do not seem to care if there is an animal or person on the side of the road and suggested that the reason behind lowering

the speed is to allow Chief Marshall the ability to ticket a driver who is going 35-40MPH which is a dangerous speed for the road. Sandy Robinson stated that she was in support of lowering the speed. Stating that with the number of children and animals if the speed limit remained the same the situation would get worse. She also said that lowering the speed would maintain the safety and character of the neighborhood. Sue Hofstetter stated that if the speed limit is reduced the majority of the residents would go slower but that she felt it would not address the concerns others had of the out-of-towners. Phil Barker voiced his opposition to reducing the speed limit on East Washington Road. He said that if the speed limit was reduced we would legally be able to drive faster on Main Street in the center than on East Washington Road. He stated that drivers should be ticketed and this would solve the speeding situation. Sue Hofstetter asked the Selectmen to have Chief Marshall give out tickets at a lower threshold stating that possibly this would solve the problem in itself. Chief Marshall said that he could not ethically issue a ticket he would know would get thrown out of court. Chief Marshall stated that since the complaint had been filed with the Selectmen there has been more radar patrol on East Washington Road. He said that we have stopped eleven vehicles and eight of these drivers were East Washington residents. Jennie Bruno asked about the 15MPH sign at Eccardt's Farm. Eaton explained that this is a suggested speed. John Hofstetter asked how many people fight tickets. Chief Marshall explained the ticketing process. John Hofstetter stated that he felt 25MPH is too slow. Dave France expressed his opinion on the proposal stating that motorists are not civil as they once were. Sandy Poole asked if the residents of East Washington reported the registration numbers of the vehicles that all of the residents see speeding to the Police Department would it help. Chief Marshall said that he could not ticket the operator but he could call and advise that the neighborhood has noticed them speeding. Steve Terrani stated his opposition to the proposal stating that this is a classic 10% problem and that more enforcement could solve the situation. Steve Terrani stated that he has come across more people driving in the middle of the road which is his concern.

Eaton closed the meeting at 7:22PM stating that the Selectmen would discuss and vote on the issue during the regular Selectmen's Meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Dagesse
Secretary to the Board of Selectmen