

**Chairman:** Toby Turner

**Members Present:** Lisa Ridge, Paul White Sr., Joe Goss, Amanda Turnipseed, Brad Swain

**Members Absent:** Reed Adams

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

**Guests:** Tyler Blankenship

## **I. CALL TO ORDER**

Toby Turner called the April 15, 2021 meeting of the Monroe County Traffic Commission to order at 1:30 p.m. (Location: Virtual ZOOM).

## **II. LAST MEETING MINUTES**

Joe makes a motion to approve the meeting minutes for November 19, 2020. Lisa seconded the Motion. Vote: Aye (Unanimous). Motion carried.

## **III. NEW BUSINESS**

### ***Add Yield Sign at Eastbound Bottom Road for Liberty Hollow Road***

Paul Satterly said we received a report at the Highway Garage; a motorist reported almost being hit by a left turning vehicle at the intersection of Bottom Road and Liberty Hollow Road. It is a rather strange intersection; Bottom Road curves through the intersection and is the through route. Liberty Hollow Road comes in from the north and stops for Bottom Road. This is a similar setup to what we have at Bottom Road and Simpson Chapel Road so Paul S. thought that the best solution would be to add a yield sign for eastbound Bottom Road with the supplemental sign “to traffic from right” to indicate that eastbound Bottom Road traffic needs to yield to traffic from the right before turning left onto Liberty Hollow Road. He also suggests adding a “traffic does not stop” supplemental sign for the Liberty Hollow Road approach to the intersection.

Joe makes a motion to approve the Yield Sign at Eastbound Bottom Road for Liberty Hollow Road and the recommended supplemental signs. Lisa seconded the Motion. Vote: Aye (Unanimous). Motion carried.

### ***Add All-way Stop Control at Old Meyers Road & Boltinghouse Road***

Paul Satterly said we received a request from Mr. William Mingee. He stated he was almost hit at the intersection because of fast moving vehicles on Boltinghouse Road. There is a steep hill there and the intersection is signed for 15 MPH. The site distance is somewhat limited off of Old Meyers looking onto Boltinghouse so he requested an all-way stop. An all-way stop has been considered at this location before, but there are several problems with doing that; mainly the hill would block the view of a stop sign and increase the possibility of a rear-end collision if someone is sitting at the intersection due to the lack of sight distance. We currently have rumble strips installed on the approach to the intersection and 15 MPH advisory speed with side road warning signs. Paul S. recommends denying the all-way stop control and instead, to add clarity to the intersection, adding a supplemental “cross traffic does not stop” sign to the Old Myers stop sign post. In addition, he recommends removing several bushes in the Northwest quadrant that block the view to the left from Old Myers Road to increase sight distance there.

Toby asked if the bushes were in the right-of-way or if they were on private property. Paul S. is unsure, they are set back five or six feet from the edge of the road. Toby suggested getting Ben to look at that. Paul S. said we've requested property owners to remove shrubs before and they've been able to do it or have given us permission to do it.

Paul White makes a motion to DENY the All-Way Stop Control at Old Meyers Road & Boltinghouse Road and to approve Paul Satterly's recommendations to add the supplemental sign and remove the bushes. Brad seconded the Motion. Vote: Aye (Unanimous). Motion carried.

***Add Through Truck Prohibition for Mt Carmel Road, Wolf Mountain Road & Little Wolf Mountain Road***

Toby said we are having trouble with the trucks up there hauling the large blocks from the quarry off Stinesville Road. He thinks GPS sends drivers back through the country to County Line Road because GPS chooses the shortest rather than the best route. We don't have trouble with the quarry trucks and local dump trucks hauling stone as much because they can get on their CB's and radios and let their local drivers know they're not supposed to be on that road. It's different with the quarry blocks and cut limestone stuff because a lot of those don't only leave the state, but leave the country sometimes so those drivers depend on GPS so if it sends them up County Line Road and out to Mount Carmel to the quarry, then that's how they are going to go.

Paul Satterly's recommendations are similar to what we've done on other roads to get thru trucks off of those roads and it doesn't prohibit local trucks or farmers. Amanda asked how they get out, she's trying to figure out what is the correct route. Toby said they should go out Stinesville Road to SR 46. Ginger asked if there would be a sign telling drivers to take Stinesville Road to SR 46. Toby said no. Ginger asked so how would they know the correct route if GPS is directing them the other way. Paul S. said currently there is a sign at the intersection of Mount Carmel and Stinesville Road that directs them to SR 46. Joe asked if Toby or someone could go out and talk to the quarry owners about posting a sign in the office, or at the scales, or something just for informational purposes. Toby is sure that has been done and he has no problem doing it again. Paul S agreed that he has talked to them in the past, but they shrug their shoulders and say, oh, there's not much we can do so they're not very much help.

Amanda asked if we've talked about this before. Paul White confirmed, we did a year ago or less. Paul S said we prohibited trucks through the Stinesville downtown area at that time. Toby thinks he recently saw an 8-ton weight limit sign on County Line Road off of SR 46. Joe saw it today. It would be an Owen County sign, but it doesn't seem to be phasing the truck drivers either. Lisa asked if that was a permanent sign or a free-style sign. Toby does not know because it is not our sign. Paul W. said if it's like the sign on Franklin Road in Owen County, it's a permanent sign.

Lisa makes a motion to approve the truck prohibition signs recommended by Paul Satterly. Joe seconded the Motion. Vote: Aye (Unanimous). Motion carried.

***No Parking for Valley Mission Road, South of Monroe Dam Road***

Paul S said we received a request from the Army Corps of Engineers for No Parking along Valley Mission Drive about 1600 feet along the spillway parking lot area. Upon inspection, he noted there is a pretty small parking lot there for the spillway visitors and recommends that the available parking area be increased before we post no parking signs. Paul W. asked who would be

responsible for that us or the Corp of Engineers. Lisa said it would not be us. Tyler Blankenship is with us today and he interjected that it would be up to the Corp of Engineers. Tyler said they are not going to expand the parking lot. The parking lot was put in many years ago and because of flood control, if they expand the parking lot and put in more barriers so that people cannot get out into the spillway, it will impede the flow of water with debris on the cable coming out.

Toby asked Tyler to explain what kind of problems they are having there. Tyler said they are having major issues. They put out no parking signs because they have no access to inlets. They were having issues with 20 – 30 vehicles parked along the road so they were not able to get two vehicles through. Visitors have that parking lot there to park at the spillway and walk out and recreate. They also have a parking lot down before the tail water where they can park and walk in. We tried to minimize their parking along the side of the road by putting a riprap ditch in about 3 feet off the road, but they are still parking there. Toby surmised that ditch put them parking out in the road even more which is more of a problem. Tyler agreed, it does put them on the roadway more which has nearly caused some accidents.

Paul W. asked if it's a problem with people just stopping for a minute and then leaving or is long-term type of parking. Tyler said, it's both. They've had them stopping there off the side of the road to talk on their phone and they've had them parking there and leaving their cars and he can't always find the owners to get them to move their vehicles so they just sit there. Since the no parking signs are not county signs, the sheriff's office and conservation officers cannot enforce them.

Brad asked why people are parking there, is it for the spillway area or are we talking about the area he always called the big cut-out where about 90% of the parking was taken away. Years ago there were acres of area where people could park. Tyler said the reason they stopped allowing people to park in the spillway is because they were rutting it up and tearing it up pretty bad. When that happens and the water goes through and there is no grass there that really undermines it so that road we have now is to access the spillway to clean stuff up. In 2012, it really undermined it and created almost 100 grand in erosion damages, but where the grass was growing, the grass roots actually held the ground in place. So we can't have people going out there tearing up the grass because it's going to create a bigger, more expensive issue in the future. Brad is aware of people doing donuts in that area back then. Toby assumes growing grass would be very difficult in that area. Tyler agreed it is very hard.

Lisa asked what happens after that 1600 foot posting; wouldn't that just move the cars down a little bit further. Tyler explained he made sure that 1600 foot covered from the guardrail on past the tail water down to where there is no place to pull off the road and park. There is some confusion as to what is considered the spillway and what is referred to as the tail water. Tyler explained the spillway is at the damn and the cutout area where people used to do donuts and the tail water is below the damn where the water comes out. Brad surmised, there is plenty of parking at the tail water, but people find it more convenient to just park along the road closer to the spillway. Tyler agreed. There is only enough parking for about 20 vehicles at the spillway otherwise they are impeding our safety access for emergencies and parking out in the road. Paul S asked if another solution would be paving the shoulder to provide parking along there instead of trying to discourage it. Tyler said there is not a place to park there. They have the riprap ditch installed there for drainage and flood control. There is not enough room to add a shoulder and parking along the road.

Paul S stated it is obviously a problem to have no parking in an area that is an attraction for people to stop and visit. Tyler said there is plenty of parking provided at the tail water from which they can walk to visit the spillway. Toby asked if there were walking facilities from the tail water parking lot to the spillway. Tyler said they have a trail system at their tail water, but it does not lead to the spillway. Toby said, so we'd be putting walkers on the road. Tyler agreed, we would. Paul S said it's a pretty good hike too, probably a half mile or more. Toby doesn't like the idea of making people walk on the road. Amanda asked if the riprap is only on one side of the road. Tyler confirmed that is correct, they have cable for the parking lot on the other side but they are unable to install more because of safety from their legal district for flood control. Ginger asked if they could install a sidewalk from the tail water parking lot to the spillway. Tyler says it narrows, there is no shoulder once you get halfway from the tail water to the spillway. There is only about a two foot shoulder there.

Paul W. asked if they could do a feasibility study on enlarging the area or providing trails or something of that nature from parking lot A to parking lot B. Lisa said that would be something that the Army Corp could take on, but it's not something that the Highway Department would be able to do. Paul W asked if we could make that suggestion to the Army Corp of Engineers. Tyler doesn't see them putting the trail system on the left side of the road, if you're looking down Valley Mission because that puts people up on the cliff and they don't want that. There has been enough accidents and people falling off of that cliff already this year. Toby asked, what about the other side and then a crosswalk. Tyler agreed that was a possibility. Toby would like to make a motion, he wonders if we could table, he doesn't want to deny it at this point, but he would like to see an alternative plan or something. He doesn't think we should have people walking in the street from the tail water to the attraction at the spillway as Tyler is suggesting.

Tyler can try to get a permit to clear some of the trees to make a path on that right hand side, but he would have to clear that with his Commander first. Toby added and then we'd need to include a crosswalk and some more signage to get people across the street. Ginger asked how long it would take for Tyler to get with his Commander and get permission to do that. Tyler said it would take a couple of weeks to get all the paperwork and permission for him to cut the trees down. Ginger asked, so this would be fine to table just to next month. Tyler agreed. Lisa stated, if his Commander has any questions or they want to reach out the Highway Department, please do so.

Toby makes a motion to table this item until next month so that Tyler can come back with a better plan taking in consideration some of the concerns he heard from the Traffic Commission members today. Joe seconded the Motion. Vote: Aye (Unanimous). Motion carried.

#### ***No Parking for Little Flock Lane***

Paul S stated we received a request from residents on Little Flock Lane to post No Parking on their street because people are parking there to visit the Leonard Springs Nature Park which is about 500 feet south of that location. The parking lot has maybe six or seven spaces and during high demand times, people are parking on the grass in the yards along Little Flock Lane and along Leonard Springs Road. Paul's recommendation is to post "resident parking only" signs instead of no parking signs. Hopefully, that would discourage visitors from parking there. He also recommends we make a suggestion to the City Parks and Recreation Department to provide a larger parking lot to accommodate the demand for parking at their Nature Park.

Ginger asked if everyone received the 2 response letters and photographs she forwarded that were sent in regarding this issue. They did. Toby's questions how the Sheriff's Department would

know the difference and know when to write a ticket and enforce it. Brad asked if we can legally make a public street like that parking for residents only. If it's a public thoroughfare where parking is going to be allowed, can you be exclusive. That's a good question. We do not know the answer to that. Paul W thinks we can be exclusive if we put a time limit on it. Paul S said we've already done something similar in Sanders. Lisa asked if that went before the Commissioners. Paul S said it did. It was done because of people parking to go to the quarry to swim. Brad said, so we know it can legally be done; however, enforcing it would be a challenge, but he thinks it would put pressure on the city because maybe they are not aware of the demand and usage for parking. We really need for the city to get on board so that people using the property have adequate parking.

Ginger mentioned that there are only three property owners that would be affected if we put up No Parking signs and two of the three owners have said that they definitely want those signs. They also mentioned that people don't just park in the grass, they actually stop in the roadway and leave their vehicle in the road as shown in the photograph so they would really like to have No Parking on Little Flock Lane. Toby's concern is that Little Flock isn't very long so wouldn't they just go around the corner and park. Ginger agreed that was a possibility; however, the people making the request said this is a small road leading to a neighborhood and it's congested and it's dangerous turning in and off of Leonard Springs, so they were concerned about this small road rather than the entire subdivision. Toby said that the road is not real small, he doesn't think it's any smaller than Leonard Springs. Paul S said it's 24 feet wide and if they don't park on Little Flock, then they park on Leonard Springs. Toby asked if we were going to post Leonard Springs as well. Paul S. said there is a No Parking sign on the northbound side just north of the park. Lisa asked what road did Paul S. say we put the resident parking only sign on. It was Sanders 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue.

It seems to Joe that the main thing that needs to be done is contacting the City Parks & Rec. That little park is pretty busy, there's quite a few people go out there and 6 or 7 cars is all that parking lot will hold and there's plenty of room for them to expand the parking lot. So the emphasis should be on getting the City to do that. One thing we could do is table this and send a letter to the City and mention in the letter that the only alternative for us is to make the whole area no parking. If that's the case, it would limit the number of visitors that can park and give them a little incentive to get the parking lot done. Paul W did not realize that was a city park. Yes, it is. Paul W. knows you can't get school buses through there to drop kids off very easily. Toby doesn't think he would like inviting the public to park and leave their vehicles in front of his home either. Brad and Joe agreed.

Lisa asked if we can table this. She wants to check into the resident parking only signs because she is not finding an ordinance for that and she just wants to make sure we are all on the same page. (Upon research, we found that it did NOT go before the Commissioners, so there is no ordinance and "Resident Parking Only" is not an enforceable sign. In the minutes, we acknowledge it would not be enforceable, but could serve as a deterrent and make the residents happy.) Paul W. would like to table it and contact the city to let them know what is being proposed and letting them know what some of our ramifications are.

Paul White makes a motion to table this item to next month to give Lisa time to contact the City Parks Director and get a response. Joe seconded the Motion. Vote: Aye (Unanimous). Motion carried.

***Review of Motor Vehicle Traffic Crash Summary Report for January 2017 –  
December 2019***

Joe said it was a very thorough report as always. He always finds it interesting. Toby agreed there is a lot of interesting information in there, that's for sure. Paul W. did a little comparison with the last one we received and it looks pretty good. Toby asked if Lisa had any comments, he knows she worked hard on it. Lisa was looking at the intersection of Curry and Vernal. She thinks they were looking at doing some traffic signal updates if she is correct. She has been talking to the Redevelopment Commission Board to see if we can spend around \$30,000 to make improvements to that traffic signal. The Rhorer Road and Walnut Street Pike listed on there was actually approved with the Fullerton Pike Phase I Project so hopefully that is going to move down the list or off the list. She knows that Paul S has done a lot of things at the Old 37 and Church Lane intersection in the last couple of years. Also, on Old SR 37 South and Dillman Road, we're actually putting in for a project with the NPO as an HS Project which is the highway safety improvement program that is a 90% match, so the local match is only 10%. By the time we do a design or anything with it, it would be out in 2025 or 2026, but you have to kind of start the legwork of trying to make improvements to that intersection. Paul S looks at this data continuously so we do what we can to try and make these improvements to these areas.

Joe asked about the status of the Smith Road/Woodyard/Curry Pike Project. Lisa said that just went to letting April 7<sup>th</sup>. The contractor is Milestone Contractors, the bid was 2.7 Million. We will get the contracts with the contractor and INDOT and have a preconstruction meeting. We anticipate the utilities being relocated for the remainder of 2021 and then construction of the double roundabout in 2022. She believes it has a completion date of Fall 2022. Paul noted the crash rates at the Old 37/Church intersection were high in 2019 due to detouring traffic off of Gordon Pike. We're getting a lot of traffic through there and he thinks we saw an increase in crashes due to those detouring vehicles.

**IV. OTHER DISCUSSION**

*None*

**V. DATE OF NEXT MEETING: May 20, 2021**

**VI. ADJOURNMENT: 2:10 PM**