

Engine Compression Brakes Discussed Again

By Brittany Trandahl
Reporter

During the Town of Upton's regular monthly meeting on Tuesday, September 12, a follow-up discussion began under Unfinished Business in regards to engine compression brakes being used within city limits. "I like the idea of allowing muffled compression brakes only," stated Mayor Nicholas Trandahl. With the increase in truck traffic, there has been an increase in the use of jake brakes in town and the Council has been faced with the task of how to regulate and enforce the law more diligently.

"I'd say just turn them off, or get a ticket," added Councilman Justin Norman. "It would make more work having to look for the muffled compression system."

The law in question is that of Upton Municipal Ordinance 10.28.070 - Engine Compression Brakes which states "it is unlawful for any person to use engine compression brakes (commonly referred to as Jacobs Engine Brakes or jake brakes while operating any truck or other vehicle within the town."

"I don't have a problem

allowing and enforcing muffled compression brakes," stated Police Chief Susan Bridge.

"There is also the option of using a decibel meter for the brakes being used in town and if they go over a certain decibel, they'll be fined." The Council continued to discuss the possibility of allowing muffled compression brakes in town, adding the fact that some area towns allow for them as well.

Many members of the community were present for this discussion to express their opinions and concerns. Community member Harland Allen said, "There is no excuse to come into this town using compression brakes. It is a safety issue, meaning you're not driving properly if you have to use jake brakes in town and its also an annoyance to the residents."

Other members in the crowd agreed that the use of jake brakes in town is a safety issue, considering the weight of those trucks, if the driver hasn't begun properly slowing down at the entrance of the town, those jake brakes aren't going to stop the vehicle safely. Community

member Delane Haynes commented, "I use my jake brakes at the entrance of town and it slows me down, but my trucks have muffled jake brakes."

Councilman Joe Watt agreed in saying "I don't have a problem if I can't hear it, but when I'm in my backyard or even in my house and I can't even talk to my wife until the truck goes by, that's a problem."

Community member Neil Schiller suggested the town possibly enforce a time ordinance. Stating that many towns in and around our area have certain times in which loud noises are prohibited. "In Gillette you can't use jake brakes at all," added Schiller. "I don't think we should be using them in Upton."

Mayor Trandahl suggested working on updating the ordinance and then bringing it before the Council with three readings during their public meetings.

"I agree with that, we have to gather as much information and data that we can before me moving forward," stated Councilman Rick Rothleutner.