

Minutes
Safety Committee Meeting
February 28, 2012

Members present: Beanie Einstein, Steve Flowers, Jim Huning, Ned Lightner (chair), Gina Cressey.

Visitor: Jane Phillips

Our distinguished guest was Per Garder, a professor of traffic engineering from UMaine. We felt lucky that he donated his time and expertise to us, and we were all amazed by some of the things he told us. For starters: the state with the fewest accidents per mile and per capita is (drum roll, please) Massachusetts, followed by Rhode Island and New York.

Per named some things that slow traffic:

- Narrow streets (at 6'6" wide, cars have to take turns). Cars can get through comfortably at seven feet, and two cars can pass on a road fifteen feet wide. A fire engine should be able to get through at eight feet.
- Arches, like Camden/Rockport has. This could provide an attractive welcome to the village as well as reducing speed.
- Poorly maintained roads slow traffic, but potholes can cause injuries as well as car damage.
- A raised traffic island with plantings forces cars to go around it and could cost \$20,000.
- Trees near the road. No one wants to hit one.

We were surprised to learn that crosswalks do *not* improve safety.

In CA, nearly every car stops when a pedestrian wants to cross. In Maine, 1 car in 2 stops. In Atlanta, 800 cars go by before one stops. Maine towns differ. In Camden, almost everyone stops. In South Paris, Norway, and other towns with wide roads and fast-moving traffic, pedestrians get hit more often. Also in Brunswick where the main street is wide.

San Diego did a study using five years' worth of crash data. They looked at intersections with a crosswalk on one side but not on the other. There were 177 accidents on the crosswalk side and only 31 where there was no crosswalk. Because pedestrians, especially young people, felt an often false sense of security when in the crosswalk, they were at greater danger. Crosswalks can decrease safety.

Although Per did not recommend removing our few stop signs, he said that people tend to be more careful at uncontrolled intersections.

Cameras are excellent at deterring speeding because people don't want the steep fines. Alas, they're illegal in Maine.

Sidewalks improve safety in a big way since half of accidents where a car hits a pedestrian involve someone walking along the side of a road (e.g., Stephen King). Per could see that they aren't a good fit for our community however.

A marked four to five-foot wide path on the side of the road for bikes and pedestrians would be good on George St. / Shore Rd. We could stencil bikes on the path. One cost estimate is sixty cents per foot for a four-inch wide white line. Special paints cost more and last longer. We could start with an arch near the golf course just before the driver has three possible roads to be on. The path could start there and go as far as Gull Cottage, the end of Bayside. We'd have to paint the lines to mark the path every spring and ideally they should be on both sides of the road. Someone's quick calculation bought that to \$6000/year for painting a path on just one side of the road. Per thought they should be on both sides. There are a lot of driveways and people backing out are checking for cars, not bicycles.

Several removable rubber traffic humps could be effective on Broadway. They should be three to four inches high and ten feet long (in the direction cars are going). Some communities paint them to be quite visible, others do not. You want them fairly close together so that a car can't pick up speed between them.

Policing: Per felt it would be ideal if the policeman could live in the village and travel mostly by foot or bicycle. He said that if we really mean 15 mph, we should be ticketing or at least giving warnings at 20 mph. Speed and injury rates are closely connected.

The cost of lunch at Darby's was a small price to pay for what we learned from Per Garder. He's willing to do a bit more work for us pro bono, and would charge reasonable consulting fees if we wanted extensive help. He thinks we can do most of the work ourselves.

Gina Cressey

Safety Committee Member