

**MINUTES**  
**WASHINGTON COUNTY TRAFFIC SAFETY COMMISSION**

**PRESENT:** Jack Peters, Coordinator; Tom Sackett, Washington County Highway Commission; Norbert Neuser, Chairman; Michael Panosh, W.S. P. Bureau of Traffic Safety; Sheriff Brian Rahn, Washington County Sheriff's Dept.; Kenneth Pesch, Washington County Highway Commissioner; Tom Heydel, WI D.O.T.; Kris Perales, WI State Patrol; Thomas Jones, Hartford Police Dept.

**GUEST:** Kathy and Dale Fies, Mark Wudtke

**CALL TO ORDER**

The Washington County Traffic Safety Commission meeting of **December 7, 2005** was held at the Washington County Sheriff's Department, and was called to order by Chairman Norbert Neuser at 9:02 a.m.

The Traffic Safety Commission Meeting Minutes of **September 7, 2005** were approved as presented on motion of Ken Pesch, and seconded by Norbert Neuser. Motion carried.

**OLD BUSINESS**

The redesign of the intersection of STH 33 with STH 144 south and Glacier Drive north was discussed. Concerns over the changes were voiced by several deputies and the head of the dispatch division of the sheriff's department. Tom Heydel of the Department of Transportation stated that safety concerns took precedence over operational concerns when this intersection and its turn lanes were redesigned. He stated the old way was probably better for operations, but that the new redesigned turn lanes are much safer. He stated that D.O.T. will look at the crash rates in the future to see if these changes are helping.

One of the suggestions was to add a right turn lane for Glacier Drive from STH 33 westbound. At the present time there is not very much room in which to add the turn lane, but this will be taken into consideration in future work on the intersection.

**NEW BUSINESS**

The first item discussed was an increase in traffic accidents on STH 175 with its intersection with CTH S. Our three guests, Dale and Kathy Fies and Mark Wudtke, all were concerned and stated that they have all lived in the area for about the last twelve years, and that crashes seemed to be going up recently, especially in the last five to six years. An accident survey of the intersection from 1/1/2000 to the present showed that there were eleven accidents reported at this

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intersection resulting in two people being killed and eight people being injured.

Kathy Fies stated that there have been many more non-reported accidents where people have slid off the road and into their front yard. They stated that one of the problems is that people on CTH S are ignoring the stop sign in both directions. They also stated that a lot of the semi traffic that is northbound on STH 83 turns east onto CTH S and then uses the intersection to turn north on STH 175. Because of the severe angle of the intersection, these semis have trouble making a left turn and are going way onto the shoulder and are blocking STH 175 for a short period as they are making their turns. One of the reasons that the truck traffic is using this intersection is that STH 83 with its intersection of STH 175 crosses at an even greater angle than this intersection, and trucks have problems looking back for traffic to the south.

In addition to the guests at our meeting there were several letters which will be included as part of this report outlining various problems with the intersection and possible solutions. I also took a telephone call at home yesterday from a person by the last name of Becker who lives in the area and was also concerned about problems at this intersection. The main problem seems to be that CTH S crosses STH 175 at an extreme angle, making it hard for traffic on CTH S stopped at stop signs to see traffic on STH 175. Also, there is a hill crest to the south of CTH S and a curve, which adds to the sight distance and speed problems.

Engineer Tom Heydel of D.O.T. stated that STH 175 is slated for repaving and other improvements in the future, possibly in the year 2012, and that at that time crash rates and possible solutions, and citizen input, will be taken into consideration with regard to various improvements such as possibly taking down the hill crest to the south, widening the shoulders, reducing speed limits, and possibly adding right turn lanes. Tom Heydel stated that he and D.O.T. safety engineer Chris Cornel had looked at the intersection and for the present may improve signing, including night arrows on STH 175 to indicate the curvature in the road. He also stated that chevrons were looked into but are not going to be used because they could possibly interfere with sight distances for people stopped at the stop signs. They will also possibly move the stop bar for eastbound CTH S ahead to make it easier to observe traffic.

State D.O.T. traffic engineer Tom Heydel stated that some of the improvements will be:

- 1.) Adding forty-five mile per hour advisory signs under the curve warning signs northbound and southbound
- 2.) Adding an intersection crossing warning sign for northbound
- 3.) Adding the previously discussed yellow/black directional arrows northbound and southbound to define the curves
- 4.) Add "Cross traffic" does not stop under the stop signs both directions on CTH S
- 5.) Add stop bars on CTH S

A memo from Deputy Justin Jilling regarding problems with the intersection of CTH H with CTH XX and Trading Post Trail were discussed. One of the things that Deputy Jilling's memo did not address was that on the three stop signs at the intersection each one has an informational sign below it. The stop sign for eastbound traffic on CTH H states that oncoming traffic does not

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stop. The stop sign for southbound CTH XX has a sign stating that traffic from the right does not stop, and the stop sign for northbound Trading Post Trail has a sign stating that traffic from the left does not stop.

Highway Commissioner Ken Pesch stated that about six or seven years ago the county wanted to make CTH H a through road in both directions, eliminating the stop sign for eastbound CTH H and keeping the stop signs at CTH XX and Trading Post Trail. The reason for this was that CTH H carries a significantly higher volume of traffic than either of these other two roads. The sheriff at that time, Jack Theusch, had concerns about the Fillmore Fire Department, which is just south of the intersection, and fire trucks crossing the road without stop sign protection.

Ken Pesch stated that a 2006 project to redesign this intersection was possible. Implementation by 2008 would include a radical change of this intersection, including buying up some property, changing the intersection to a four-way stop sign, and moving the entire intersection some distance to the west. In the meantime, it seems that if people would just take the time to obey the signs that are presently there, there would be little probability of crashes in this area.

Another issue that was brought up was a deputy's concern over the way right turn lanes are marked on county roads. His concern was about intersections in general, and in particular the markings on CTH Q and its intersection with Hillside Road. The crash that concerned him was two vehicle which were on CTH Q in each direction were turning left and a westbound vehicle used the right turn lane to pass the vehicle stopped on CTH Q, and crashed with the vehicle turning left from eastbound CTH Q onto Hillside Road. The deputy felt he couldn't ticket the person driving in the right lane to pass because there were no guide arrows or signs indicating that this right turn lane was exclusively for right turns.

Ken Pesch stated that the county tries to follow Wisconsin D.O.T. guidelines on its highway markings, and this is the way almost all right turn lanes are marked. The way this particular intersection and others like it are presently marked means it is okay for traffic to use the right lane to pass stopped traffic if it can do so on a paved part of the road, and that the person turning left into this vehicle was at least fifty percent at fault. In the end it was determined that the deputy's decision not to ticket was probably the right decision, as both people were somewhat in the right and somewhat in the wrong.

In the last item of new business Ken Pesch stated that the Washington County Highway Committee is considering changing speed limits on county highways, and that any input into speed limits either raising or lowering or maintaining, are welcome either to Ken Pesch or members of the Washington County Highway Committee. Amongst the items that are being considered for change are CTH G south of STH 60 down to Germantown, where various speed limits will be changed to try and make the speed limits as uniform as possible. Also, CTH K in St. Lawrence at its intersection STH 175 is presently marked at 25 mph and they are considering changing this to 35 mph, since the school that used to be just to the east side of St. Lawrence is no longer being used.

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### REVIEW OF FATAL ACCIDENTS

Sheriff Rahn reported that as of today's date there have been eleven fatal accidents and seventeen fatalities in Washington County.

On 9/20/2005 Jason Wenstrend, age 29, DOB 7/5/1976, of Theresa, died of injuries he sustained when his motorcycle struck the back of a manure spreader at STH 28 and Mullen Drive in the Town of Wayne. The accident occurred when Jason attempted to pass the tractor just as the

tractor was beginning to make a left turn. Excessive speed and alcohol were not contributing factors.

On 11/22/2005 three teenage boys were killed as a result of an accident on Scenic Road south of Paradise Drive in the Town of West Bend. All three occupants of the vehicle were killed. They are the driver, Richard R. Kendler, age 18, DOB 5/22/1987, of Jackson; and his passengers Steven S. Strzok, age 18, DOB 12/31/1986 of West Bend; and Anthony J. Plavec, age 18, DOB 3/7/1987 of Iron Ridge. The driver was wearing his seatbelt and it is unknown if the two passengers were wearing seat belts or not. This accident occurred because the vehicle was southbound on Scenic Road at speeds of 80-85 mph in a posted 35 mph zone, probably trying to hill hop. The vehicle became airborne and came down and crashed into trees and burned. All three occupants were killed as a result of the crash, with extensive burning following the impact.

Regional Programming Manager Mike Panosh reported that in 2005 there seemed to be more multiple fatality accidents than in the past, stating that in 2005 there were 646 fatal accidents compared to 662 in 2004, but that the results were that in 2005, 741 people were killed compared to 276 in 2004, and passenger deaths were 183 in 2005 and 149 in 2004; motorcycle passenger deaths were 10 in 2005 and 2 in 2004.

It appears that Washington County fatalities are following the state trend with the last couple of fatalities being multiple fatalities.

### REPORTS AND OTHER BUSINESS PERTINENT TO THE COMMISSION

Michael Panosh, reported that the following Assembly Bills of interest to the safety commission are either pending or have been acted upon. They are Assembly Bill 618, which is Booster Seats for Child Passenger Safety Restraint Law, pending; Assembly Bill 70, which is a \$25.00 surcharge on citations to pay for child safety seats for poor people, pending; Assembly Bill 512 which is passed and concerns railroad crossing signs to be the same throughout the state; Assembly Bill 215 which was defeated, which was Primary Enforcement of Seatbelt Laws; and Assembly Bill 216, which is tied to the primary seatbelt enforcement which is Information on Traffic Stops, also called Racial Profiling.

Police Chief Tom Jones of the Hartford Police Department reported that he is retiring as of February 24, 2006, and will be resigning from this Traffic Safety Commission. We thanked Chief Jones for his participation in the last three years in this commission, and wished him a

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healthy, wealthy, and joyous retirement at new residence, which will be in the area of Las Vegas, Nevada.

Tom Heydel is requesting a copy of fatal accidents to be given to members of this commission at the meetings, and asked if it is a requirement of highway safety meetings, as some of the meetings he goes to have done this in the past. We will be starting to go through a copy of fatal 1050s, and I will research if it is a requirement, though I do not have my books with me today to do this.

Tom Sackett asked if the sheriff's department enforces an ordinance about plowing snow across roadways and leaving residue on the roadways, and he was assured that these laws are enforced. Ken Pesch stated that when his plow crews call in complaints to the sheriff's department, to his knowledge, they have always been acted upon properly.

Sheriff Rahn reported on the new wireless enhanced 9-1-1 system which will be installed during April of 2006 and is designed to go into effect in May of 2006. An approximate \$350,000.00 total grant for this enhanced 9-1-1 system is being used with \$80,000.00 of Washington County's share. This system will rely on the newer-type cell phones which put out a GPS signal to enable dispatchers to determine the location of wireless 9-1-1 calls.

### **ADJOURN**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:00 a.m. upon motion of Jack Peters, seconded by Norbert Neuser.

The next meeting will be held on **March 1, 2006 at 9:00 a.m.** in a meeting room at the Washington County Sheriff's Department.

Respectfully submitted,  
Lt. John C. Peters, Coordinator