



Board of County Commissioners Agenda Request

3B
Agenda Item #

Requested Meeting Date: July 26, 2016

Title of Item: Highway 18 Safety Concerns

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> REGULAR AGENDA <input type="checkbox"/> CONSENT AGENDA <input type="checkbox"/> INFORMATION ONLY	Action Requested: <input type="checkbox"/> Approve/Deny Motion <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adopt Resolution (attach draft) <small><i>*provide copy of hearing notice that was published</i></small>	<input type="checkbox"/> Direction Requested <input type="checkbox"/> Discussion Item <input type="checkbox"/> Hold Public Hearing*
Submitted by: Nathan Burkett		Department: Administration
Presenter (Name and Title): Nathan Burkett, County Administrator		Estimated Time Needed:
Summary of Issue: Please see attachments.		
Alternatives, Options, Effects on Others/Comments:		
Recommended Action/Motion: Adopt resolution.		
Financial Impact: <i>Is there a cost associated with this request?</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <i>What is the total cost, with tax and shipping? \$</i> <i>Is this budgeted?</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <i>Please Explain:</i>		

July 8, 2016

Steve Kulifaj
38373 State Hwy 18
Aitkin, MN 56431
218-670-7027

To Whom It May Concern:

In 2015, I sent in a letter to the DOT regarding the dangerous road conditions along Highway 18 in Aitkin County on the north side of Lake Mille Lacs. Owning a resort and home along Hwy 18, I had personally witnessed numerous "close calls" as well as accidents. With a speed limit of 55 mph, no shoulder on either side of the road, dense overhanging trees, and thousands of vacationing families in the area, I stated that it is not "if" someone was going to be killed but "when" someone would be killed; in June, our fears came true when a 10 year old girl was struck and killed.

I am writing this letter as a final effort for someone to hear our pleas. There have been 7 significant accidents on HWY 18 since January 2016. Being a resort area, with 4 resorts, 2 restaurants and a bar within a 5 miles stretch of HWY 18, drivers do not expect to come around a corner and see people crossing the road. The Red Door Resort & Motel at 38421 State Hwy 18, has 232 fish house sites on individual lots across the north side of Hwy 18. At full capacity, our fish house parks can house over 1000 people. On any given weekend, we will have hundreds of people crossing back and forth across the highway to go to the lake, the restaurant or the park. I am confident that this is busier than any main street in any of the surrounding cities. Add Barnacles, Barneveld's Resort, and Doc's Harbor to the mix, and the population in this small area is more than the population of the city of Aitkin.

Every weekend, there are close calls on Highway 18. Vehicles pulling boats make wide turns into parking lots because there is no shoulder on the road. Kids with towels, bare feet and swimsuits walk back and forth the highway and speeding vehicles and semi-trucks often slam on their brakes to avoid pedestrians. All along Hwy 18, there are skid marks and tire tracks through the ditches from close calls.

It is our hope that this latest fatality will not be regarded as insignificant and that MnDOT will take the issue seriously. Hwy 169 has a 55MPH speed limit with wide paved shoulders and no pedestrians crossing; Hwy 18 is 55MPH with NO shoulders, heavy tree coverage, blind corners, in one of Minnesota's most popular tourist and resort areas with hundreds of pedestrians crossing each day. It is our belief that a speed limit of 40 MPH for approximately 6 miles around the resorts, along with several warning signs about pedestrian traffic and vehicles turning should be implemented immediately. Lives are at stake here and we must act soon. In addition, wide shoulders along Hwy 18 should be added and vegetation should be cut back. This will reduce the number of accidents and also reduce the auto/deer collisions. Please implement these changes as soon as possible because they will reduce accidents and save lives.

We appreciate your consideration and hope that you will take this serious safety issue seriously and act quickly. We ask that you strongly consider our request as we believe it is necessary to reduce further injuries and even deaths along Hwy 18.

Thank you for your consideration.

Steve Kulifaj



Aitkin County



TZD Coalition

Our mission is to eliminate traffic fatalities and serious injuries on Aitkin County roadways through Education, Enforcement, Engineering and EMS.

The Aitkin County Towards Zero Death (TZD) Coalition unanimously supports the citizens movement to take all necessary steps to reduce the speed limit on portions of Minnesota State Highway 18 (between State Highway 169 and State Highway 47).

In light of the number of accidents, including a recent pedestrian fatality, the Aitkin County TZD Coalition encourages the Aitkin County Board to adopt a formal resolution supporting a speed reduction and, furthermore, submit said resolution to the appropriate State authorities in a sincere effort to achieve our Toward Zero Death endeavors.

Paul W. Bruggman

Coordinator for Aitkin County TZD

Paul W. Bruggman 7-19-2016

Working to create a culture in which traffic fatalities and serious injuries are no longer acceptable through the integrated application of education, engineering, enforcement, and emergency medical and trauma services.

Our mission is to move Aitkin County Toward Zero Deaths on our roads and to assist in carrying out the mission of the Minnesota TZD Initiative.

169.14 SPEED LIMITS, ZONES; RADAR.

Subdivision 1. **Duty to drive with due care.** No person shall drive a vehicle on a highway at a speed greater than is reasonable and prudent under the conditions. Every driver is responsible for becoming and remaining aware of the actual and potential hazards then existing on the highway and must use due care in operating a vehicle. In every event speed shall be so restricted as may be necessary to avoid colliding with any person, vehicle or other conveyance on or entering the highway in compliance with legal requirements and the duty of all persons to use due care.

Subd. 1a. **License revocation for extreme speed.** The driver's license of a person who violates any speed limit established in this section, by driving in excess of 100 miles per hour, is revoked for six months under section 171.17, or for a longer minimum period of time applicable under section 169A.53, 169A.54, or 171.174.

Subd. 2. **Speed limits.** (a) Where no special hazard exists the following speeds shall be lawful, but any speeds in excess of such limits shall be prima facie evidence that the speed is not reasonable or prudent and that it is unlawful; except that the speed limit within any municipality shall be a maximum limit and any speed in excess thereof shall be unlawful:

(1) 30 miles per hour in an urban district;

(2) 65 miles per hour on noninterstate expressways, as defined in section 160.02, subdivision 18b, and noninterstate freeways, as defined in section 160.02, subdivision 19;

(3) 55 miles per hour in locations other than those specified in this section;

(4) 70 miles per hour on interstate highways outside the limits of any urbanized area with a population of greater than 50,000 as defined by order of the commissioner of transportation;

(5) 65 miles per hour on interstate highways inside the limits of any urbanized area with a population of greater than 50,000 as defined by order of the commissioner of transportation;

(6) ten miles per hour in alleys;

(7) 25 miles per hour in residential roadways if adopted by the road authority having jurisdiction over the residential roadway; and

(8) 35 miles per hour in a rural residential district if adopted by the road authority having jurisdiction over the rural residential district.

(b) A speed limit adopted under paragraph (a), clause (7), is not effective unless the road authority has erected signs designating the speed limit and indicating the beginning and end of the residential roadway on which the speed limit applies.

(c) A speed limit adopted under paragraph (a), clause (8), is not effective unless the road authority has erected signs designating the speed limit and indicating the beginning and end of the rural residential district for the roadway on which the speed limit applies.

(d) Notwithstanding section 609.0331 or 609.101 or other law to the contrary, a person who violates a speed limit established in this subdivision, or a speed limit designated on an appropriate sign under subdivision 4, 5, 5b, 5c, or 5e, by driving 20 miles per hour or more in excess of the applicable speed limit, is assessed an additional surcharge equal to the amount of the fine imposed for the speed violation, but not less than \$25.

Subd. 2a. **Increased speed limit when passing.** Notwithstanding subdivision 2, the speed limit is increased by ten miles per hour over the posted speed limit when the driver:

- (1) is on a two-lane highway having one lane for each direction of travel;
- (2) is on a highway with a posted speed limit that is equal to or higher than 55 miles per hour;
- (3) is overtaking and passing another vehicle proceeding in the same direction of travel; and
- (4) meets the requirements in section 169.18.

Subd. 3. **Reduced speed required.** (a) The driver of any vehicle shall, consistent with the requirements, drive at an appropriate reduced speed when approaching or passing an authorized emergency vehicle stopped with emergency lights flashing on any street or highway, when approaching and crossing an intersection or railway grade crossing, when approaching and going around a curve, when approaching a hill crest, when traveling upon any narrow or winding roadway, and when special hazards exist with respect to pedestrians or other traffic or by reason of weather or highway conditions.

(b) A person who fails to reduce speed appropriately when approaching or passing an authorized emergency vehicle stopped with emergency lights flashing on a street or highway shall be assessed an additional surcharge equal to the amount of the fine imposed for the speed violation, but not less than \$25.

Subd. 4. **Establishment of zones by commissioner.** On determining upon the basis of an engineering and traffic investigation that any speed set forth in this section is greater or less than is reasonable or safe under the conditions found to exist on any trunk highway or upon any part thereof, the commissioner may erect appropriate signs designating a reasonable and safe speed limit thereat, which speed limit shall be effective when such signs are erected. Any speeds in excess of such limits shall be prima facie evidence that the speed is not reasonable or prudent and that it is unlawful; except that any speed limit within any municipality shall be a maximum limit and any speed in excess thereof shall be unlawful. On determining upon that basis that a part of the trunk highway system outside a municipality should be a zone of maximum speed limit, the commissioner may establish that part as such a zone by erecting appropriate signs showing the beginning and end of the zone, designating a reasonable and safe speed therefor, which may be different than the speed set forth in this section, and that it is a zone of maximum speed limit. The speed so designated by the commissioner within any such zone shall be a maximum speed limit, and speed in excess of such limit shall be unlawful. The commissioner may in the same manner from time to time alter the boundary of such a zone and the speed limit therein or eliminate such zone.

Subd. 4a. [Repealed, 1997 c 143 s 20]

Subd. 5. **Zoning within local area.** When local authorities believe that the existing speed limit upon any street or highway, or part thereof, within their respective jurisdictions and not a part of the trunk highway system is greater or less than is reasonable or safe under existing conditions, they may request the commissioner to authorize, upon the basis of an engineering and traffic investigation, the erection of appropriate signs designating what speed is reasonable and safe, and the commissioner may authorize the erection of appropriate signs designating a reasonable and safe speed limit thereat, which speed limit shall be effective when such signs are erected. Any speeds in excess of these speed limits shall be prima facie evidence that the speed is not reasonable or prudent and that it is unlawful; except that any speed limit within any municipality shall be a maximum limit and any speed in excess thereof shall be unlawful. Alteration of speed limits on streets and highways shall be made only upon authority of the commissioner except as provided in subdivision 5a.

By Commissioner: xx

20160726-0xx

Highway 18 Safety Concerns

WHEREAS, the citizens of Aitkin County are concerned about the dangers on Highway 18 on the north side of Lake Mille Lacs, and

WHEREAS, there was one fatality and several significant accidents on Highway 18 since January 2016, and

WHEREAS, there are four resorts, two restaurants, and a bar within a five mile stretch of Highway 18 with fish house parks that can easily house over 1,000 people, and

WHEREAS, on any given weekend there are hundreds of people crossing back and forth along the highway to go to the lake, the restaurant, or the park, and

WHEREAS, every weekend there are close calls on Highway 18:

- Vehicles pulling boats make wide turns into parking lots because there is no shoulder on the road
- Kids with towels, bare feet and swimsuits walk back and forth
- Speeding vehicles and semi-trucks often slam their brakes to avoid pedestrians
- All along Highway 18 there are skid marks and tire tracks through the ditches from close calls, and

WHEREAS, Highway 18 has a 55 mph speed limit with NO shoulders, heavy tree coverage, and blind corners in a popular tourist and resort area, and

WHEREAS, Aitkin County Towards Zero Death (TZD) Coalition unanimously supports the citizens' movement to take all necessary steps to reduce the speed limit on portions of Minnesota State Highway 18 (between State Highway 169 and State Highway 47).

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Aitkin County Board of Commissioners supports the citizens' movement and the TZD Coalition in reducing the speed limit, adding signage, and any other measures necessary to make Highway 18 safe.

Commissioner xx moved the adoption of the resolution and it was declared adopted upon the following vote

FIVE MEMBERS PRESENT

All Members Voting Yes

STATE OF MINNESOTA}
COUNTY OF AITKIN}

I, Nathan Burkett, County Administrator, Aitkin County, Minnesota do hereby certify that I have compared the foregoing with the original resolution filed in the Administration Office of Aitkin County in Aitkin, Minnesota as stated in the minutes of the proceedings of said Board on the 26th day of July 2016, and that the same is a true and correct copy of the whole thereof.

Witness my hand and seal this 26th day of July 2016.

Nathan Burkett
County Administrator