

TOWN OF SUNSET BEACH

TOWN COUNCIL AGENDA ITEMS

MEETING DATE: September 10, 2012

AGENDA ITEM NUMBER: 5c

SUBJECT: Discussion of Town-wide Speed Limit

SUMMARY OF INFORMATION:

Staff met and discussed the idea of changing the speed limit on E. Shoreline and on the island streets and establishing a Town-wide speed limit.

The speed limit on the Town's island streets is 20 MPH. Sunset Boulevard on the island and Main Street have a speed limit of 35 MPH. Sunset Boulevard on the mainland and W. Shoreline Drive have a speed limit of 45 MPH, as does NC 904 in the town limits. Georgetown Road has a 55 MPH speed limit. Live Oak, Magnolia, Park Drive, and E. Shoreline have a 35 MPH speed limit. The rest of the Town's public roads have a 20 MPH speed limit, except for roads in Wyndfall where all have a 25 MPH speed limit, and one in Sea Trail that has a 15 MPH speed limit.

It is not uncommon to have different speed limits in a municipality, depending on the road conditions of the various streets. This does not confuse drivers as they must heed the posted speed limit on the particular street. According to Chief Massey, there have not been complaints about drivers being confused by the different speed limits.

Chief Massey and I believe that the 35 MPH speed limit is appropriate for East Shoreline. It is a very straight and long road. NCDOT uses a standard that basically says that if 85% or more of the traffic is driving up to a certain speed, then that speed is a reasonable speed limit. But, if say only 50% of the traffic is doing up to that speed, and the rest are going faster, then the speed limit needs to be increased.

We don't believe that 85% or more of the traffic will stay at or below 25 MPH, and the consequence would be police officers writing a lot of tickets which probably would be considered unreasonable. Since we can't write Town speeding tickets any longer, they'd be the more expensive State tickets. The Police Chief feels that doing more enforcement if there are speeding problems on E. shoreline is the way to handle this effectively.

The staff also believes that the 20 MPH speed limit on the island's Town streets is appropriate given the congested conditions in the "season". It would not be safe to set that limit at 25 MPH. Previous discussion by the Council indicated that changing the speed limit seasonally is not an acceptable alternative.

The staff has made contact with NCDOT regarding reducing the speed limit in the area of the Sunset Boulevard and W. Shoreline/E.Shoreline intersection. They will advise us of their findings and decision on that proposal sometime in the near future. They may be conducting some data collection already as some of their personnel have been spotted parked in that area.

TOWN ADM: (x) DEPT. HEAD ()