

NEWS FROM GOLD bar

BY JOE BEAVER

[G.R.I.T. Note: A taxpayer/citizen advocate in Gold Bar – Joe Beaver -- has been the most-recent and visible citizen to pick up the Light of Information torch in Gold Bar. He has recently been sending out updates and information to citizens. Below is some information he distributed via email yesterday, Monday, July 31st, to his e-mail distribution list. There seems to have been a steady stream of “activists” in Gold Bar since Councilman Robert Amenn came to power in January of 2003 and has been a contentious lightning rod for issues of every stripe. We hope Joe can stand the rigors required by this non-paid volunteer effort which requires long hours, thick skin, and little help or appreciation from other community members.]

GOLD BAR COUNCIL MEETING CHANGED TO THURSDAY, August 3rd

Attached is the council meeting notice for Thursday of this week. There is no business to be conducted per the current agenda, but we will probably discuss speed humps on First Street. The Tuesday meeting is re-scheduled for Wednesday, in accordance with Gold Bar Procedures, on account of Night Out Against Crime. The Wednesday meeting will be adjourned until Thursday for some reason.

Those of you who have not been attending meetings should plan to attend, perhaps not this one, but some. Extra ears in the assembly are handy. I will have some comments to make about Robert's Rules of Order and how they affect the council.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Council Meeting Rescheduled

City of Gold Bar
Council Meeting

Thursday, August 3, 2006
7:00 PM
City Hall Council Chambers

Due to National Night Out held on August 1st, the City Council of the City of Gold Bar will hold their regularly scheduled meeting on Thursday, August 3rd.

Mayor Hill will formally open the regular meeting on the next appointed day (August 2nd) and recess it until Thursday at the above stated time. The agenda will be as posted.

SPEED BUMPS ON 1ST STREET

Attached is a report on some background work I performed concerning speed humps (not bumps) using WSDOT sources.

While speed humps are not illegal, different WSDOT sources rate speed humps on arterials as "appropriate" to "inappropriate". It is possible that the differences may have to do with the usage of the particular street.

That speed humps are not illegal is insufficient to justify their use. For example, driving an automobile in Washington is not illegal. However, it requires operator certification (drivers test), permission of the state (drivers license), adherence to rules (drive on right side of road, don't run stop signs, etc), and assurance against damage due to actions taken (liability insurance). Similar things seem to apply to speed humps.

If the speed humps were to be put on the north end of Second Street, we could probably just hire a guy to pour asphalt and get away with it (much like riding those little motorcycles on a low volume public street).

However, while it cost about \$ 600 to pour asphalt on the street to form a speed hump, WSDOT sources report the average speed hump costs \$ 2,000.

The report that is attached is just a quick summary of things found. Before the city proceeds with speed humps, the staff (i.e. John Light) needs to make a "real" study to determine all of the factors needed to install speed humps without serious prospects of having to remove them or answer lawsuits (spurious or not).

I suggest that the Council authorize John to investigate this, including monies for the outside consultants/engineers he will need to develop a passable action plan.

**FIRST STREET SPEEDING ISSUES [in Gold Bar]
By Joe Beavers, July 28, 2006**

The speeding issues on First Street in Gold Bar have been discussed and initial comments made. At the July 18th City Council meeting, discussion on this the issue of speed humps was continued. Issues that have been raised to date are:

- MSRC report that notes that traffic devices need to be reasonable and necessary
- Citizen comments about the effect of speed humps on emergency vehicles
- Citizen comments about the effectiveness of speed humps
- John Light's issues with potential liability of speed humps.

A summary is made below and detailed discussion follows.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A study of different documents found on the Washington State website notes that all of the above issues need to be addressed when using **traffic calming devices**, speed humps (not bumps) being one of the devices.

Different papers range in their opinion of speed humps on arterial roads, from "inappropriate" to "applicable". Just putting speed humps in place without doing the upfront preparation can lead to subsequent conflict and cost impacts. If the speed humps only affected Gold Bar residents, more latitude could be expected in their use. However, with the out of town traffic going to Wallace Falls via First Street, outside legal challenges would be expected. In 2004, Snohomish County had to replace 28 school speed limit signs when challenged over the wording. So, crossing the t's and dotting the i's is important. Inadequately signed speed humps have been a cause of claims.

A staff or consultant study needs to be made (or an existing city's rule set used) to determine a sequence of actions to insure that Gold Bar only does the speed humps once. A likely sequence of events is:

- traffic survey for number of vehicles per day
- traffic survey for speed distribution and percentage over 35 mph (limit plus 10 mph)
- improvement/refurbishing of speed limit signs
- neighborhood speed watch with letters to owners of speeding autos
- additional signage
- justification of need for the speed humps, i.e. why are alternate solutions not suitable.

Detailed comments follow.

REASONABLE AND NECESSARY

Control of speeding on First Street in Gold Bar has been attempted by signage and by police presence. Police presence works while the officer(s) are on the scene, but do not work once they leave. This was noted by several residents of First Street. Even the speed monitoring sign did not work. It simply recorded the rates, which were reported to be as much as 60 mph.

Use of speed humps can be considered to be a 24 x 7 speed deterrent. They are necessary in that no other deterrent can be economically maintained over that time span.

That speed humps are reasonable is supported by the experiences of May Creek Tracts, Bellevue, and Kirkland.

Currently, evidence of the speeding problem is largely anecdotal. A survey of speeds over a long time period (month ?) needs to be made in order to determine:

- average daily usage
- time distribution of usage

-speed distribution.

A Neighborhood Speed Watch needs to be made over a long period of time with letters sent to the owners of speeding autos. If no change in the speeding habits of drivers on First Street occurred, then the necessary part of the equation would likely be proven.

EMERGENCY VEHICLES

Lonn Turner and I talked with Eric Andrews, Fire Chief, about speed humps on First Street at WSDOT's RDP (Route Development Plan) U. S. 2 open house in Gold Bar in June (2006). He had no problems with wide speed humps, saying that it would add only a few seconds to any call. This was supported by a paper from the Washington State website which noted a 2 second increase in response time per speed hump. The increase in response time for speed humps was noted as being smaller than the differences in response time between different neighborhoods.

I talked with two EMTs at Station 54 about speed humps. They had no problem with them, noting that there are many speed humps in May Creek Tracts already. They already drive slowly down First Street, due to the multiple side streets.

Kirkland has used speed humps with emergency vehicle wheel paths with good results.

EFFECTIVENESS

Rebecca Rodni of Bellevue stated that their speed humps do reduce high end speeders. The average speed does not drop a lot, but the top speeds do reduce dramatically. She notes that there are yahoos that are not greatly affected by speed bumps and some drivers speed up between them.

All papers on the website noted that speed humps reduce overall automobile speeds.

POTENTIAL LIABILITY

One study noted that out of 1,500 traffic lawsuits over 68 jurisdictions, only six involved traffic calming devices, and only two were successful. The six claims included both construction sites and speed humps and it was not noted if speed humps in a non-construction site were involved.

Use of appropriate signage to warn drivers was considered a must in order to minimize liability claims. There are state standards on this.

MAY CREEK TRACTS

May Creek Tracts has a speed limit of 15 mph and uses multiple speed humps. I drove my Impala over a circuit of about 1.5 miles through there and crossed 10 different speed humps. As I was leaving, I went over the last speed hump at 22 mph, then turned back and crossed it again at 35 mph (don't tell Chief Ruchty). At 22 mph the hump was fairly unobtrusive. At 35 mph, it gave me quite a jolt.

I watched traffic enter for a while. All vehicles slowed down to cross the hump without much ado. They did speed up again, but seemed to maintain a reasonable limit.

BELLEVUE

Bellevue has around 100 speed humps installed. They take several steps before adding any traffic calming device, Phase I (cheap things) followed by Phase II (things that cost money). They describe the use of a Neighborhood Action Team (motorcycle officers) but note that they do this weekly with two full-time officers.

KIRKLAND

Kirkland has an active program of speed humps at locations where they have been deemed suitable. No definition of suitable was obtained.

GRANTS

The "Safe Routes to School Program" is an active grant program. This provides grants to provide children a safe route to school and includes streets within a 2 mile radius of the primary school. Applications are detailed and are due in early October.

BACKUP DATA

All backup data has been given to John Light.

Thanks,
Joe Beavers