

Executive Committee for Highway Safety
Meeting Minutes; Mtg. #17
July 24, 2007

Location:

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

Committee Members in Attendance:

Susan Coward	Bob Andrews	Debbie Barbour	Chief Crone
Doug Galyon	Bill Rosser	John Sullivan	Jim Westmoreland
Kevin Lacy	Axel Lluch		

Guests in Attendance:

Tony Spence	Lacy Love	John Stokes	Tom Crosby	Brain Purvis
Brad Hibbs	Stephen Lowry	Christian Brill	Chris Hartley	Jane Stutts
Don Nail	Joe Geigle	Tom Norman	Marie Sutton	Cliff Braam

Scribe:

Cliff Braam

Minutes:

- The meeting began at approximately 9:40 a.m.

Task I – Welcome

Susan welcomed and thanked everyone for coming.

Susan announced that since Jane Stutts has retired from HSRC, she will no longer be chairing the Older Driver working group. In her place, Suzanne LaFollete-Black, from the NC AARP and Phyllis Bridgeman from the NC DHHS, Division of Aging and Adult Services will be sharing the role of chairing the group. Both of these ladies have been a part of the group since its onset and will do a wonderful job of moving forward with the group's initiatives.

Susan then spoke about the meeting schedule of the Committee and made the suggestion that the group move to three meetings per year instead of quarterly meetings. This will provide the working groups and technical working groups more time to develop and implement strategies between meetings. It was suggested that the three meetings be held in the months of January, May and September. The new schedule was approved by all.

Task II – Fatal Trends Update

Kevin Lacy reported out on our current fatal trends with some very disturbing numbers. If our current trends continue as they have so far in 2007, we will experience the largest number of deaths on our roads since 1973. If present trends continue, our projected total number of

fatalities for 2007 is 1,699. In general, fatalities are up in all categories (with speeding, alcohol and unbelted leading) and the trend line is no longer flat as it has been, but instead is on a 16.5% increase. Kevin stated and it was agreed upon by many members, that while it is not unusual to have spikes in trend lines such as this; this is unacceptable.

Jim Westmoreland asked if the fatal data could be broken down further to possibly highlight potential specific areas for focus. Cliff will get with Jim and provide the data.

2006 numbers are nearly official. While there may be a few added, the final numbers (1,425 fatal crashes and 1,555 fatalities) should not change much.

Task III – Speed Issues

Kevin gave a brief presentation on speeding illustrating that the people fatally injured in speed related crashes are real people and how significant of an impact speeding is on our overall numbers. In 2006, 616 of the 1,555 fatalities (40%) were speed related.

The time has come for us to do something about this issues. In one year, speed related fatalities increased nearly 25%. We set reasonable speed limits, law enforcement issues thousands of speed related citations, but we still loose many lives each year. Regardless of how well we do from both an engineering and an enforcement perspective, our actions are having little to no positive impact on those speeding. WHY? Part of the systems is broke.

It was mentioned that Virginia has now has laws allowing for significant penalties (fines in the thousands of dollars) for those caught speeding.

Brad Hibbs stated that Minnesota has established reasonable limits and are enforcing those limits tightly (2-4 mph variance) and have combined these efforts with a successful public education campaign to begin bringing the numbers down. However, Brad mentioned that time is still needed to determine the long term effect of these efforts.

A recommendation was made that a task force at the state level (similar to the Governor's DWI Task Force) be established to investigate what is broke and how it should be fixed in regards to the speeding issue in North Carolina.

Tom Crosby made the motion to move forward with getting this type of task force established. The motion was seconded by Jim Westmoreland.

Cliff will draft a resolution of support for the formation of a Speed Task Force for review and comments by the Committee. The resolution will also need to mention the utilization of photo enforcement as a vital tool in this endeavor.

Task IV – Red Light Cameras

Kevin reported that the court systems have finally ruled on the issue of fines and proceeds in regards to red light cameras. The upper courts in North Carolina have upheld the lower courts

decision that 90% of the monies collected from red light cameras must go to the school systems. In turn, nearly all of the cities with active cameras are now abandoning the program

Task V – Update on Strategic Safety Corridor Selection

Stephen Lowry from the Traffic Safety Unit provided the following information on the status of the corridor selection progress.

- We are developing methods to provide crash information for the NCMIN roadway network.
- We have collected the available listings, maps and files on the SHC. This info is nearly 3 years old so it will need updating.
- We are in the process of entering SHC routing information into our CRASH database.
- We plan to have this work completed by the end of August.
- We have a designed a means to provide various types of crash data.
 - Will be able to provide crash rates for the statewide, regional and subregional tiers.
 - Will be able to provide crash data for tiers, each corridor or corridor segments.
 - Will be able to provide crash data for segments
 1. Currently meet the vision plan.
 2. Need upgrades to meet the vision plan.
 3. Aren't part of the final vision but currently serve as part of a SHC to get from Point A to Point B.
- We provided estimated NCMIN crash rates to the Transformation Management Team last week. However, we consider these numbers to be “ballpark” estimates.

Task V – Working Group Updates

Cliff provided an update on the revised role of the working groups.

Over the past four years, things have worked pretty well, but there is now a need to adjust roles in an effort to assist in moving forward with the working group efforts. Essentially it has been decided to allow the working groups to act and function as independent expert panels. It is envisioned that this will allow the working groups more freedom and flexibility without relying so heavily on the ECHS. The working groups will no longer need to seek approval from the ECHS for every action, strategy, etc., but are being asked to keep the ECHS informed of actions, strategies and progress. Hopefully by revising the roles in this manner, it will streamline the process and help to move strategies forward in a more expeditious manner.

Offered Suggestions:

- Take topic assigned to the group and investigate ways to reduce associated crashes
- Seek expertise of others outside of the core group if needed, while adjusting the core group as warranted
- May want to make and prioritize list of issues to be addressed
- Act upon the list
- Essentially it will be the responsibility of the WG to implement strategies/countermeasures
 - May seek out grants (state, federal or other)
 - May seek out funding from partner agencies

- May seek out private funding
- May see funding from ECHS member agencies
- Public Information for education/awareness issues (partner with Public Information working group)
- White papers (or resource papers) for legislative needs
- Others as deemed applicable and appropriate

Chairs should reporting out on:

- WG Accomplishments
- Direction of the WG
- Seeking approval on drafted resolutions of support as needed
- Strategy when need the assistance of the ECHS

Work Groups Will Not:

- Move forward with legislative items without approval of ECHS

Older Driver

Jane Stutts reported out on the latest strategy from the Older Driver working group that will focus on expanding law enforcement involvement in older driver safety initiatives. In essence, the goal of this strategy is to build on the current level of involvement within the law enforcement community by:

1. Promoting the NHTSA “Older Driver Law Enforcement Course” to state law enforcement agencies, including NC State Highway Patrol, local police departments, and county sheriff’s offices. The course might initially be offered through a “train-the-trainer” program with support from NHTSA.
2. Expanding the voluntary participation of State and local law enforcement officers in programs, such as the AARP Driver Safety Program, that increase awareness of older driver safety issues in their communities and directly benefit older drivers.

Keeping Drivers Alert

Tom Crosby reported that funding has finally been secured for the Teen Distracted Driving educational campaign. He stated that Katy Jones and staff are currently working on revising timelines, cost estimates and project tasks and will be submitting these for final approval within the week.

Task VII – Next Meeting Date

September 25, 2007; 9:30 – 11:30; Chief Engineer’s Conference Room

The meeting was adjourned at 10:55 a.m.