

Executive Committee for Highway Safety
Meeting Minutes; Mtg. #14
October 24, 2006

Location:

Chief Engineer's Conference Room, Beryl Drive @ 9:30 a.m.

Committee Members in Attendance:

Susan Coward	Bob Andrews	Roberto Canales	Fletcher Clay
John Crone	Doug Galyon	Herb Garrison	Terry Hopkins
Darrell Jernigan	Kevin Lacy	Axel Lluch	Steve Varnedoe
Mike Yaniero			

Guests in Attendance:

Shelly Winters	Katy Jones	John Stokes	Jeff Cox	Lisa Crowley
Brad Hibbs	Beth Horner	Ben Hughs	Selena Berrier	Joanna Reese
Don Nail	Joe Geigle	Tom Norman	Chris Hartley	Jane Stutts
Brian Mayhew	Cliff Braam			

Scribe:

Cliff Braam

Minutes:

- The meeting began at approximately 9:30 a.m.

Task I – Welcome

Susan opened the meeting and everyone introduced themselves for the benefit of new members and guest that were present.

Susan announced that Colonel Clay has been asked and has accepted the role as vice chair of the Committee.

Task II – Fatal Trends Update

Kevin presented handouts in regards to our current status for fatalities so far this year. As of now, our total fatalities are slightly higher than last year's numbers, but our rate, due to an increasing VMT, is still marginally lower than last year's rate. Kevin stated that the good news to report this period, is that the slope of our fatalities and our fatal crashes are flat. The bad news concerning these numbers is that the slopes of the graphs are flat. In essence, the numbers have not gone up dramatically, but we have not moved them down either (which is where we need/want to be heading.)

Task III – Strategic Highway Safety Plan Update

During the past quarter, as required by SAFETEA-LU, North Carolina completed its Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP), got approval on it from the Secretary of NCDOT and submitted it to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in advance of the deadline. We have received approval back from FHWA accepting our plan and North Carolina is now eligible for the funding made available through SAFETEA-LU.

Brad Hibbs, representing John Sullivan, stated that US Transportation Secretary, Mary Peters, has congratulated the Committee and North Carolina on having their SHSP approved and for being active and implementing strategies coming out of the efforts of everyone involved.

Task IV – Traffic Records Coordinating Committee Update

Brian Mayhew gave an update on the TRCC. He stated that the TRCC is a multi agency group whose main objectives are to improve data systems including the sharing, collection and linkage of data.

Brian stated that the TRCC still needs representation from a few additional agencies: 1) a local law enforcement and 2) a planning agency. If Committee members know of anyone who could assist in this role, please contact Brian.

Brian also noted that the TRCC has met the requirements of NHTSA to be eligible to receive section 408 funds and that the TRCC was recently awarded approximately \$1 million.

Susan asked where these monies would/could be spent and Brian stated that the monies must be spent according to the plan that was submitted and approved. He said that exceptions could be made if just cause existed. For example, the Administrative Office of the Courts received additional monies this year that they had not anticipated and therefore, they likely will not need as much of the 408 money as has been budgeted. This money will be eligible to be spent in other areas.

Task V – GHSP Strategic Highway Safety Plan Overview

Don Nail gave the Committee an overview of GHSP's SHSP that included an overview of the various areas that GHSP funds projects in. GHSP's SHSP is also an integral part of North Carolina's SHSP and is included in the appendix of the document, which is available on the ECHS web site. The presentation given by Don will be available on the ECHS web site.

Task VI – Working Groups

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

Tom Norman presented two strategies to the Committee for consideration and approval. The first strategy "DMV Handbook Revisions" focuses on making revisions to the present Driver's Handbook to include additional, specific information on laws, when to yield right of way, how to respect other road users' rights, and tips on the proper way for each mode to operate. As a part of

this inclusion, test questions should also be added to the pool of potential question about these issues.

The second strategy, “Training for Law Enforcement Officers” focuses on raising the awareness of law enforcement officers, both to the existing statutes related to bicyclists and pedestrians and the availability of relevant materials.

Kevin Lacy made a motion to approve both strategies with the addition to add the courts to the target audience of the law enforcement strategy.

The motion was seconded by Chief Yaniero.

OLDER DRIVERS

Jane Stutts presented two strategies to the Committee for consideration and approval. The first strategy, “Improve Signage at Non-Standard Interchange Approaches” involves a pilot project where additional signage will be placed in advanced of “non-typical” interchanges (typically cloverleaf designs) to assist the motorists in getting in the correct lane depending on their desired direction of travel. The pilot project will be evaluated and the results utilized to determine if additional signage is beneficial and should be used on a more wide spread basis.

The second strategy “Identify Hazardous Intersections and Improve Their Safety for Older Drivers” will identify intersection locations where older drivers are over represented or have a higher than average occurrence of being involved in a crash. These locations will be systematically reviewed along with an older driver representative to determine appropriate countermeasures. This strategy was also reviewed by the Intersection working group.

Bob Andrews made the motion to approve both strategies as presented. The motion was seconded by Darrell Jernigan.

LANE DEPARTURE WORKING GROUP

Steve Varnedoe reported that the group has no new strategies to present at this time. Steve did mention that the group has divided into four technical Working groups focusing on the following areas: 1) Positive Guidance, 2) Utility Pole Collisions, 3) Performance Measures and 4) Clear Recovery Areas.

INTERSECTION SAFETY WORKING GROUP

Terry Hopkins reported that the group is still working on refining the strategy for advanced street name signs. Terry mentioned that a draft guide on use and placement has been completed and is being circulated for final review and comments. Terry then asked Kevin Lacy to present the group’s strategy “Automated Enforcement at Intersections”. This strategy would seek the appropriate legislation to allow statewide authority to allow automated enforcement of red light violations in North Carolina. Currently, each municipality that wishes to utilize red light cameras, must individually obtain legislation to allow the placement and use of the cameras.

Passing this legislation would make it easier for safety officials to add this tool to their toolbox as a last resort for locations with a demonstrated need.

There are two key issues to be considered; 1) Blanket approval for usage and 2) Resolution of the fine issues that currently exists.

There was much discussion concerning this strategy and it was decided to table the strategy for more research and investigation.

PUBLIC EDUCATION AND INFORMATION

Katy Jones, reported that the group is looking to revise the current ECHS web site to make navigation easier. As part of this effort, the group is looking to create a simpler web address that will be easier to remember. It is anticipated that the new web address will be www.ncdot.org/ECHS. Katy said that part of the intent of the redesign of the site is to provide more of an outreach to the public and media.

Katy said that the group is also looking to develop a quarterly newsletter for the Committee and its working groups that will be distributed prior to each ECHS meeting. The newsletter will highlight Committee and working group activities and accomplishments from the previous quarter.

DRIVER EDUCATION

Cliff reported that the group has held its first meeting and that about half of the group composition consists of people from the driver education field. The group is genuinely interested in establishing a state wide curriculum in addition to correcting some of the other “short comings” within drivers education. The group and especially the industry members, welcome the support of the ECHS and see this as an excellent opportunity to make positive changes to assist young drivers.

ENSURING DRIVERS ARE LICENSED WORKING GROUP

Cliff reported for Tony Spence and said that the group will need legislation to carry forward the strategy “Temporary Impoundment of Vehicles for DWLR Operators” that has been previously approved by the ECHS.

It was noted that this is and will be a controversial issue and that DOT may need some of its other safety partners to move forward with this.

KEEPING DRIVERS ALERT WORKING GROUP

In the absence of Tom Crosby, Cliff, reported out. The group presented the strategy “Hotel Discounts for Drowsy Drivers.” This program will provide a respite hotel for drowsy drivers at discounted rates to encourage drowsy drivers to stop and rest rather than continuing to drive while drowsy or tired.

Darrell Jernigan made the motion to support the strategy as presented. The motion was seconded by Bob Andrews.

COMMERCIAL MOTOR VEHICLE SAFETY

The group has not met since the last ECHS meeting but has their next meeting scheduled. Darrell reported that the State Highway Patrol has received some grant monies for commercial motor vehicle efforts.

INCREASING SAFETY BELT USAGE WORKING GROUP

Child Passenger Safety

Darrell reported that this year, N.C. lost \$1 million in grant monies because NHTSA disqualified N.C. based upon the child passenger safety exemption that allows a child to be unbelted if their personal needs are being attended to. Darrell stated that in order for N.C. not to lose this money next year, the exemption needs to be removed from the law.

Kevin stated that the Committee should draft and send NHTSA a resolution demonstrating the effectiveness of our current law and that this exemption has had minimal, if any impact on our usage rates.

BAC Levels

Darrell stated that in effort for North Carolina to qualify for increased funding, that our current legislation in regards to enhanced penalties for placing ignition interlocks on vehicles needs to be lowered from a BAC of 0.16 to 0.15.

Colonel Clay made the motion to support this legislative change and it was seconded by Chief Yaniero.

Finger Printing of DWI Arrests

Darrell said that he has had preliminary conversations with members from the SBI and CCBI concerning fingerprinting all DWI arrests to prevent individuals arrested multiple times for DWI from slipping through the system by utilizing different aliases. Finger prints would be utilized to positively identify an individual and link back to the correct records. Darrell asked the Committee's approval to proceed with this in the form of a strategy.

The motion to move forward was made by Chief Yaniero and seconded by Bob Andrews.

MOTORCYCLE SAFETY WORKING GROUP

John Stokes reported that there are no new strategies from the group at this time. He did state that the group has received a \$143,000 grant to begin implementation of training and the public information and education activities previous approved by the committee.

SPEED WORKING GROUP

No new reports.

Task VII – Next Meeting Date

January 16, 2006; 9:30 – 11:30; Chief Engineer’s Conference Room.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:55 a.m.