

Pinellas County Community Traffic Safety Team Minutes

Meeting Date 1/8/04

President Dave Fechter called meeting to order at 10:03 am.

Introductions were made around the room.

Minutes from the 12/4/03 meeting were reviewed and an amendment was needed.

- The name of a resident recently receiving a DUI conviction was mistakenly reported as Jack St. Arnold. Mr. Jack St. Arnold is a judge within the county and incorrectly listed as the person for which community service work was being considered. CTST wishes to apologize to Mr. St. Arnold for the error and any difficulties caused by this mistake.

The minutes were then unanimously approved with the above amendment made, and after considerable discussion related to the new right turn lanes on US 19.

Committee Reports

Education-Presented by Committee Member Diane Roffey

- School administrators declined the mock DUI crash proposed for Palm Harbor University High School in March. The event is on “hold” for any other potential locations at this time.
- Palm Harbor Fun & Safety Day will be held again on February 7, 2004 from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm at 777 Alderman Road, Palm Harbor. There will be tables of educational materials, free bike helmet distribution for children, a bike rodeo and other activities. Car seat technicians will not likely be able to attend the event due to other conflicting events. Flyers will be distributed to elementary and middle schools in the north county area to inform the public of this community service event.
- A new law has gone into effect requiring that drivers age 80 and older must have their visual acuity tested as a part of their drivers license renewal requirement. Forms are available on-line to report people who may be considered unsafe on the road, due to this new law.

Enforcement-Presented by Chair, Ron McKenzie

During the month of December 2003, four enforcement activities, two Sobriety Checkpoints and two Prevent Alcohol Sales to Students (PASS) were held, yielding the following results:

- 12/12/03 (8:00 pm – 11:00 pm) St. Petersburg, Sobriety Checkpoint on Park Street at 46th Avenue North. 24 Pinellas County Sheriff’s Officers with equipment and 4 members of Explorer Post 900 passed 1140 vehicles, diverted 212 for assessment. All driver’s licenses and warrants were checked with an average intrusion time of 1 minute 32 seconds. 9 people were arrested (7 DUI, 7 Drug, 2 Suspended license, 2 other misdemeanors); 24 traffic citations; 7 vehicles impounded.
- 12/13/03 (12:30 am-3: 30 am) St. Petersburg, Sobriety Checkpoint on 54th Avenue at 78th Street North. Twenty-four (24) Pinellas County Sheriff’s Officers with equipment and four (4) members of Explorer Post 900 passed 64 vehicles, though all were diverted for assessment. Driver’s licenses and warrants were checked with an average intrusion time

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of 2 minute 29 seconds. 8 people were arrested (5 DUI, 3 Drug, 2 Suspended license, 1 other felony, 1 other misdemeanor); 8 traffic citations; 6 vehicles impounded.

- The total traffic citations issued were for the following: 12 DUI, 4 DWSLR, 1 speeding, 1 seatbelt, 3 insurance, 3 expired tags, 1 other moving, and 1 other non-moving violations.
- Two Operation P.A.S.S. (Prevent Alcohol Sales to Students) events were held on 12/22/03 and 12/30/03. Pinellas County Deputies working with Youth Education Services coordinated three 19-year old volunteers to attempt to purchase alcohol at 23 businesses using a marked bill. The “decoy” told their true age to the clerk and was on a cell phone with officials the entire time to document the transaction. Eleven businesses sold alcohol to minors in violation of Florida State Statutes 562.11, including one at which a 17-year old clerk sold the alcohol. A notice to appear was issued to violators. Businesses that did not sell alcohol to the decoy were presented with a certificate congratulating them from SADD. Use of a “marked bill” during transactions permits return of funds used to the PCSO and return of the purchased, unopened alcohol to the business.
- 14 “Saturation Patrols” were conducted during December 2003
- A discussion about devices to help determine if an identification card is fake was held. The technology is similar to a license scanner. A clerk would simply slide the ID through a box to read a strip on the card. Lee Brown from Great Bay Distributors said that they would try to help provide some in the community.

Engineering-Presented by Chair, Mark Hanger

- Update to the Ulmerton Road/Lake Avenue/20th Avenue SE area: some activity for safety improvements. The county has recently acquired land along 20th Avenue formerly owned by CSX Railroad. A consultant is working to redesign the area within a six-month completion date. Some additional safety improvements may still need to be done. Pinellas County Public Works is also investigating the possible addition of a traffic signal.
- Plans are underway to install mile marker signs along Gulf Boulevard. Similar signs were installed on US 19 with positive results. Mile markers will be placed along Gulf Boulevard, Gulf Way, Blind Pass Road and Mandalay Avenue, creating one continuous link along the gulf beaches.
- New roadway safety innovations were piloted, determined as successful, and are now recommended by FHWA’s MUTCD. Florescent color signs are recommended to alert drivers to traffic crashes; large print on road signs to aid older drivers and “animated eyes” to caution pedestrians at intersections are some examples.
- Park Street north and south of Central Avenue is being investigated to calm heavy traffic through the neighborhood. The project is large and still under consideration, but thoughts such as dual lefts from southbound Park onto Central and other traffic calming devices are being considered.
- Some safety devices called “I Stops” are being installed at PSTA bus stops along the US 19 corridor in mid- and north county locations. These solar-powered devices provide security lights and a flashing beacon signal visible for one mile at night. The devices are intended to aid people at night and help make their presence at a bus stop more visible after dark. A concurrent project, sidewalk installation at the most poorly lit locations,

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should also help improve the safety of bus stops. At least 18 “I Stop” lights are expected to be installed.

- 65 reports (long form) from the months of September, October and December 2003 were provided to FDOT representatives for review and analysis related to accidents along the new right turn lanes on US 19. A summary of DOT’s current findings for data previously received follows this paragraph in two separate charts. According to FDOT representatives, recommended changes for both the Curlew and Tampa Road intersections, including channelized islands and the addition of overhead right turn only signs, are being constructed. Bi-directional openings appear to be a factor in accidents. It was informally suggested that an increased enforcement effort with higher visibility might decrease accidents. A project contract was executed on 11/24/03. The forecasted start time is March 25, 2004 with 100 contract days based upon available information as of early December 2003.

US 19 crash data from Republic Drive to Tarpon Avenue

	2000	2001	2002	2003
NorthBound (4/01-10/31)	30	43	38	38
NB monthly Average	4.3	6.1	5.4	5.4
Southbound (3/01-10/31)	25	35	38	50
SB monthly Average	3.6	4.4	4.7	6.25

2003 Monthly Long form Reports	# Acci- dents	Accident Type: Sideswipe	Accident Type: Left Turn	Accident Type: Rear end	Accident Type: Angle	Accident Type: Rearend/ sideswipe	Accident Type: Pedestrian	Accident Type: Bicycle
March NB (Northbound)								
March SB (Southbound)	7	2	2		1		1 fatal	1
April NB	3	2	1					
April SB	3	1		1	1			
May NB	5		3	2				
May SB	3			1	2			
June NB	10	3	4	2	1			
June SB	6		2	3		1		
July NB	5	1	2	1	1			
July SB	12	3	2	4	3			
August NB	5	1	3			1		
August SB	6	3	1	2				

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September NB	4	1	3					
September SB	8	2	1	4	1			
October NB	6	1	5					
October SB	5	1	2	2				
Totals	88	21	31	22	10	2	0	1

Dave Fechter raised two questions regarding US 19 as follow-up from the December CTST Meeting: changes to signal timing at the intersection of US 19 & Tampa Road and the suggestion that the “right turn only” lanes be reverted back to a “through lane” status. Pinellas County Signal Shop representative Steve Yeatman stated that the signal timing changes based on time of day, running in different cycles. The CTST had informally suggested modification of the signal during the previous meeting. Steve stated that due to the varying cycles, more information is needed to clarify the specific times where problems occur.

A FDOT representative stated that the lanes are technically treated as a through lane, which “drops” at a couple of points for right turns. Therefore, there is no need for the CTST to make a formal recommendation for change.

CTST members were reminded about the applications now available on the Buckle-Up website for CTST of the year nominations. Jeanette Rouse could use assistance in completing the application for Pinellas County. Applications are due by March 15, 2004.

Peter Hsu reminded the group about the “402” safety grants, which have in the past been due by approximately March 31.

White enforcement lights ordered by FL DOT are expected to arrive during January. Distribution details need to be coordinated to funnel them to appropriate municipalities.

The CTST District 7 newsletter for January 2004 was distributed.

Three presentations/discussions were held.

1. Jim Byers, a PSTA Planner, presented the CTST with the concept of Traffic Incident Management (TIM), to propose getting CTST support for a formal program in Pinellas County. According to Mr. Byers, current efforts focus only on roadway clearance and site management after a traffic incident causes disruption to the normal flow of traffic. TIM offers a comprehensive approach to coordinate activities through all municipal agencies by 1) preplanning alternate routes, 2) incident detection and verification procedures, 3) incident response, 4) site management, 5) site clearance, 6) motorist information, and 7) traffic recovery. TIM is actively used successfully at locations around the country. Discussion revealed that TIM would also help with emergency/disaster planning and that the Pinellas County Emergency Management Department may be the best place for the project. Mr. Byers requested that CTST members consider the TIM concept, supporting establishing a program in Pinellas County, how to get appropriate groups involved and how to best organize it within the county. Facts and figures on costs of traffic delays were presented to help clarify the need for TIM.

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2. Elissa Nauful of WFLA-TV updated the group on the proposal for a media safety campaign. Plans are to partner with Hillsborough and Pinellas County schools, the Pinellas County Bicycle & Pedestrian Committees, Pinellas and Hillsborough County MPO's, and work with FDOT for grant funding. WFLA-TV is seeking a letter of support from the CTST at this time. CTST members unanimously voted to provide a letter of support to WFLA-TV for the media campaign.
3. Lee Brown of Great Bay Distributors requested group feedback for an alternative idea to the traditional anti-DUI campaigns." The idea was to coordinate a parade in Pinellas County, getting local public and private schools and groups to sponsor floats, bands, and put a positive spin on the prevention of underage drinking educational efforts during the Prom/Graduation season. Float competitions for prizes and getting local SADD chapters involved were suggested. A senior high school student present in the meeting as an observer was asked his opinion on the issue. It was suggested that parents need to be reached as well, because kids listen to their parents. Also that teaching responsible drinking is needed if alcohol is present in the home. CTST members were asked to consider the parade idea and provide Lee with suggestions.

Next meeting date is Thursday, February 5, 2004.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 11:35 am.

Respectfully submitted,
Alison Weber, MS, CSP
Safety & Loss Prevention Specialist for Pinellas County Schools