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Joel Faxon
Andrew Sachs
Scott Cicciari
Neil Chaudhary
Joan Plouffe

TOWN OF NEWTOWN

BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS

**The Board of Police Commissioners
Regular Meeting, Tuesday, June 1, 2021
191 South Main Street, Newtown
Conference Room**

MINUTES ARE NOT FINALIZED UNTIL APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS

Present: Joel Faxon, Scott Cicciari, Neil Chaudhary, Joan Plouffe
Absent: Andy Sachs

Also Present: Capt. Vanghele, four members of the public, one by phone.

Chairman Faxon called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Public Participation: none.

Police Union Participation: none.

Consideration and action on the minutes: Commissioner Plouffe moved to accept the minutes of the regular meeting of May 4, 2021. Commissioner Chaudhary seconded. All in favor.

Chief's Report: Chief Viadero thanked the commission members that attended the ceremony for Steve Ketchum. It was a fitting tribute and his family was very appreciative. Staff update: Pete Wlasuk will graduate the academy in July, Hugo Rojas is in the field, doing FTO training, working on hours toward POST certification. Frank Piazza is doing well; anticipated graduation is late September. Gladys Pisani and Bob Haas are retiring in June. Jason Frank will retire in August. Anticipating the vacancies there will be interviews in the near future; there are upcoming academy classes. There will be two vacancies in the Detective Bureau; testing will be late June, early July. There was a notable arrest, by Officers Hayes and McCarthy involving a domestic assault/car accident. Officer Chapman made a complicated arrest related to the zoom bombing of a high school class. A 15 year old Newtown juvenile was charged with three counts of ridicule on the count of race, three counts of computer crime in the fifth degree and disorderly conduct. Officer James made arrest on a warrant, motor vehicle charges, a good amount of fentanyl was recovered. The Police Cadet Program has begun again. Chief Viadero invited the commission to stop in on Wednesday nights. The program is being led by Officer Hayes; Officers John & Stephanie McDermott and Officer Hull are assisting. St. Rose held an appreciation day for Public Safety, Ambulance, Fire and Medical professionals. Chief Viadero was invited to speak to the Newtown Men's Club about the Police Accountability bill. Range was held the last two weeks of May to requalify officers. Use of force and de-escalation goes along with firearms training. The current body cameras have reached the four year life expectancy; a three year contract with Axon body cameras is being finalized. The cameras will be paid for with asset forfeiture funds but will need to be budgeted for in the future. The contract includes a warrantee. Dr. McCabe, Program Coordinator for an audit of NYPD body worn camera videos offered the same program to Newtown. Chief Viadero sees this as a good opportunity to have an external review. Videos involving complaints and arrests are saved. Chief Viadero hopes there will be funding in the future due to

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Town Clerk of Newtown 11:57am

Debbie Annalia Halstead

the state mandate. There is a new state hire of a crisis intervention clinician to help with follow up on mental health issues in town. There has been an increase in traffic due to work on I-84 resurfacing.

Old Business:

a. Flagpole Accident Data: Capt. Vanghele presented the attached Flagpole Intersection Vehicle Accident Study from 2017-2021 breaking down the number of accidents as well as the types of accidents that occur at the flagpole, which is one of the top three areas in Town for accidents. Capt. Vanghele reviewed information from past studies. Speed is not generally a factor in any of the accidents. The most frequent accidents occur at the stop sign at the top of Church Hill Road; the least frequent accidents are on West Street. This study shows there is 1.6 accident per 281,250 motor vehicles; passing on the right is a problem. Chairman Faxon said the state is not agreeable to a stop light due to the back up of traffic. A traffic circle would require use of eminent domain. The area deserves attention however the resolution may be difficult. Commissioner Ciccari thanked Capt. Vanghele for the detailed report voicing surprise that the most frequent accidents are not those with vehicles making a turn. Greg Pategas of 126 Toddy Hill Road was hit by a pick up truck at the flagpole going to a boy scout meeting with his sons. Traffic is increasing, he believes speed is becoming more of a factor and the flagpole is a historic nuisance. He wants to understand what can be done, incrementally, but noted there will traffic back up; the traffic is flowing now because people are passing illegally on the right. Going to another scout meeting recently an 18 wheeler passed on the right. There is inadequate land in the area which limits viable options. Chief Viadero said that raised roadways will get the attention of drivers. Sherry Bermingham of 42 Main Street said the five speed bumps on Queen Street diverts more traffic to Main Street and suggested removing some of them. The Commission further discussed options, agreeing signage and painted lines on the road will not work. Relative to raised structures CDOT will have to approve the design, engineering, change of surface and likely the surface material. Chief Viadero said that he went to Hartford, in 2016, with Dan Rosenthal and Fred Hurley, Director of Public Works. The state needs interest from the Town; funding was pushed to WestCOG, the planning agency for this area. It has been discussed, with no plan. Greg Pategas said that drivers on Toddy Hill Road have been respecting the recently etched center line and suggested a rumble strip at the Flagpole. Chief Viadero will follow up with the state.

b. Summer Calendar: Commissioner Ciccari moved to cancel the July 2021 meeting. Commissioner Chaudhary seconded. All in favor.

Correspondence: none.

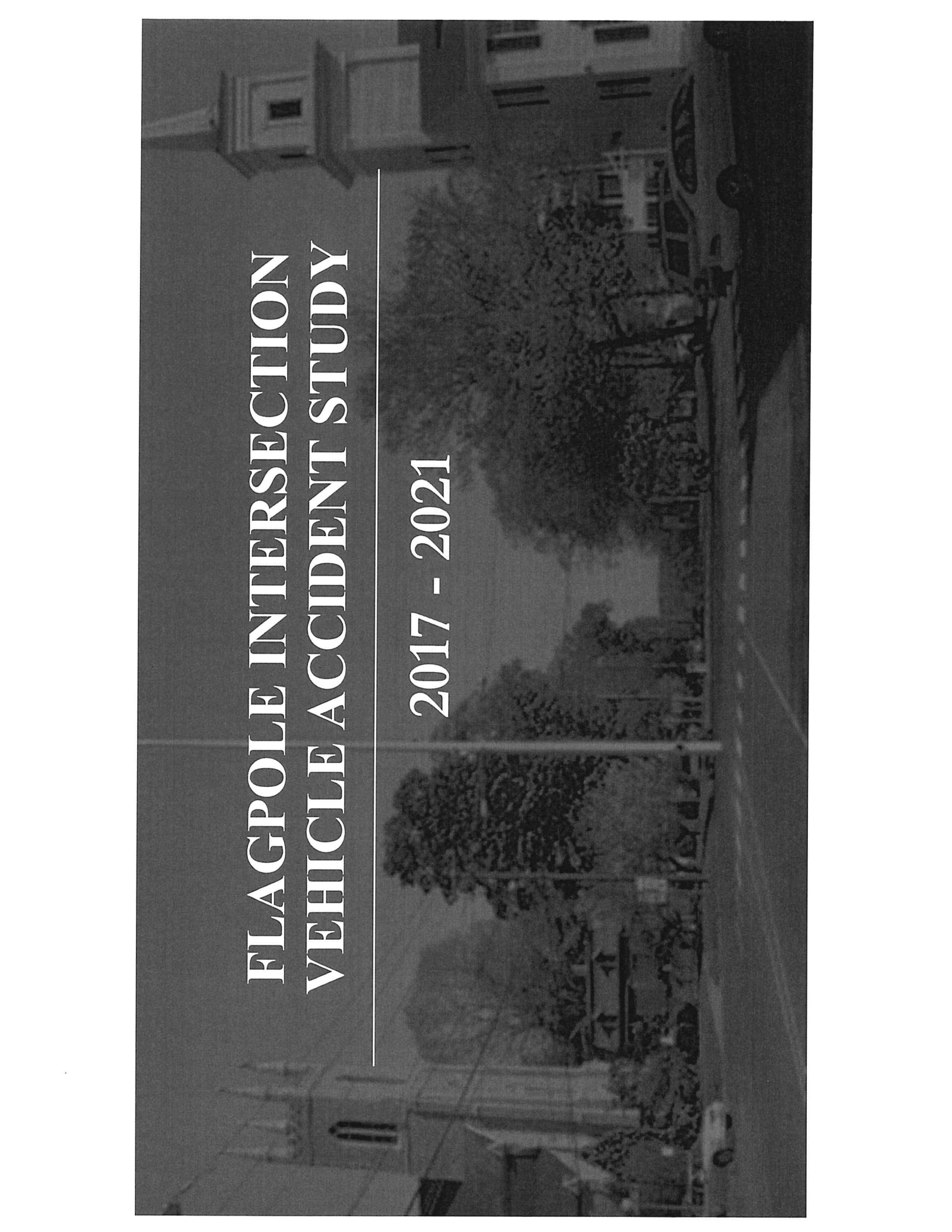
Commissioner Participation: none.

Public Participation: none.

Adjournment: Having no further business to report Commissioner Plouffe moved to adjourn the regular meeting of the Board of Police Commissioners at 7:39 p.m. Commissioner Chaudhary seconded. All in favor.

Att: Flagpole Intersection Vehicle Accident Study 2017-2021

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Marcinek, Clerk



FLAGPOLE INTERSECTION VEHICLE ACCIDENT STUDY

2017 - 2021

STUDY METHODOLOGY

- Search NexGen RMS using the following criteria:
 - Year: 2017 – 2021 searched separately
 - Location: Main, Main/Church Hill, Church Hill, Church Hill/Main, West, Flagpole
 - Call Type: MVA, MVA inj, MVA evading, MVA school bus, MVA pedestrian
 - Include Main Street addresses from # 25 (library) to #45 (Edmond Town Hall)

STUDY METHODOLOGY

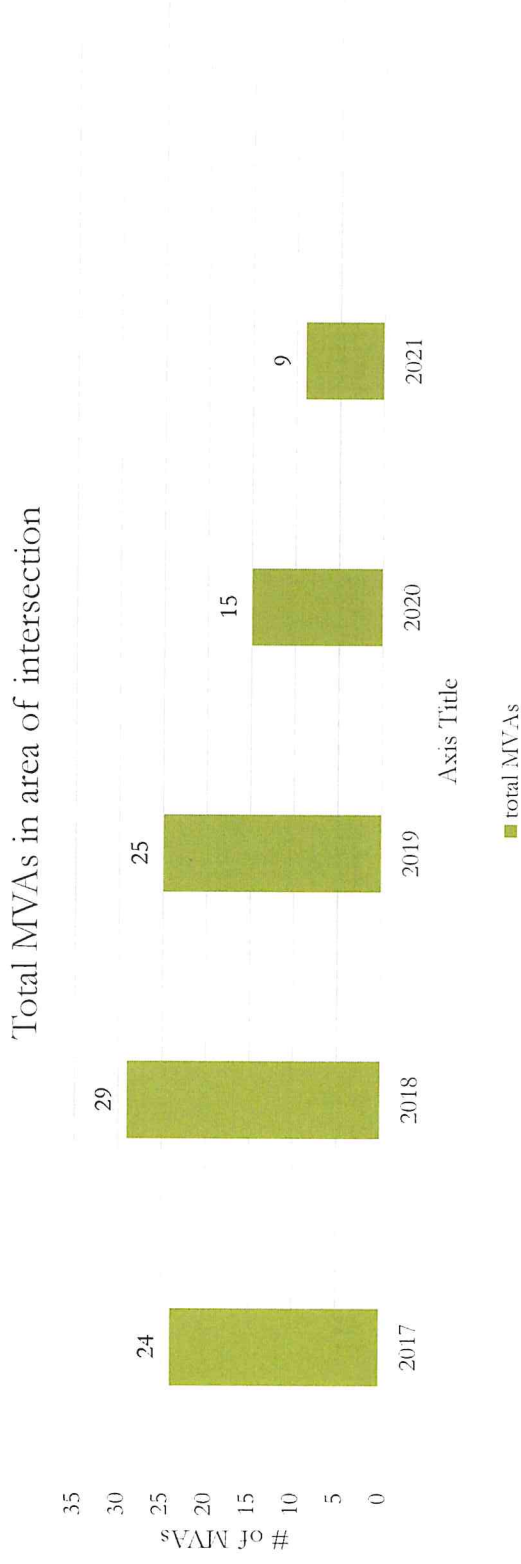
- Each accident report was opened and briefly scanned to ensure it met the criteria parameters
- Each accident report was downloaded into separate folder by year
- A more thorough review of each accident report was completed which:
 - Identified accidents that were in the general area of the flagpole intersection but were not considered germane. These were accidents where the intersection could not be considered a causal factor and were removed from consideration;
 - Placed the remaining accidents into one of nine categorical types, determined by how the accident occurred. Data compiled on severity of accident measured by any injuries sustained.
 - Collected data on injuries

STUDY METHODOLOGY

- Accident categories were reviewed to determine frequency and possible remediation ideas. (Cause and Effect)
- Information on past studies and vehicle counts reviewed.
- Remediation ideas proposed.

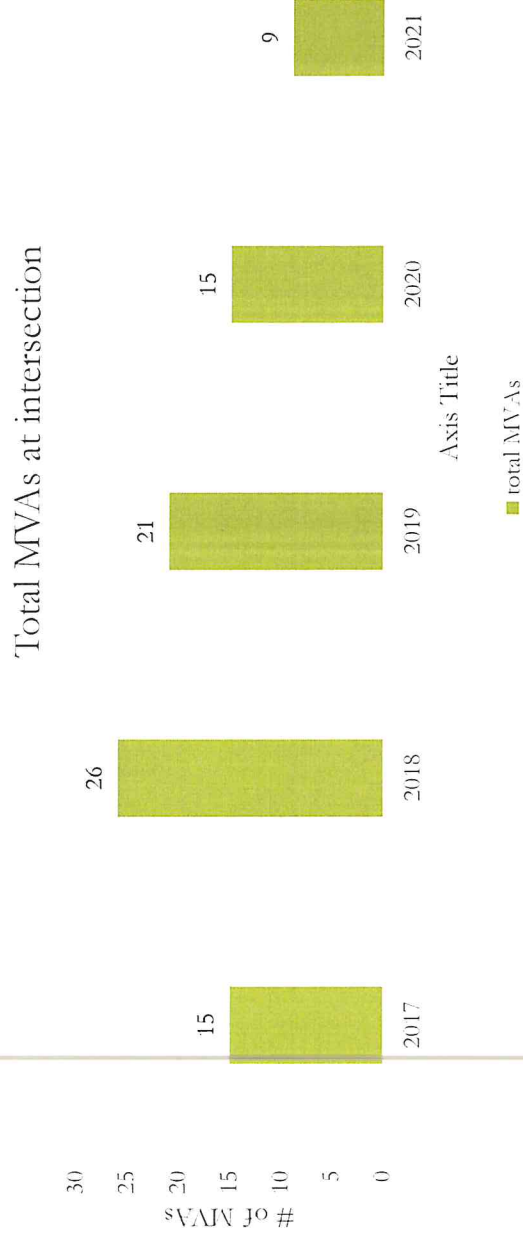
Total MVAs in area = 102

[16 MVAs were considered not related to intersection]

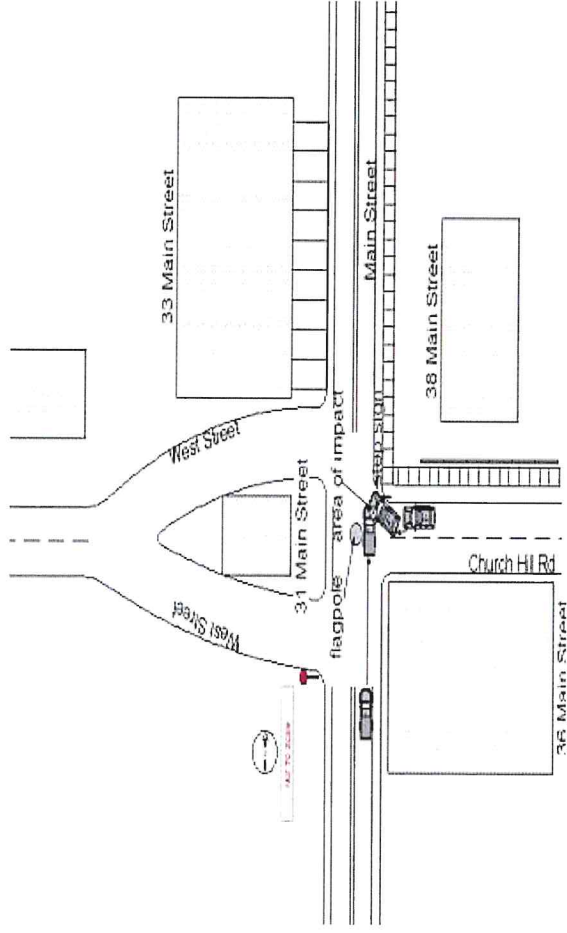


Total MVAs at Intersection = 86

[Injuries = 8 possible injuries & 5 suspected minor injuries]

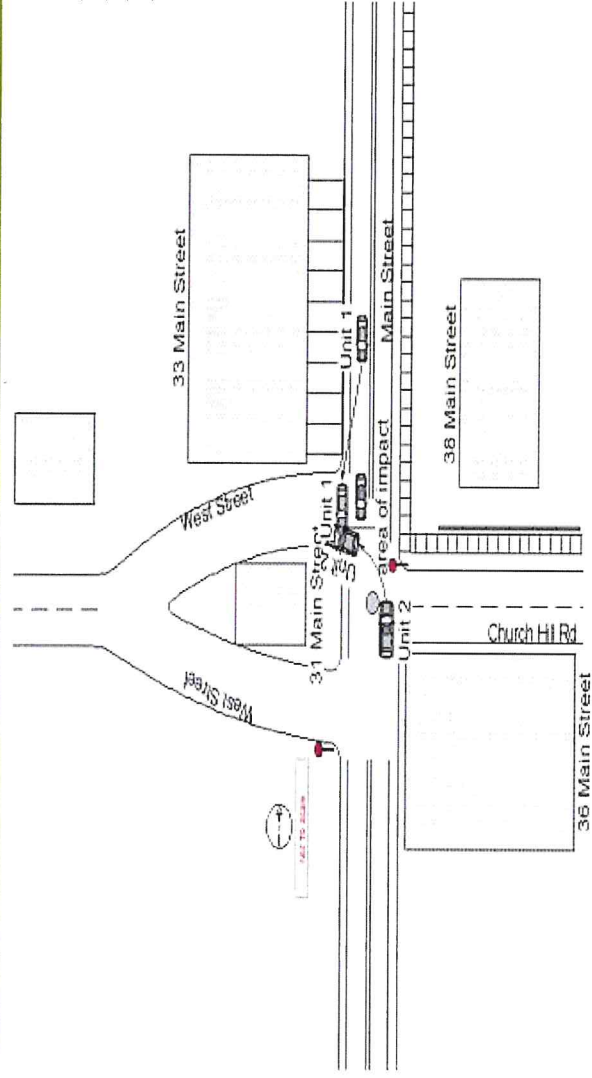


MVA Type 1: Failure to obey stop sign at Church Hill rd.



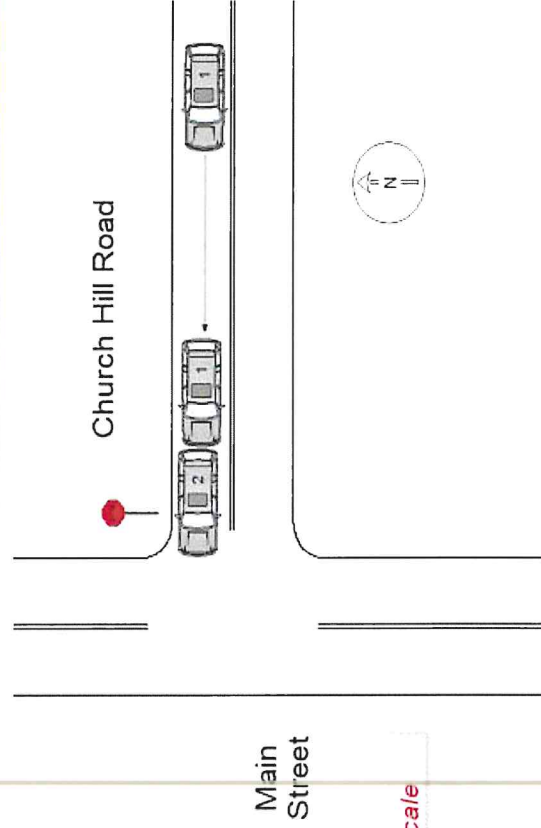
Number of MVAs of this type: 23
Percentage of total: 27%

MVA Type 3: Passing on right, southbound



Number of MVAs of this type: 16
Percentage of total: 19%

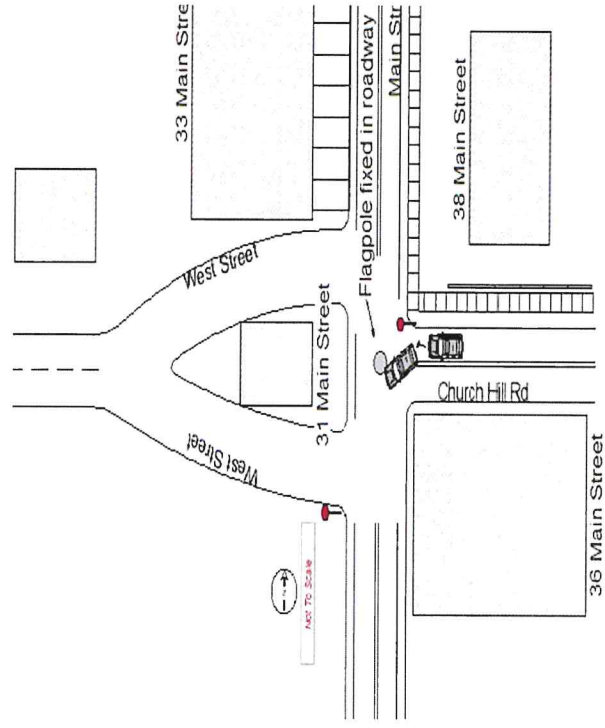
MVA Type 4: Rear-end at Church Hill Rd. stop sign



Number of MVAs of this type: 10
Percentage of total: 12%

Not To Scale

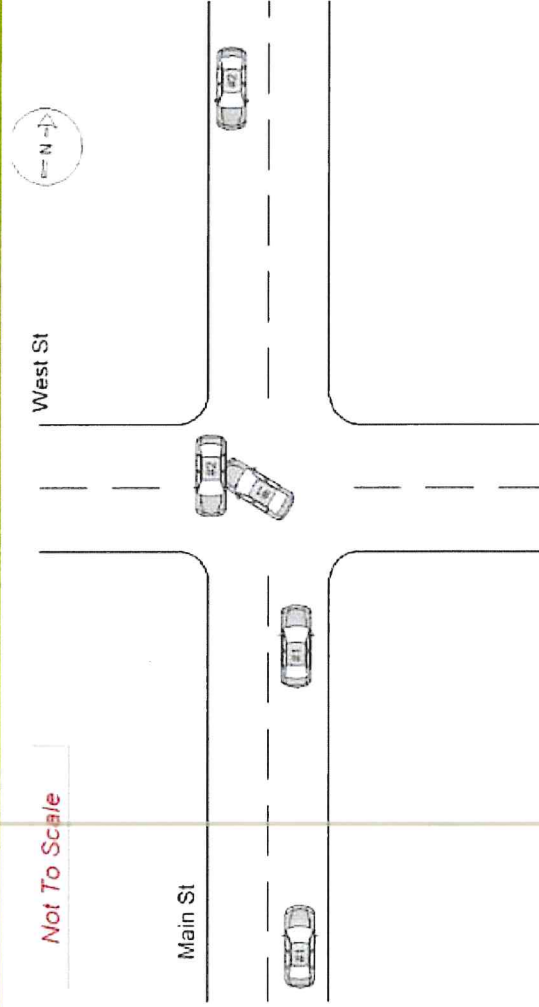
MVA Type 5: Driving into the flagpole



Number of MVAs of this type: 10
Percentage of total: 12%

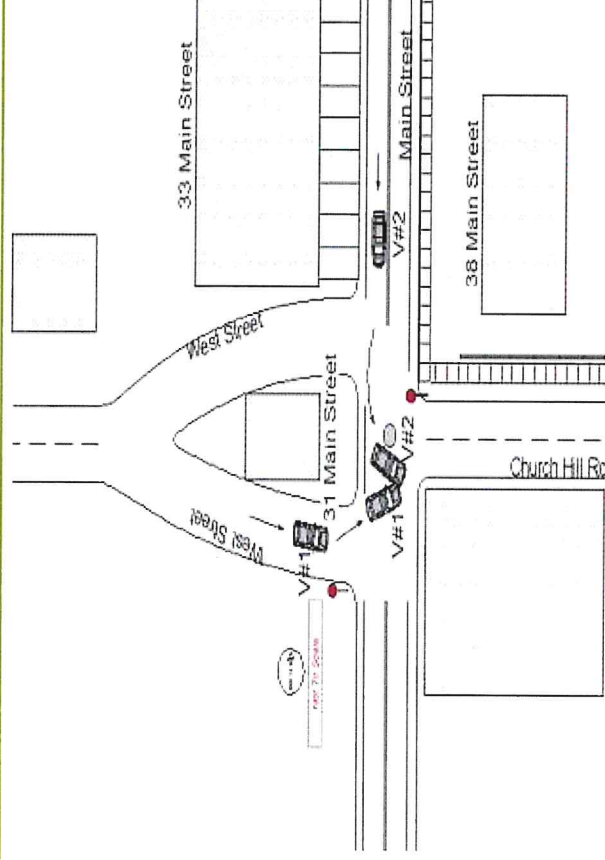
MVA Type 6: Turning

Not To Scale



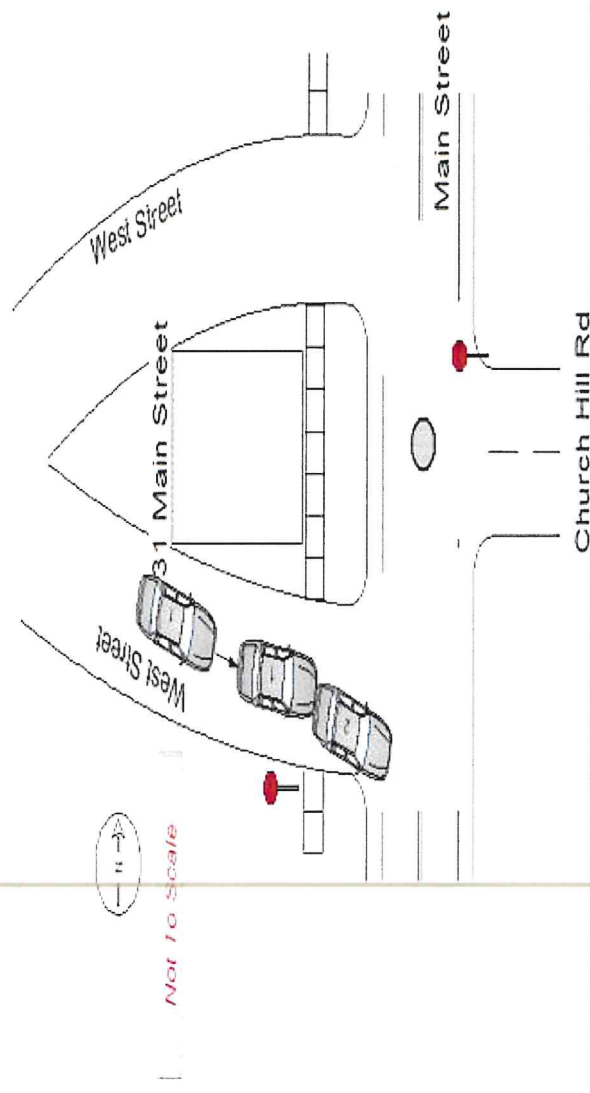
Number of MVAs of this type: 3
Percentage of total: 3.5%

MVA Type 7: Failure to obey stop sign at West St.



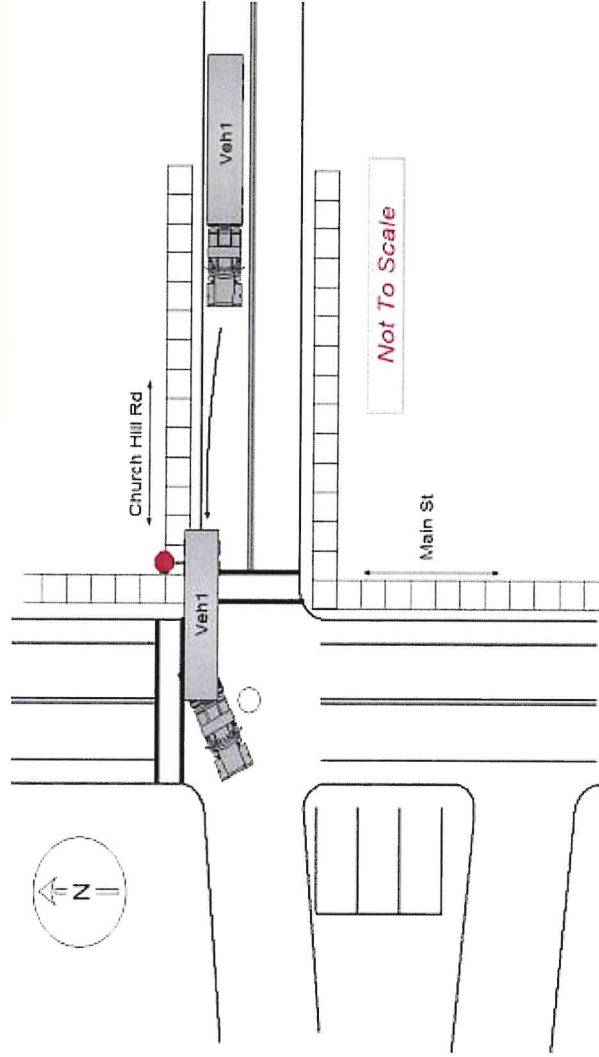
Number of MVAs of this type: 2
Percentage of total: 2%

MVA Type 8: Rear-end at West Street stop sign



Number of MVAs of this type: 2
Percentage of total: 2%

MVA Type 9: Tractor Trailer attempting turn



Number of MVAs of this type: 1
Percentage of total: 1%

Accident Types Chart

Entering Main Street from Church Hill rd. stop sign	23
Rear-ending another vehicle on Main Street	19
Passing vehicles on the right while traveling southbound on Main Street	16
Rear-ending another vehicle while at the Church Hill rd. Stop sign	10
Driving into the flagpole	10
Turning	3
Entering Main street from West Street	2
Rear-ending another vehicle while at the West St. stop sign	2
Tractor trailer attempting to go around the flagpole	1

Dec 2015 Intersection Improvement Study

Frederick P. Clark Associates – Michael Galante

“The findings of this analysis indicate that to protect motorists from the Flag Pole and to address traffic congestion and overall safety a raised center median is recommended on the southbound approach on Main Street and the shifting of the Church Hill Road approach to the south so that the alignment for left turn movements from Church Hill Road to southbound Main Street will no longer need to turn around the police in a clockwise format. Further, the closure of the northerly leg of West Street will further mitigate turning movement conflicts and overall safety concerns.”

Dec 2015 Intersection Improvement Study

Frederick P. Clark Associates – Michael Galante

“The results of the analysis indicate that with these geometric modifications, with or without traffic signal control, this intersection will operate at an improved level of safety and minimize congestion. The intersection meets the criteria followed by the CT DOT for installation of a traffic signal. Further, if it was determined that the signal installation is not appropriate for a variety of reasons, these recommended geometric modifications are still appropriate. The modifications will impact on-street parking located along the westerly side of Main Street in the immediate vicinity of the Church Hill Road intersection”

MVA REDUCTION IDEAS

- DECREASE THE AMOUNT OF TRAFFIC FLOW? NO
- DECREASE THE AMOUNT OF SIDE STREET PARKING? NO
- DECREASE THE AMOUNT OF PRIVATE AND BUSINESS DRIVEWAYS ENTERING MAIN STREET? NO
- REMOVE FLAGPOLE? NO
- SHIFT CHURCH HILL ROAD SOUTH OF FLAGPOLE? NO
- CHANGING TRAFFIC FLOW OR CLOSING LANE ON WEST ST.? NO

MVA REDUCTION IDEAS

- THE CASE FOR DOING NOTHING:
 - Average accidents per month at intersection: 1.6 accidents per month
 - Average monthly count of vehicles through intersection: 450,000 vehicles
 - ONE ACCIDENT FOR EVERY 281,250 VEHICLES AT INTERSECTION
 - Speed is not a major factor in the intersection accidents (i.e. – no speed bumps)
 - Only a handful of possible minor injuries. NO SERIOUS INJURIES. No pedestrian accidents
 - Majority of MVAs indicate driver error, not intersection design
 - Doing nothing costs nothing and therefore will not affect budget
 - No current push from the public to make changes to this intersection

BEST ALTERNATIVE NEXT TO DOING NOTHING

- Traffic Lights to control N/S Main Street traffic. Timing to favor N/S traffic.
- Traffic Light to control Church Hill Rd.
- Barrier around flagpole for better visual
- Enhanced marking if needed on road way
- Identifiable dual lane near flagpole allowing southbound traffic to safely pass vehicles turning left onto Church Hill Rd.
- More study would need to be done to assess costs, traffic back ups, political issues, etc.
- Left to their own devices, this intersection will continue to be an “everyman for themselves” intersection.

Would a Traffic Light Mitigate These MVAs?

*Asterisk denotes # of accidents that may not occur due to having traffic lights at intersection

Entering Main Street from Church Hill rd. stop sign	23	*15
Rear-ending another vehicle on Main Street	19	*10
Passing vehicles on the right while traveling southbound on Main Street	16	*12
Rear-ending another vehicle while at the Church Hill rd. Stop sign	10	*5
Driving into the flagpole	10	*5
Turning	3	-
Entering Main street from West Street	2	-
Rear-ending another vehicle while at the West St. stop sign	2	-
Tractor trailer attempting to go around the flagpole	1	-

Would a Traffic Light Mitigate These MVAs?

- Conservatively, a traffic light may reduce accidents at the intersection by 47 accidents which is a 55% reduction.
- OUTSTANDING QUESTIONS:
 - The reduction may not be as much as suggested
 - The New traffic lights may in and of themselves cause accidents. Especially at first, when motorists are not used to them. Accidents may also be caused by those traveling fast or reckless in order to make the light.
 - Traffic back ups and increased noise is a factor that must be weighed.

