

Chairman: Toby Turner

Members Present: Paul White Sr., Amanda Turnipseed, Reed Adams, Russell Brummett, Lisa Ridge

Members Absent: Brad Swain, Joe Goss

Staff: Paul Satterly (Highway Engineer), Ginger Henson (Secretary)

Guests: Judy Pound (Discussion of Smith Pike)

I. CALL TO ORDER

Toby Turner called the July 18, 2019 meeting of the Monroe County Traffic Commission to order at 1:30 p.m. (Location: North Showers Conference Room 106A).

II. LAST MEETING MINUTES

Lisa makes a motion to approve the meeting minutes for May 16, 2019. Paul White seconded the Motion. Vote: Aye (Unanimous). Motion carried.

III. NEW BUSINESS

Discussion of Smith Pike and the high rate of speed of vehicles

Judi Pound is present. Toby asked her to introduce herself. She lives at 3155 N Smith Pike and has owned that house since 2003. She did travel out of state for about 5 years, while her granddaughter lived in the house. But she is back now and this issue has come back to the forefront again and it has gotten far, far worse than she could ever imagine. Toby welcomed her presence. Judy's memory isn't what it used to be so she is going to mainly read from her notes because she didn't want to miss anything.

Judi's issue today is excessive speeding on Smith Pike. It is a long standing problem that she first brought to the attention of Mayor, Mark Kruzan in May 2005. He referred her to the Highway Director, Bill Williams and the Planning Director, Bob Cowell. Judi has copies of those email conversations which she passed out to each board member. Judi thinks from her own vantage point as a homeowner on N Smith Pike and not wanting to step on anybody's toes, what needs to be done to remedy the problem is:

- 1.) The county engineer needs to determine the average speed on N Smith Pike. It is posted at 35 mph and it is basically a residential area. If she counted correctly, there are only 3 small businesses along there, but it's not basically a commercial area. She would guess that the average speed is more like 55 – 60+. She acknowledged the Board nodding their heads because they drive over there. She does not feel she is exaggerating. She's not the worlds' best at measuring distance or anything else. That is just what she thinks is happening.
- 2.) She wants to discuss with the sheriff what can be done to curtail the heavy traffic by routing drivers to Curry Pike where there is a 4 lane highway and a 40 mph speed limit. If you look at these emails she started early on, Bill Williams explained that was the reason for building Curry Pike to SR 45, to take the traffic off of N Smith Pike. That was in 2003. That hasn't happened, has it? Lisa pointed out, they are both public roads. Judi understands that and she understands that people have the right to drive on the roads. She's not territorial. But she also lives there and she knows that her grandchildren will no longer bring their children to her house because it's not safe.

It's not safe to go out and get your mail until about 10:00 PM and then you get people flipping you off or swerving over. She's had it happen to her. Lisa believes it. Judi doesn't like to bring up issues without having some remarks about what she thinks should happen. She's not the Sheriff, she's not trained in law enforcement, but here is what she thinks should happen. First, you should assign officers in unmarked cars to spend a lot of time on N Smith Pike initially and issue a lot of tickets until irresponsible drivers get the message that the speed limit will be enforced at all times. Secondly, you should increase the speed limit on Curry Pike from 40 mph to 50 mph so traffic can move along faster, then maybe the people that are cutting through on N Smith Pike and waiting a long time to turn onto Woodyard will have an incentive to use Curry Pike instead.

Other issues related to the excessive speeding is the noise. Not only are people driving extremely fast, but many of them have extremely loud mufflers that shake the windows, in Judi's house at least. The whining sound of cars between 5 pm and 9 pm is extremely disruptive. It's like living in the middle of a race track. Also, there are 2 schools close to Woodyard Road as you start up towards 46. There is Grace Pre-School and the Village and she thinks that there needs to be some double flashing lights there because her granddaughter works there and she has had near crashes there because there are little hills on N Smith Pike and the people there start picking up speed very quickly, she can hear it. She can't even sit outside in her backyard because the noise is so disruptive. The other day, there was such a loud noise coming from Woodyard, that she went out to investigate and there were 4 cars racing bumper to bumper, traveling at least 80 mph. That's just one instance, there are many more that goes on.

Judi just thinks something needs to be done there and install some flashing lights to indicate there are some schools and there are parents dropping off kids and picking them up. There is nothing there right now to warn drivers. Humbly, with all due respect to the sheriff and the others, she is not the expert, but she just feels that the failure to enforce one of our most basic laws gives the impression that law enforcement will turn a blind eye to other more serious crimes. More tickets need to be written until the offenders get the message that disregarding speed limits and other traffic laws will not be tolerated. That is all Judi has for us and she is appreciative of the Board's time and looks forward to hearing back from them. If the Board has any questions, she would be glad to answer them.

Lisa explained to Judi that we have to follow a manual called the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices which helps determine what speed limit we can set. One of the guidelines we have to follow is the 85 percentile rule. That means you can post the speed limit on what 85% of the cars are driving. Judi, remarked, well that wouldn't be good, would it? Lisa agreed, it would not. Paul explained to Judi that Curry Pike is now set at 40 mph because of the design and curvature of the road, so you can't increase the speed to 50 mph just to move people quicker. Lisa said, she could guarantee people were already exceeding the speed limit on Curry Pike. Judi commented how scary it is to drive on the highway due to the speeders. Lisa thought there were school bus signs around the villages because that had come before the Traffic Commission in the past. Paul White said there is at least one school bus sign on Smith Pike. Lisa said we can check our inventory to see if any signs are missing and re-install those. Judi said she doesn't go that way very often so she could be wrong about that, but she has never seen one. Lisa reiterated, we can check our sign inventory for that.

Judi drove around the neighborhood writing down speed limits and said that Carmola Drive's speed limit is set at 30 mph and they have at least one speed bump. Lisa said there shouldn't be a speed bump, because we do not do those. Paul White commented that if there is one, it wasn't by design. He drives Carmola Drive quite often and has never seen a speed bump. Forest Park's speed limit is 20. Woodyard is 35.

Lisa explained another thing you have to look at is how a road is classified and she is going to guess that Smith Pike is not classified as a local road. She would guess it is more of a Minor Collector Road. Paul White believes it is Arterial. Reed said she isn't asking for a different speed limit, she is just asking for more reinforcement. Judi agreed. Lisa understands, but Judi is comparing Smith Pike to Carmola being 30 and Forest Park being 20. Judi said Liberty Drive is a very heavily traveled road also and their speed limit is 30. Reed explained Liberty Drive is very curvy whereas Smith Pike is straight as an arrow. Judi agreed, it's not curvy, but it's hilly. Russell said now that Curry Pike is open, Smith Pike provides drivers with a wide, open way to go and that is part of the problem. Reed said you'd be better off with more cars. Russell agreed, you would be because if you had someone in front of you going the speed limit as opposed to no car in front of you for a mile.

Reed asked Russell if he could boost the patrols through there. Russell agreed, he can. Reed said there are a view things we have employed in the past to try to get people down to the correct speed limit. It's a heavily traveled area so it seems to him worthwhile. Paul White said we can do the same thing that the California Highway Patrol does and just stick an empty police car there, sometimes they put a stuffed bear in it and sometimes there is an officer. Russell said, we've tried that. It works for about ½ a day. Russell asked how many crashes we have there on the crash report. Judi pointed out the Town & Country Vet Clinic has a lot of traffic now because they do a lot of business, there is a lot of congestion sometimes at Carmola coming out when people are picking up their animals after work. It just concerns Judi and the quality of life isn't good for those of us that live there. When her own grandchildren won't bring her great-grandchildren to visit because they are so scared because kids get away from you so quickly. Russell said we've had deputies in that area running radar before. He remembers because they were parking in the Veterinarian lot and he was complaining that they were blocking his entrance. Judi saw them, but complained to the Sheriff that they are never there very long though she knows they cannot be everywhere at once. Judi offered to let them park in her driveway, she has a little drive with 2 places to park. Russell explained if they are there for ½ hour and don't get anything they are going to move on to someplace else. Judi said they've got to get their between 7 and 8. Russell said every road in the county is like that. Judi understands that, but it's still a problem for us (her neighborhood). You're the sheriff, but I live there and it's not good.

Russell doesn't doubt what she is saying. He knows that we (the Sheriff's Department) get complaints about every road in the county. We now have deputies following school buses just trying to get people not to pass school buses when they have the arm down. That was a top priority, we've been doing that and will continue doing that when school starts this fall. He can talk to the deputies and see what they come up with and see if they can hit it again and run radar in that area. Judi said maybe they should write tickets for a while and maybe make the fine more; people have got to get the message. Russell said they won't; drivers continue to commit traffic violations regardless of fines. Judi says she is from the old school, but there is nothing wrong with old school when it comes to the law. Russell agrees with Judi 100%, we do write citations, but we typically find that about 2 weeks passes, everything disappears and it goes right back to the same thing. Judi agreed. Russell said its people having the attitude that it's my road and I'm going to drive how I want. He finds that it's more of the attitude of drivers than anything else. Judi said when they start killing people's children, it's going to be a much deeper issue. Russell can see that happening on that road.

Reed asked if anyone has been killed on Smith Pike. Russell did not see that. Judi doesn't know if there has. Reed pointed out there have been 20 crashes in the last 3 years. Russell said that was

from people sliding through the stop sign and rear-ending someone. From Forest Park on down, it's like an ice skating rink when winter hits. But it hasn't been bad since Curry Pike has been opened up.

Paul said we have been working with INDOT to get intersection improvements done at HWY 46 and have gotten stone-walled there. We are also working on a round-a-bout design for Curry and Woodyard and Woodyard and Smith Pike and we are hoping that will get people to use Curry Pike rather than continuing on to Smith Pike. That will hopefully divert people even further than what we are currently seeing. The round-a-bout at Woodyard and Smith Pike would help to reduce the speeds at least on the north end, but he thinks it will also keep people on the higher speed route using Curry Pike. So that is something up and coming. Reed asked as if we can run a sign inventory on Smith Pike to ensure that all of the signs are still in place. Lisa agreed, we can run a report out of our system then have our sign guys check and make sure there are no signs missing. Lisa said we have a temporary speed board, but again, it is a temporary thing. We could put that out there for 2 days, but once we take it, everyone will be back to the same way they were. Judi understands that. What Judi has observed since she has been back here is a lot of new development since she was gone and homes in her neighborhood have been bought by young people with children, so there are more kids in the neighborhood and she has grandchildren she is especially attached to and grandbabies that are not allowed to come to her house because it's not safe. Russell will find out which deputies were out there, get feedback from them and ask them to go back out there. Judi said that is fair enough.

Paul Satterly, said we are also doing a project for Carmola that will have sidewalks on both sides of Carmola and we are also going to have a left turn lane at Smith Pike for Carmola. He thinks that intersection improvement will help safety wise as well and that will give people a place to walk on Carmola instead recreating on Smith Pike. Judi says she doesn't even try to get out of her house unless it's early in the morning or late at night. If it's 3:00 in the afternoon and she's not home, she doesn't even try to go home because she cannot get in and out of her driveway. If I were to get sick or needed to take my daughter for medical care, I would have a hard time getting out of my driveway. Judi understands all about building and expanding, she is all for that but at some point you have to think about what you are creating first.

Reed asked Judi to please understand we are all very sympathetic. The challenge is that road is straight as an arrow and there is stuff at both ends of it. It's a pathway to Ellettsville from the west side of town. In the end, there is not a lot you can do to stop people from going down that road. Judi asked what about Hartstrait Road. It's a straight road too and it takes you to Vernal Pike and some of the others. Judi doesn't know how you train people to take a different route. Lisa said people are going to take the route that they want to take; they are going to take the route that they are used to. Hopefully the round-a-bout will make a difference. A lot of people do not like to use a round-a-bout so may avoid going that direction. Judi said maybe that's the solution. Paul Satterly pointed out with State Road 46 under construction, Judi is probably seeing a lot more traffic. Russell agreed with that. Paul Satterly said people get stuck in traffic even trying to get to Curry Pike and so they are all using Smith Pike so you will see a real high traffic volume on Smith Pike until construction is done in November.

The SR 46 construction is also causing a big mess. Smith Pike is seeing record numbers of vehicles right now. Paul White has seen a huge increase just driving through there with the school bus. Amanda pointed out there will be a short window when all those lanes will be open for IU's enrollment week and the return of students moving into housing. Russell asked if both sides are to be done by November. They are, even though they haven't finished one side as of yet. Lisa said

weather hasn't helped with the schedule this year. It just stopped raining a week ago. Reed asked when is the round-a-bout coming about. Judi would like to know the timeline as well. Lisa said it's going through the MPO so both the city and county are providing funding. She believes construction is scheduled for 2021. But we have to go through design, we have to go through right-of-way things and then go to construction. So it's at least a 2-year window. But that is about as fast as any project goes. It's hard to move a project along once you get into the right-of-way because you don't know what you are going to get into with the property owners. Judi can imagine that would be the time consuming part.

Lisa said we had a good public meeting on it and it has been very supported. We sent out letters to the property owners and we had a huge turnout and they are very supportive of the project. So hopefully right-of-way will be a breeze. Paul Satterly said there were a lot of Smith Pike people there all concerned about the speeds on Smith Pike. Judi was glad to hear she wasn't the only one concerned. Lisa said we just don't have an easy solution. Judi said, well, I guess for right now, Sheriff, just try to ticket people. Reed asked about the sign inventory. Judi wouldn't want to stand out there and direct traffic, it's too scary. Judy thought about going door to door to get petitions signed. Obviously other people have already spoken. Paul Satterly said they were all at the public information meeting. Judi missed that, it must have happened before she came back to town. Judi appreciates our time and doesn't want to take any more of it. The board thanked her for coming because we need members of the public coming to let us know what their concerns are. Judi wanted to do more than just complain, she wanted to offer solutions from a woman's perspective. She hopes it made some difference. Judi thanked the board again, especially the Sheriff and his crew; God bless them all.

Approval of Maple Grove Goat Run

Toby inquired about whether we were discussing the Goat Run today. Ginger responded, on that one, he said he will have the Certificate of Insurance by next month so we can postpone until then.

Establish a Speed Limit for Southway Drive

Paul Satterly said we received a request that a speed limit be established and a sign erected for Southway Drive. It currently is not covered by an ordinance for a speed limit. He took a look at it. The road is about 15.5 feet wide. It's pretty bumpy so he couldn't imagine anyone driving more than 15 or 20 mph. There's narrow right-of-way, about 25 feet of right-of-way. It has an existing dead-end sign at the intersection with Church Lane. His recommendation would be to establish a 20 mph speed limit and add a couple of red diamond, end of road markers at the end. Paul White asked if those red diamond markers would prevent people from being able to turn around to get back out. Paul Satterly, responded, no, they will be off the paved area. It's just so people realize the road does come to an end. There is no cul-de-sac, it just stubs off and that's it. Reed is concerned that if we put a 20 mph speed limit, people might speed up. Paul Satterly said if they could do 20, it would be a miracle, it's more like a 15 or even a 10. Toby said, our guys have to back down it to push snow because there is no room to turn our trucks around. Paul Satterly said, per Indiana Code, the lowest we can post this street is 20 mph. Reed asked how many signs he was going to install. Paul Satterly responded, just one.

Paul White makes a motion to accept the Highway Engineers recommendation to establish the speed limit on Southway Drive at 20 mph and to install an End of Road diamond sign. Amanda seconded the motion. Vote: Aye (Unanimous). Motion carried.

School Bus Warning Flasher Request for Curry Pike between Gifford Road and Beasley Drive

Paul Satterly said we received this request from Deputy Blake for additional flashing yellow lights to help motorists beware of school bus stops that are in that area. We've had a lot of stop-arm violations there on that section of road. It's a 4-lane undivided road. We have a couple of signs up in that section, the ones that say, "All Lanes Must Stop for School Bus". But, evidently, a lot of folks are not familiar with that law. So the request is to add some flashing lights and additional signage. Paul Satterly did take a look. We have received calls about that area before. We do not typically do flashing yellow lights in school bus pickup areas, but we do have those in school zones where there are crosswalks or at the school limits. He has not seen things typically done for pickup areas. What we can do is add additional school bus stop warning signs. Since this is a 4-lane undivided road, we could go with the larger 36" signs for better visibility. He knows that there are none of those out there now. We could add those and add a couple of additional "All Lanes Stop When School Bus Stops" signs on either side of Gifford since it is a long way between the two signs currently in place. Hopefully, the school corporation is not having kids cross the street. Russell doesn't think they are. Paul White thinks it would be a smart idea to add the diamond signs to the same post or side by side the "All Lanes Stop When School Bus Stops" signs. Paul said, we could do that. Russell said, Deputy Blake is the one that has been riding the school buses. He has been talking to the school bus drivers and getting their input. Russell is the one that encouraged him to write it up and submit it to the Traffic Commission. Russell thinks we should do at least what Paul Satterly and Paul White suggested because a lot of people do not realize they are supposed to stop in both directions when there is no median. Reed says, when you haven't taken the driver's test in 30 years, you forget those details. Lisa asked Paul Satterly if he runs past Laura what signs are already in inventory and may be missing that we can replace or needs removed from inventory to keep the inventory correct. Paul said he could do that.

Russell makes a motion to accept the Highway Engineers recommendation to install larger and additional warning signs and to add the diamonds. Lisa seconded the motion. Vote: Aye (Unanimous). Motion carried.

Truck Restriction, Stop Signs and Yield Sign for Cedar Ford Covered Bridge on Maple Grove Road

Paul Satterly stated we have a new covered bridge in an effort to keep it above the creek level. It does have 10-ton load limit signage and clearance signage. The original design was to have Maple Grove as the through movement onto the covered bridge. He thought it would be better to make that intersection at Maple Grove Road and Delap an all-way stop so that people coming up Maple Grove would have an opportunity to focus on the fact that they are about to run into a covered bridge and adding the no truck over 10-ton sign similar to what we've done at the Dillman's bridge. Also, the original design included stop signs at the each end of the bridge and he would like to take those out and change that to a yield condition for traffic running southbound on the bridge. That concludes his proposal for Cedar Ford Bridge. A yield sign makes more sense to Paul White because you need to stay out there for the stuff coming through the bridge. Paul Satterly agreed. The northbound doesn't have a clear view of vehicles coming south because of the curve and the people on the curve have an opportunity at the yield sign to stop and look all the way through the bridge and check to see if it's clear. Lisa asked if that was why he's only yielding one side of the bridge. That is correct. Paul Satterly stated that is actually a standard thing. The supplemental plaque to the yield sign would be, "to oncoming traffic" which is actually the standards listed in the MUTCD (Manual Uniform of Traffic Control Devices). Paul White asked if we passed this, does it also have to go before the Commissioners for an ordinance. It does.

Lisa makes a motion to approve the engineer's recommendations to delete the stop signs at each end of Cedar Ford Bridge, add a yield sign at the north end of the bridge, make the intersection of Maple Grove Road and Delap Road an all-way stop and add no truck signs at the intersection of Delap Road & Maple Grove Road and at the intersection of Bottom Road & Maple Grove Road. Paul White seconded the motion. Vote: Aye (Unanimous). Motion carried.

Discussion of 2016-2018 Crash Report

Lisa asked if anyone had any questions on the Crash Report or concerns. It was just handed out for everyone's information and review, trying to provide them the hot spots for crashes. Russell likes it. Amanda asked what our role is in receiving this report and is it our role to use it for making any recommended improvements. Lisa said we do use it. Actually one of our highest intersection locations was Walnut Street Pike and Moores Road. That is part of the reconstruction of Fullerton Pike, phase 1. That has been on the list for 10 years. It used to be Fairfax and Walnut Street Pike. And then it moved up to Moore Road. Lisa thinks with the school coming in and all of the development, that intersection was getting 13,000 – 15,000 cars a day when we did traffic counts years ago. So we do use it as a tool. The Highway Engineer uses it as a tool to look at things for signage.

Amanda noticed the report had stated that the areas where crashes are concentrated are then inspected for improvement if improvement is an option and Amanda feels there may be areas where crashes are happening just because people are speeding or for other reasons out of the control of the county, but she wondered how those are inspected or do we discuss those here. Paul Satterly takes a look at it and one of the first things he noticed was this traffic signal at Curry and Woodyard needs fixing, so he fixed it, reducing the amount of crashes at that location and also one of the things he's done is look at Old 37 South and Fairfax. Another thing he has done is add "cross traffic does not stop" to stop signs in high volume locations. We have so many 4-way stops that sometimes people forget that there is a 2-way stop. For example, we put those in at Walnut Street Pike and Fairfax which was a high crash location and that helped settle things down there. We did the same thing at Woodyard and Smith Pike. We did comprehensive sign work all the way through the entire length of Fairfax which has reduced the crashes on it and we don't hear as many complaints of people running off of the road and into resident's yards on the curves.

The reason Amanda asked is that the same ones seem to be at the top of the list and the number of crashes seem to get larger and larger each year, but there are probably more and more people using those areas. She just wondered if as the Commission are the members supposed to be taking a look at this report and coming back with suggestions or asking for an area to be reviewed. Paul Satterly told her she is more than welcome to take a look and make suggestions. Lisa said, we are always opens to suggestions. Toby thinks it's also a tool you can use to make decisions on what comes to the commission. Lisa said there are conferences that the highway personnel attend to try to help with off-the-road crashes and there are options out there, but usually where they put the rumble strips on the edge of pavement, which she thinks helps immensely, but you have to buy a piece of machinery to attach to the paver or the contractor has to use that which adds additional cost, but she would love to see a trial area for one of these run-off-the-road locations and just see what it does. Paul Satterly said, even a right edge line will keep people on the road. If you have no lines or just a yellow center line, white edge lines can make a big difference. Russell said the thing about white lines though, when people are looking at their phones driving, they don't see the white lines, but those rumble strips wake them up. Toby said, in Kentucky, on narrow roads, they won't do a center line, but they'll do 2 white edge lines. Lisa doesn't think we've ever tried that.

Reed said, if you look at crashes per intersections, the top 2 are way far and above everything else on the list. That's Fairfax Road and Walnut Street Pike and then Curry Pike and Woodyard, but that's getting the round-a-bout so he wonders if there are any future plans for Fairfax Road and Walnut Street Pike. The numbers highlight that something needs to be done with that. He imagines it's pronounced right now with all of the construction going on down there. Traffic patterns keep shifting between Walnut Street Pike, Walnut Street and Rogers Street. Lisa hopes that will go back down once the Fullerton Pike Project is complete. Russell concurs. Paul White thinks the construction on Rhorer Road/Walnut Street Pike intersection has really super helped and it's not finished yet. Reed agrees, it's going to be great, especially when it's done all the way to the interstate.

Russell asked if any rumble strips could be added to Smith Pike. Toby explained, we usually do that for hazardous conditions like when a road is just over the peak of a hill. Toby's not sure what it is like now with Curry Pike, 46 and Smith Pike. Russell said the traffic probably has increased a lot on 46. Paul White said it has more than doubled. Amanda specified between Smith Pike and Arlington. She comes from Ellettsville down to IU every day and then she's on Arlington again. Toby said Curry and 46 took all of the trucks off Smith Pike though. Paul White said there are No Truck signs posted up there already.

Lisa was just checking to see if the Fairfax and Walnut Street Pike crashes had increased over the 2017-18 because of the construction. It stayed the same. Reed said the construction has been gone for 2 years down there. Lisa replied, it's a year overdue. Weddle Brothers said they'll have it done by the end of next week, but that just so happens to be the same day they will be meeting up with INDOT to see if they can be prequalified for Federal Aid projects.

IV. OTHER DISCUSSION

None

V. DATE OF NEXT MEETING: August 15, 2019

VI. ADJOURNMENT: 2:25 PM