

TOWN OF AMHERST

TRAFFIC-SAFETY BOARD

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AMHERST TRAFFIC SAFETY BOARD

February 2, 2022

The February meeting of the Amherst Traffic Safety Board was called to order at 7:00 p.m. on February 2, 2022, Chairman Eric Fraas presiding. First order of business was approval of the January 5, 2021 meeting minutes, which Chairman Fraas begins by asking if any additions or corrections are needed.

1. Greg Dionne would like changes to page 2, second-to-last paragraph, change the word "Chairmen" to "Chairman". Also in the same paragraph, close to the bottom, change "Gregg" to "Greg".

Chairman Fraas asks if there are any other additions or edits to the minutes. With none being heard, the minutes are approved as corrected (10-0). Members present are Chairman Eric Fraas, Vice Chairman Gregory Dionne, Dan Rider, Ken Smith, Kevin Cantwell, Mark Storch, Maxwell Kahn, Kristin Goss, Jennifer Michniewicz, and Michelle Nagel. Departmental Liaisons included Captain Kevin Brown of the Police Department, Thomas Voigt of the Planning Department, Bill Prenevau of the Building Department, Al Spoth of the Highway Department, and Christopher Schregel, Traffic Safety Coordinator/ Engineering Liaison. Also in attendance was Michael Szukala, Councilmember Liaison. Meeting held via Zoom with guest list on record at the Town's Engineering Department.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Park Club Lane – Traffic Safety Study Presentation. Chris Schregel begins by reporting that about a year ago residents approached the Town with concerns related to the Park Club Lane area. Since then, the Town has collected data and formulated concepts and ideas addressing some of the issues. Supervisor Kulpa has been advised directly by the residents concerning these matters as well. The engineering firm of DiDonato Associates was hired by the Town to complete a traffic study of the roadway and suggest improvements with an eye to slowing vehicle speeds and improving pedestrian safety. Kashyap Revalli (Kash) from DiDonato Associates was on hand to present their findings:

Kashyap Revalli, Engineer from DiDonato Associates. Kash presented a PowerPoint slide show that included:

- Project Location
- Current conditions
- Speeds, crash history and safety issues
- Pedestrian safety deficiencies

Kash mentions specifically that the new medical campus development on Park Club Lane will be cause for concern with expected traffic volume increases and associated speed issues. His firm also evaluated one of the Town of Amherst design concepts, involving installation of a dead end just north of the commercial medical development with installation of a new bypass road along the railroad right-of-way. Their assessment acknowledged the concept's advantage of decreased traffic between the commercial and residential areas, but observed that it doesn't address the speeding issues.

Their study found that considerable cut through traffic was traveling this route due to signal delays at North Forest and Union. Based on these findings, other options have been explored to lower speeds. The concept considered by DiDonato Associates for Park Club Lane was divided into three zones:

- Zone 1: Residential Area: focus on pedestrian safety and slowing speeds
- Zone 2: Commercial Access: focus on medical campus and cut through traffic
- Zone 3: Horizontal Curve: focus on the on the curve at the southeastern location

Kash's presentation included the following talking points and recommendations:

- Most of Park Club Lane is without sidewalks, causing the shoulder to be used as a pedestrian walkway.
- Residents have stated their concerns with the intersection of Park Club Lane and Woodlee Road in its capacity as a school bus pick-up and drop-off site. Kash's presentation suggests a 4-foot wide sidewalk would improve the safety at this location, and the addition of high visibility crosswalks would enhance awareness of the all-way stop.
- The intersection of Park Club Lane and Briar Row was analyzed for operation and safety. This junction can be confusing to drivers as one leg is stopped-controlled but not the others – it has been considered by the Amherst Traffic Safety Board as a candidate for an all-way stop to improve sight lines and regulate traffic flow. Kash's presentation suggests the addition of specific pavement markings, including a marked mini round-about with appropriate advance warning markings.
- Donato's study noted serious non-compliance at the "No Right Turn" sign already in place at the commercial section outlet, intended to discourage the turn north onto Park Club Lane. Drivers making this turn directly increase traffic thru the Park Club neighborhood. Kash's presentation addresses this by advising the addition of pavement markings, left turn only signs, and roadside delineators to further deter drivers from making that right turn.
- The presentation also offered safety improvements through the horizontal curve, including: adding new curve advisory signage and chevrons, rumble strips down the center line, and reflective pavement markers. The addition of a 4-foot wide sidewalk and crosswalk from the commercial properties to the Walker Center would foster connectivity and increase pedestrian safety.

Presentation is on file at the Town's Engineering Department. Chairman Fraas opens the public comment period for this item:

- a) Nathan Hartrich, President of the Morningside Homeowners Association. They have been dealing with all the issues mentioned by DiDonato Associates for many years. He has had numerous close calls at the Woodlee intersection due to stop sign non-compliance. Mr. Hartrich questions if an enhanced crosswalk can be installed when sidewalks are not present, to which Kash replies that sidewalk installation is the best option, but even a walking path (shoulder) would be better than leaving it as is. Mr. Hartrich also favors the Town's bypass concept as it would be beneficial to some residents. His main interest is lowering vehicle speeds and the opportunity for pedestrians to walk in the neighborhood safely.
- b) Hillary Banas, 543 Park Club Lane. She agrees with everything Mr. Hartrich has said and also feels that the dead-end concept with bypass would be the most beneficial to the residents of the neighborhood. She states that the expansion of Roswell Medical Center, along with a new banquet facility, will increase traffic and increase the number of speeders within the Park Club neighborhood. She supports the sidewalk recommendations, and would like to see an all-way stop at Briar Row instead of a mini-roundabout.
- c) Anne Naville, 37 Blossom Heath. Mrs. Naville likes the changes that have been proposed. She and her husband walk in this neighborhood often and would like sidewalks along Park Club Lane, but is worried both about losing trees and snow/ice blockage during the winter. Bill Prenevau of the Building Dept. states that it is the responsibility of the adjacent homeowner to keep sidewalks clear of snow and ice. Bill also reports the bushes that were at Park Club Lane and Briar Row have been removed by the Highway Department, improving visibility and sight distance in that area.

- d) Amanda Start, She states that the intersection of Briar Row and Park Club Lane would benefit from an all-way stop and doesn't think a mini roundabout would be a good option.
- e) Larry Robinson, 109 Meadowbrook Road. He likes the no right turn signage at the commercial properties, and appreciates all the suggested solutions. He states, however, that the initial requests from the residents were regarding the high speeds on Park Club Lane, and he did not hear the speeding issue addressed adequately during the presentation. He is happy that the problems on Park Club Lane are being studied but suggests more work needs to be focused on speed reduction and traffic volume concerns.
- f) Tim Oliver, Snyder Fire Department. He is concerned about the dead-end option as it would add time to any possible fire rescue on the north side of Park Club Lane. He reminds everyone that in any emergency situation seconds are important.
- g) John Naville, 37 Blossom Heath, likes the idea of adding sidewalks and would like other traffic calming measures put in place before attempting to construct a new road.

Chairman Fraas closes the public comment period and opens the discussion up to the Amherst Traffic Safety Board members. Greg Dionne agrees with Larry Robinson's comments, affirming that traffic volume and speeds seem to be the major problems. He suggests dead-ending Park Club Lane and not building a bypass road would be the most financially responsible option, adding that emergency access would need to be a part of the project. He feels this would eliminate opportunities for vehicles to cut through to the medical campus. He also comments that the three-way stop and addition of sidewalks, pavement markings and signage are all good options, but he would have liked medians or pinch points discussed as possible options to slow traffic. Chris Schregel states that a double dead-end cul-de-sac was a suggested option years ago, but was not favored by the residents.

Nate Hartrich comments that the residents in this neighborhood are anxious about losing access to Main Street should a dead-end be implemented. He is of the opinion that a bypass road would be of service to area residents, yet wouldn't be attractive as a cut-through -- people visiting the medical buildings would enter from Main Street, thus avoiding the Park Club neighborhood.

Chairman Fraas is of the opinion that a new road bypass would not be a solution to the problems. Eric also does not support a three-way stop at Briar Row in the intersection's current configuration - he is of the mind that this intersection would need to be reconfigured into a true T-intersection for a three-way stop to be effective. Eric would also like to see curbing added at the exits of the medical development to deter traffic from making the right turn northbound onto Park Club.

Dan Rider informs the members that he traveled Park Club Lane and encountered very dangerous conditions due to speeding vehicles and unsafe driving behaviors. He liked most of the suggested improvements in the report with some possible modifications. He also suggests adding a roundabout at a different intersection to help with the traffic and speed issues. He comments that the medical development should pay for sidewalks and some road improvements as part of the construction process.

Kevin Cantwell feels that a simple pavement marked roundabout at Park Club/Briar Row could be problematic in bad weather conditions -- he would like to see a permanent fixture rather than painted lines if a roundabout is installed there.

Maxwell Khan is not in favor of a mid-block crosswalk in Zone 3 because of safety issues. Chairman Fraas responds that if flashing beacons were added to the mid-block crosswalk, it would be useful to pedestrian traffic coming from Park Club Lane to enter the plaza. Chris Schregel questions the number of pedestrians coming from Park Club Lane to enter the plaza. Chairman Fraas would like the pedestrian traffic looked at before making any changes in this area. Kristin Goss mentions that she knows employees from the medical complex that use Park Club Lane to walk and jog during work breaks and suggests a sidewalk would be useful to them.

DiDonato Associates to take input from the meeting and revise the final report for submission in the upcoming weeks.

2. Paradise Road at Whisperwood Drive Crosswalk – Request for a Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB). Chris Schregel begins with an update on this item. Chairman Fraas has suggested a flashing beacon be installed to enhance the crosswalk. Chris Schregel shows a sample of what that would entail if pursued, adding that signage would also be included to enhance the crosswalk. Al Spoth mentions that the current crosswalk at this location was installed by the Highway Department after residents voiced concerns regarding the previous orientation. He suggests that the Highway Superintendent be notified of the possible RRFB addition at this crosswalk to gauge Highway support or objection. Chris Schregel noted that he is not aware of specific criteria or warrants within the MUTCD regarding the establishment of an RRFB crossing -- Jennifer Michniewicz responded that there is NYSDOT criteria to establish an RRFB, which she will provide in a follow-up email. Item held for Engineering to review criteria and the Highway Dept. to provide input.
3. Town Wide Bicycle Treatments – Amherst Traffic Safety Board input on wish list locations. Chairman Fraas opens the discussion to the members. Tom Voigt begins the conversation by saying he is still gathering comments and suggestions from the members. Hold until March for further board member input.

Chairman Fraas asks if any other new business needs to come before the Board.

Greg Dionne would like to add an item to New Business. He would like the Amherst Traffic Safety Board to send a letter to the Town Board regarding resubmitting a RAISE grant for Maple Road. Last year the grant was denied, but funds have become available in 2022. The grant would provide much needed pedestrian and bike improvements. The members agree. Chris Schregel to notify the individual who is working on the RAISE grant of this recommendation.

Chairman Fraas asks if any other new business needs to come before the Board. None being heard, he opens up Old Business.

OLD BUSINESS

- A. Plymouth Place – Parking restriction change. Chairman Fraas explains that a final recommendation is needed on the parking restriction request for the west end of Plymouth Place. Chris Schregel displays a sketch of the proposed parking restriction changes being requested. The item was held last month over a question about lifting the parking restriction directly in front of 34 Plymouth Place. After several correspondences, the Refuse Division ultimately rescinded its objection to removing the parking restriction since it was explained to them that the garbage truck is already backing down the road. Motion by Maxwell Kahn, second by Kevin Cantwell, to approve the added parking restrictions as shown on screen and remove the parking restriction as shown in red on the screen. Approved 10-0.
- B. Longmeadow Road – Bike lanes. Chairman Fraas begins by explaining that the Amherst Traffic Safety Board recommended installation of bike lanes on Longmeadow Road based on the feedback from residents in the area. The proposal stalled at the Town Board level on the matter of lingering uncertainty over the loss of on-street parking. Members discuss and brainstorm ideas on how to obtain additional resident feedback. Ultimately, the Traffic Safety Board agreed that a second letter be sent to residents of Longmeadow inviting them to respond or appear at the April 2022 Traffic Safety Board meeting.
- C. Kings Highway/Berryman – Held for Crossing Guard Review. Continue holding, waiting until weather conditions improve as required by Town Policy for this count.
- D. Rockingham Counts – Held for vehicular counts. Continue to hold, waiting for weather conditions to improve so that counters can be deployed.

- E. Eggert Road – Curve signage update. Chris Schregel informs the members that the sign has been installed. Item closed. Greg Dionne states that the sign has been installed but one of the chevrons in the southbound direction has been knocked down by a snow plow. County will be notified.

Chairman Fraas asks if there is any other old or new business.

- i. Chris Schregel has an update on Heim Road. The Heim Road and Mill Middle school beacons are currently out to bid. Projects should progress in the summer. The all-way stop at Dodge and Heim intersection was Town Board approved and will be established when the weather breaks. The County will install 'traffic pattern change' message boards as part of the deployment. Kristin Goss would like the timing on the signal at Dodge and Hopkins reviewed after the stop signs go live.
- ii. Greg Dionne would like to discuss the sidewalks on Klein, specifically the three segments that are missing. The Amherst Traffic Safety Board reviewed the sidewalks on Klein about a year ago and requested sidewalk installation. As of now, no sidewalk has been installed. Greg Dionne would like to know if anything can be done to expedite the installation. Chris Schregel informs the members that a CIP project has been established and the Town Board will provide funding in 2022 for sidewalks and ADA ramps. These locations are targeted for completion in the summer of 2022.
- iii. Greg Dionne would like a letter sent to the Town Board recommending they find funding for continuation of the Pedestrian Safety Action Plan at controlled and uncontrolled crossings. Chris Schregel responded that funding is available in 2022 for a continuation of the Pedestrian Safety Action Plan.

Chairman Fraas asks if anyone has any additional new or old business to bring before the board. None being heard, the Old and New Business portions of the meeting are closed.

SITE PLANS / REZONING

NONE

Motion by Dan Rider to adjourn the meeting at 9:30 pm, second by Chairman Fraas. Next meeting is scheduled for March 2, 2022.

Respectfully submitted,



Christopher P. Schregel
Traffic Safety Coordinator