

9/1/16

Dear Sandy and SCA board,

I'd like to offer the following observations and suggestions for your consideration:

From reading the minutes and talking to Stony Creek residents, it is apparent that there is general agreement that people are driving on our principal roads faster than many of us can recall, to the point of causing a public safety concern. I'm sure we all have our stories on this topic, but I can say unequivocally that you can risk your life attempting to cross Thimble Islands Rd. in front of our property.

Despite that consensus of opinion, there has been little offered as possible remedies for this situation, other than speed bumps – a technology which would seem to have little chance of approval – and a mention of police planning to monitor sections of Thimble Islands Rd. Whether the latter has happened, I do not know.

Speeding cars are not a problem unique to Stony Creek, of course; some years ago in Branford, a police radar unit was stationed weekly on Harbor Street, the route to Branford Point, to cut down on speeding. This enforcement came about, I was informed, because a police commissioner happened to live on Harbor Street. Even in Stony Creek, years ago, we had a radar cop who stationed himself near the Ramshaw/Greenfeld house on upper Thimble Islands Rd. for a day, to absolutely no effect because drivers could see his roof lights by the time they rounded the corner at Medlyns' house and thus alerted. would slow down.

The beach community of East Lyme, where speeding traffic is a far worse problem than here, this summer began a campaign to remind motorists to drive slowly through their community through the use of signage – lots of signage. As the attached news article describes, about 80 small signs have been placed throughout town that ask motorists to "Slow Down, Enjoy Our Town," and "Check Your Speed in Our Village."

I've seen this approach used in other locations – a Lake Champlain resort in a somewhat isolated location has a sign at its entrance roadway that reads, "You're here. Relax. Slow Down, and Enjoy Your Stay."

We have one such sign in Stony Creek, posted at the entrance to Thimble Islands Road years ago over concerns about this very same problem. I suspect hardly anyone realizes it's even there any longer: despite its size, it's not very eye-catching, and seems to have melded into the landscape, at least in terms of anyone paying it any heed.

I think that original sign needs to be redone, and its message needs to be repeated – as they have done in East Lyme and even as do our cross walk signs, which have proven quite effective.

I recommend that we install small but highly visible signs that read "Slow Please" on upper Thimble Islands Road, on School Street, and on lower Thimble Islands Road, past Seaside Hall. It might also be useful to have signs on the stretch of road passing the puppet house.

Specifically, I suggest that we install at minimum two signs, on each side of the road, on upper Thimble Islands Road, between the Four Corners and the rail bridge. Existing posts can be used, such as those holding speed limit signs, or new ones can be installed at minimal expense. I would recommend two signs on each side of School Street, and also two signs along the stretch from Seaside Hall to Long Point Road, realizing that these would be obscured by parked cars on weekends unless elevated.

Some years ago, to deter cars from flying down to the dock, Gerard Monast and his crew put out a small sawhorse, with "Go Slow" painted on it, and it seemed to have a benefit. I think the same would happen with the installation of the additional signage.

On my second matter, and still on the topic of signage, it's been my observation over the years that sign makers are universally obsessed with apostrophes, to the extent that no word that ends in the letter S can be presented on a sign without this punctuation. Perhaps some of you have noticed that our new Thimble Islands Road signs have fallen victim to this penchant, and that they are as a consequence misspelled and ungrammatical, since Islands is neither a verb nor, in this case, a possessive noun.

I'm enclosing a photograph of the poor sign, and requesting that the board ask public works to correct it, either by replacing the sign – as should occur – or at minimum sending someone over with a can of green paint to cover up the apostrophe.


Thanks for listening and Regards,  
Stan Fisher



# East Lyme campaign aims to stop speeding on local roads

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East Lyme — A campaign is underway to encourage drivers to slow down on local roads, from pathways in small beach communities to long, rural roads in the north end of town.

Small signs placed on roads in East Lyme say "Slow Down, Enjoy Our Town," or "Check Your Speed in Our Village."

First Selectman Mark Nickerson said he gets calls every week from people in the community who ask for the town to do something about speeding on local roads.

The new campaign is intended to raise awareness about the importance of driving slowly and to encourage town residents to take personal responsibility and slow down the prevailing speed.

"People need to take responsibility for their actions and realize when buzzing through town that it's someone else's neighborhood," said Nickerson. He pointed out that people are outside walking their dogs or jogging, while kids are riding bikes in the driveway or playing ball in the front yard.

Thus far, there are about 60 signs posted around town, with another 20 that are scheduled to be placed. The signs were funded through a donation, as well as some funds from the first selectman's office.

He is also asking the police department to step up enforcement.

During the summer, many people are visiting the boardwalk, beaches and Main Street in downtown Niantic. He said drivers should be aware of the increased foot traffic.

While Nickerson said he receives complaints about speeding throughout the year, the summertime brings a larger volume of people driving on the roads. There are also more visitors who are potentially unfamiliar with local roads.

In addition, when Interstate 95 is backed up or closed down, drivers tend to cut through the town. They may also try to speed when they find an open road, he said.

Nickerson previously wrote a blog about the speeding issue (<http://eltownhall.com/first-selectmans-blog/a-serious-issue/>), posted on the town's website, which encourages drivers to slow down.

"If we all watch our speed and be mindful of our individual responsibility of slowing down, others on the road will have no choice but to slow down too," he wrote in the blog. "This will help our police force identify those on our roads who are excessively speeding. But more importantly, it will keep us all safe."

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